

Compliance Assessment Report CAR_NRW0040387

Permit being assessed: LB3690HV

For: PTP@LLECHWEDD SLATE CAVERNS CENTRE, held by QUARRY TOURS LIMITED
At: BLAENAU FFESTINIOG, GWYNEDD, GWYNEDD, LL41 3NB.

Type of assessment carried out: Site Inspection, Reason: Incident Response (Incident number: 2206015).

On 01/09/2022, between 12:00 and 13:00.

Parts of permit assessed: Whole permit

NRW Lead Officer: Simon Roberts.

Report sent to: Michael Bewick, Managing Director, on 22/09/2022.

1. Summary of our findings (full details in section 4)

Part of permitted activity assessed (criteria)	Assessment result	Permit condition
WQ-C1 - Emissions and monitoring - Emissions to water	C3 Minor	Date of non-compliance 01/09/2022 with permit condition 3.1 Emissions to Water - 3.1.2 - The limits given in schedule 3 shall not be exceeded
WQ-D3 - Information - Notifications	C4 No impact	Non-compliance with permit condition 4.3 Notifications - 4.3.1. - Natural Resources Wales shall be notified without delay following the detection of: a) any malfunction, breakdown or failure of equipment or techniques, accident, or emission of a substance not controlled by an emission limit which has caused, is causing or may cause significant pollution

Result types are explained in more detail in the 'Important Information' section below.

2. What action is required?

Criteria	Action needed	Complete by
WQ-C1	Ensure compliance with permit conditions	30/09/2022
WQ-D3	Ensure in future that NRW is notified of any malfunctions or	30/09/2022

Criteria	Action needed	Complete by
	failures with PSTP in order to comply with notification conditions of permit	

Action criteria codes are listed in the 'Important information' section below.

3. What will happen next?

Any non-compliance we have identified and recorded on this form is an offence. It can result in criminal prosecution and/or suspension or revocation of your permit.

You are non-compliant with your permit.

At this time, we are issuing you with a warning for the non-compliance recorded above. Warnings may influence future enforcement response for continued or further non-compliance.

This statement does not stop us from taking additional enforcement action if further relevant information comes to light or offences continue.

4. Details of our assessment

On the 1st September 2022 Natural Resources Wales (NRW) took a formal sample of final effluent from the Llechwedd Slate Caverns Package Sewage Treatment Plant (PSTP) outfall as part of a pollution incident investigation (WIRS 2206015).

During the investigation a strong sewage odour could be detected around the Afon Barlwyd, along with a obvious grey water discolouration, substantiating a sewage pollution incident. The source of this pollution incident was found to be the PSTP which served Llechwedd Slate Caverns under discharge permit LB3690HV. The PSTP outfall was observed, with clear signs that the discharge from the PSTP had a grey discolouration and carried a strong sewage odour, indicating a clear problem with the operation of the PSTP.

During the investigation it was stated by the general manager for Zip World Llechwedd, that both blowers in the PSTP were out of use, and that the PSTP had not been operational since 26th August 2022.

The results of the final effluent sample were as follows:

Sample Results:

Suspended Solids: 50mg/l
Ammonia: 188mg/l
BOD: 390mg/l

Permit limits:

Suspended Solids: 30mg/l
Ammonia: 10mg/l
BOD: 20mg/l

The sample results taken on 1st of September 2022 are therefore non-compliant with permit condition 3.1 Emissions to water - '3.1.2 The limits given in schedule 3 shall not be exceeded'.

The incident has been categorised as 'low level to water' on WIRS, NRW's incident recording system, and has been given a CCS category 3 (a non-compliance which could

have a minor environmental impact).

In addition, since it was confirmed that the PSTP had not been working since the 26th of August 2022, there is an issue of non-compliance with permit condition 4.3 Notifications:

4.3.1 Natural Resources Wales shall be notified without delay following the detection of:

- (a) any malfunction, breakdown or failure of equipment or techniques, accident, or emission of a substance not controlled by an emission limit which has caused, is causing or may cause significant pollution;
- (b) the breach of a limit specified in the permit; or
- (c) any significant adverse environmental effects.

Please ensure that the PSTP is operated in a manner that is compliant with the conditions set out in permit LB3690HV, including emission limits.

It has since been confirmed by Zip World Llechwedd's general manager on the 7th of September that the aerators are back in the PSTP (installed by Gwynedd Environmental Waste Service on 2nd September) and that PSTP was now working once again. It has been stated that there are now 3 'blowers' in place, with one acting as 'back up' to avoid potential incidents. It was also stated that odour around the PSTP outfall was now much better, and that recent rains had washed away any discolouration. It would be worth looking into if there is an alarm on the blowers to bring to your attention any issues before an environmental impact occurs, or to review the frequency of any checks that are carried out on the PSTP in order to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

Please note any reference within the CAR/ permit to the Environment Agency means Natural Resources Wales.

In this document 'Natural Resources Wales' means the Natural Resources Body for Wales established by Article 3 of the Natural Resources Body for Wales (Establishment) order 2012.

If you have any queries about this report, or to discuss completion of any actions, please contact the NRW Officer named above.

Important information

Legal status of this report

Your permit is issued to you under the Environmental Permitting Regulations. You have a responsibility to comply with the conditions of your permit and prevent pollution/harm to the environment. You must also ensure that you comply with any other relevant legislation that may apply to your site's operations.

This report explains the findings of our assessment and any action you are required to take. We categorise non-compliance using our guidance for assessing non-compliance at regulated sites.

When we find potential non-compliance/s we will normally give you advice on how to maintain compliance.

To correct non-compliance, we may:

- require you to take specific actions
- issue a notice
- review the conditions of your permit.

Any advice and guidance we give will be without prejudice to any other enforcement response that we consider may be required.

Assessment results and non-compliance categories (used in section 1):

Assessment result	Description
Assessed (A)	Assessed or assessed in part, no evidence of non-compliance found
Action only (X)	Action only relating to the activity assessment
Ongoing (O)	Ongoing non-compliance, not scored

Non-compliance category	Description
C1 Major	Potential to have a major, serious, persistent and/or extensive impact or effect on the environment, people and/or property
C2 Significant	Potential to have a significant impact or effect on the environment, people and/or property
C3 Minor	Potential to have a minor or minimal impact or effect on the environment, people and/or property
C4 No environmental impact	Non-compliance at a regulated site that cannot foreseeably have any impact on the environment, people and/or property

If your assessment result in Section 1 is suspended, what does this mean?

In line with our guidance, we may suspend non-compliance for up to six months to allow time for remedial action to be taken. These will be re-instated if the action is not completed.

Full list of water quality action criteria (used in section 1 and 2):**WQ A: Management**

- WQ-A1 General management

WQ B: Operations

- WQ-B1 Permitted activities
- WQ-B2 The site
- WQ-B3 Operating techniques
- WQ-B4 Improvement programme
- WQ-B5 Pre-operational conditions

WQ C: Emissions and monitoring

- WQ-C1 Emissions to water
- WQ-C2 Emissions to land
- WQ-C3 Emissions of substances not controlled by emission limits
- WQ-C4 Installation of monitoring boreholes

WQ D: Information

- WQ-D1 Records
- WQ-D2 Reporting
- WQ-D3 Notifications

Enforcement response

Any permit condition non-compliance is an offence and we may take legal action against you. Action we take can include prosecution, serving a notice on you and/or suspension or revocation of your permit. See our Enforcement and Sanctions Guidance for further information.

Data protection notice

You should make sure that anyone named in this report knows that the information it contains will be processed by Natural Resources Wales to fulfil its regulatory and monitoring functions and to maintain the relevant public register(s).

We may also use and/or disclose the report in connection with:

- offering or providing you with our literature or services relating to environmental matters
- consulting with the public, public bodies and other organisations (e.g. Health and Safety Executive, local authorities) on environmental issues
- carrying out statistical analysis, research and development on environmental issues
- providing public register information to enquirers
- investigating possible breaches of environmental law
- assessing customer service satisfaction and improving our service
- Freedom of Information Act or Environmental Information Regulations requests.

We may also pass it on to our agents or representatives to do these things on our behalf.

Disclosure of information – this report will be available to view on-line

If you think this report contains commercially confidential information that should not be placed on our public register, you must contact your local Natural Resources Wales office within **fifteen working days** of receiving this report, using the contact details in the accompanying email or letter. You must give a full explanation of why it should not be

added to our public register, including specifying which information is commercially confidential. We will assess your request and respond to you within 20 working days to let you know if we agree to your request.

What do I do if I disagree with the report or have a complaint?

If you disagree with this compliance assessment report, you should contact the lead officer without delay to discuss your concerns.

If you are unable to resolve the issue with the lead officer or their line manager you should contact our Customer Contact team on 0300 065 3000 (Monday to Friday 08:00 – 18:00), or email enquiries@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk for details of how to raise your dispute further through our Complaints and Commendations procedure.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can contact the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales by phone on 0300 7900203 or by email at ask@ombudsman.wales

Welsh Language Standards

We are committed to establishing Natural Resources Wales as a naturally bilingual organisation. We will provide compliance reports in your preferred language.