


Meeting record

Subject	Eco Park Community Liaison Group
Date	Monday 20 May 2024
Location	Eco Park, 3 rd floor
Recorder	Will Hamill

Present

Name	Initials	Organisation	Title / Role
Ken Snaith	KS		Resident, CLG Chair
John Flounders	JF	SUEZ	Plant Manager
John Seaman	JS		Resident
Peter Hughes	PH		Resident
Andrea Koskela	AK		Resident
Calum James	CJ	SUEZ	National Environment and Industrial Risk Manager
Richard Watkins	RW	SUEZ	Environment and Industrial Risk Manager
Sandra Dunn	SD	Spelthorne Borough Council	Cllr., Halliford and Sunbury West
Malcolm Robertson	MR		Resident
Karen Howkins	KH	Spelthorne Borough Council	Cllr., Laleham and Shepperton Green
Gareth Swain	GS	SUEZ	Regional Manager
Will Hamill	WH	SUEZ	Regional Communications Manager
Carl Philips	CP	Shepperton RA	Chair

1.0	Welcome and apologies	
1.1	<p>KS welcomed the group and opened the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Richard Parkinson, Nigel Spooner and Councillor Buddhi Weerasinghe. Councillor Maureen Attewell was also unable to attend.</p>	
2.0	Membership update	
2.1	WH noted that Diane Hall is no longer a member of the CLG, having resigned.	
3.0	Approval of minutes from previous meeting	
3.1	Minutes from the previous meeting were presented to members. Approval was given subject to an amendment correcting a comment from AK, which was mistakenly written as “AC.” This has been implemented and the final version of the minutes is now available on the SUEZ Surrey website.	
4.0	Matters arising	
4.1	<p>Planning</p> <p>At the outset of the meeting KS mentioned that he wished to raise a few questions on planning related matters, which were discussed at the CLG in January. It was suggested by GS that this be covered under AOB.</p>	
5.0	Operational update	
5.1	<p>Gasifier</p>  <p>Figure 1</p> <p>JF provided an operational update on gasification. He acknowledged that May was not reflective of normal operations as the gasifier, had been subject to a 10-day downtime period. This was due to a breakdown on the 49-degree angle conveyor which feeds the gasifier and not related to the gasification process. It is planned to replace this module in September to prevent reoccurrence.</p> <p>However, JF noted even with the downtime on the feed conveyor 88% contract availability was achieved for the month, and currently operating at 87% for the year to date. JF further noted that combustion is performing fine, with no breaches.</p>	

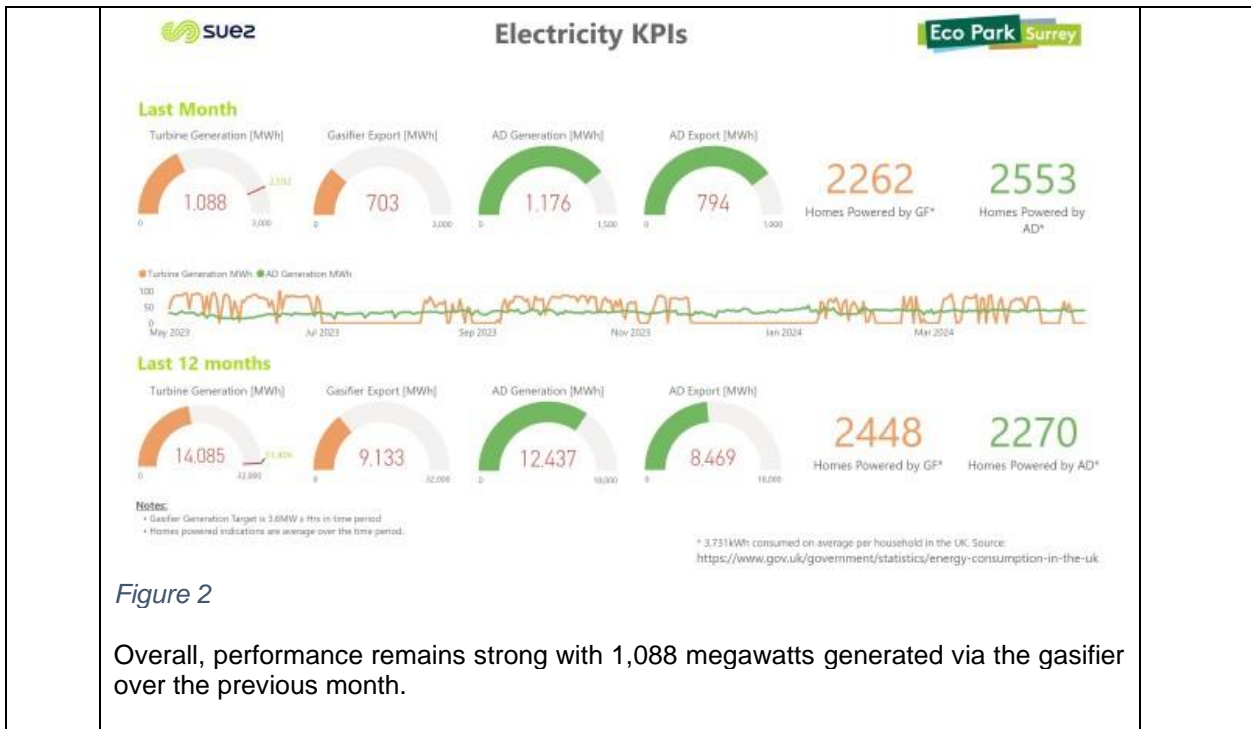


Figure 2

Overall, performance remains strong with 1,088 megawatts generated via the gasifier over the previous month.

5.2

Anaerobic digestion

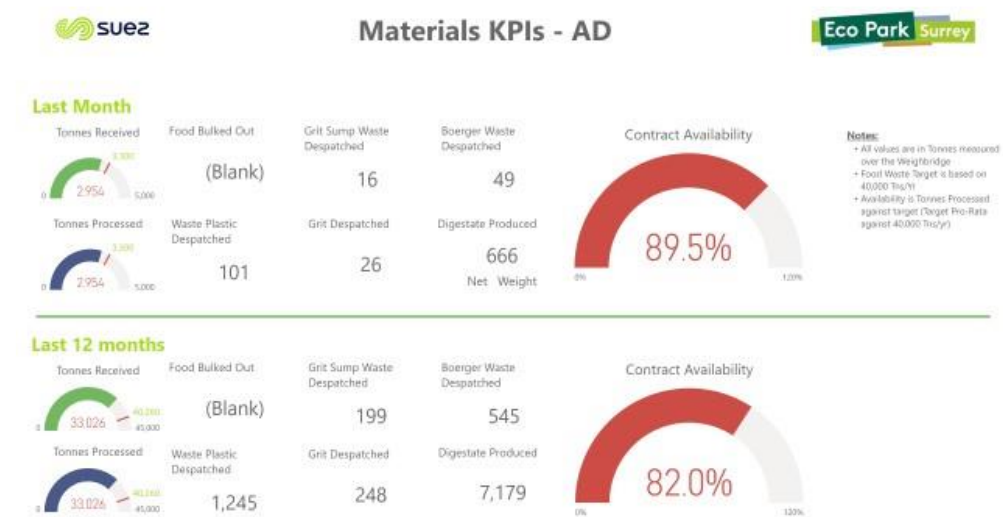


Figure 3

JF provided an update on the anaerobic digestion facility, confirming operating performance in 2024 reaching over 90% contract availability.

KH questioned whether there had been any downturns in performance in recent months and JS asked whether the parasitic load had gone down.

JF confirmed that the plant has operated consistently and downturns have been minimal over the course of the year to date and that everything is working efficiently with no food waste turned away by the Eco Park and everything received being processed.

GS echoed that the operation is running very well and that the goal should be to extract more food waste from the residual waste stream and would be grateful for the group to encourage more food waste segregation at source.

CP asked whether the facility is working under capacity because we haven't had the deliveries. GS confirmed it can accept more food waste. The plant can process

40,000 tonnes and Surrey residents are not separating 40,000 tonnes per year currently, re-iterating the point on removing more food from residual waste.

JF said a current problem is flats, where arrangements for waste make it easier for people to throw food waste in black bags than to separate it.

CJ noted that there are steps being taken to encourage change as a country, with segregated food waste becoming a legal requirement to increase uptake.

AK mentioned her own food waste box, which is getting old and damaged by foxes, noting this may deter others facing the same issue from using the food waste service.

GS clarified that food waste collection itself hasn't decreased. Rather, it has gone up steadily over time and the capacity to process it has increased. GS confirmed that SUEZ might need to look at neighbouring areas to fill the capacity, followed by potentially looking at commercial sources.

KH echoed JF's point that recycling in flats can be challenging.

GS agreed and emphasised the importance of education noting that the site has the potential to generate more electricity.

MR asked whether food waste for the whole county is collected and bulked at the Eco Park. GS clarified that some districts deliver to local transfer stations then this gets bulked to the Eco Park which processes the food waste.

5.3 Non-technical summary

Each January, SUEZ submits a detailed report on site performance to the Environment Agency (EA). At January's CLG meeting, members requested a non-technical summary of how 2023's figures in this regard compared to 2022.

RW presented the headline figures to members.

Waste

April 2022 vs 2023 - Waste

	Unit	2022	2023	% change
Waste received	tonnes	57,544	62,823	9
Rejected Waste (MPT residues)	tonnes	15,661	21,586	38
Unprocessed waste transferred out (bulked out while the GSF was offline)	tonnes	17,457	9,676	-45
Total Waste Combusted	tonnes	24,426	31,561	29

More stable operations allowed us to accept more bulk deliveries. The increase in rejected waste is associated with increased waste throughput. Meanwhile, increased operational hours allowed us to treat more of the waste received on-site.



Figure 4

On waste, RW confirmed a 9% increase in waste received by the gasifier. GS clarified that the 62,823 annual tonnage figure should not cause alarm as it was due to the phasing of the year (the figures overlap between two contract years). RW clarified that reporting to the EA is not tied in with the contract year, rather the calendar year.

CP asked what MPT stands for, to which JF clarified 'Mechanical Pre-Treatment'.

RW noted that the tonnage of rejected waste has gone up, mainly due to the composition in waste seen overall. Some of this was due to the amount of material received that the gasifier can't accept including metals, items that can be recycled, organic and food waste.

MR asked what happens to the rejected organic waste, to which JF said it is removed and combusted at Kemsley EFW in Kent.

RW also confirmed that there has been a significant reduction in unprocessed waste transferred out, with limited periods of downtime. JF noted that this was down to planned outages for 2 weeks, followed by 6 weeks due to statutory inspections of aspects of the plant.

RW explained that the total waste combusted – the amount of material that has gone through the gasification process – had increased by 29%.

Generation

April 2022 vs 2023 - Generation

	Unit	2022	2023	% change
Power Generated	MWh	16,260	17,349	7
Power Exported	MWh	9,796	11,150	14*
Power Imported	MWh	2,290	2,015	-12
Power Used	MWh	8,754	8,214	-6

*Net power benefit= 1,354 MWh

Power generation and export was increased as the plant reliability was improved, which also means that less power was imported and overall efficiency was better.



Figure 5

On power generation, RW noted that this is incrementally improving every year. The headline figure for power generation is a 7% increase.

Overall, there was a net reduction in the power that we had imported from the grid, with the whole process becoming more efficient.

SD asked if we have the equivalent figures for the first quarter of 2024. As an action, SUEZ said we would provide this. This can be found below:

		2024 Q1
Waste		
Waste received	tonnes	15,445
Rejected Waste (MPT residues)	tonnes	7,213
Unprocessed waste transferred out (bulked out while the GSF was offline)	tonnes	1,918
Total Waste Combusted	tonnes	6,313
Generation		
Power Generated	MWh	2,957
Power Exported	MWh	1,969
Power Imported	MWh	831
Power Used	MWh	1,819

Figure 6

RW/
WH

5.4

Complaints

CJ provided an update on complaints, noting that in the last month SUEZ had 3 in relation to odour, 2 in relation to noise and 2 relating to pests. One of the noise complaints related to an alarm which was substantiated. The others SUEZ was unable to substantiate.

CJ also noted how since the previous meeting, inspections from the Environment Agency took place around some of the surrounding roads and houses, looking at pests, odour and noise, but could not substantiate on any front.

PH asked whether the Hetherington Road complaints mentioned in January’s meeting are still not being passed on to SUEZ by the EA. CJ and RW confirmed that the EA are still receiving these complaints but are no longer passing them to SUEZ.

CP asked whether this is because it is not being taken seriously, to which CJ explained how it came to a point where the outcome of the investigation had not made a link to the site. GS also confirmed that following significant investigations there was nothing that could be linked to site operations.

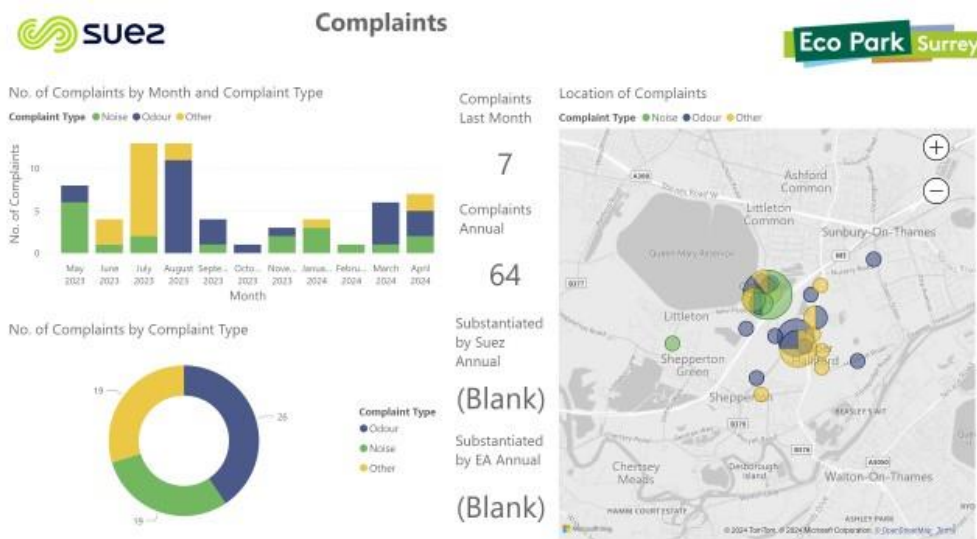


Figure 7

GS noted that a complaint had been made by a member of the public in relation to HGVs going through Shepperton village. KH mentioned that it had come up a few times and asked whether we could relay the information to our drivers, to which GS confirmed we would as an action.

MR asked what the phrase “(Blank)” means on the slides, to which JF said the program that delivers the report marks zeros as blank.

GS

5.5

RBF

On the RBF, GS noted that everything is performing well and that the planning application to accommodate more green waste will eventually come forward.

KS sought clarity on the timescales based on the recent website update explaining the application. It was confirmed that, in line with the website update, the planning application will be submitted in the summer.

5.6

CRC / Revive

GS confirmed that the CRC continues to be very busy, with the reuse shop performing well and generating more money to support the contract and donate to charitable causes in Surrey.

	<p>GS provided an update about a diary that was recovered from the bulking facility after it had been mistakenly disposed of by a local resident. The operations team recovered it from amongst 15 tonnes of cardboard. The lady was overjoyed at the extra mile that the site team had gone to recover something that was so important to her.</p> <p>SD asked how it is determined whether something will go to the re-use shop or not, having brought items that have been rejected. GS said it was a really good point and explained that staff are trained to evaluate the full criteria to select items for sale, also accommodating finite space at the shop.</p> <p>SD questioned whether there was an alternative place items could go - GS explained that Ivydene Cottage is being considered to expand the reuse offer.</p> <p>GS took an action to liaise with the team and ask what criteria is undertaken to make sure SUEZ select the most appropriate items.</p> <p>CP also expressed interest having wondered what happened to two Scalextric sets that he dropped at the site.</p> <p>GS highlighted how SUEZ is trying to extend its electrical reuse offering, but that it has to prioritise safety. As part of this we would look to work and develop a hub for electrical items. However, GS acknowledged that as a fully functioning electrical recycling service we are not there yet.</p> <p>KH asked about the potential for working with HMP Bronzefield. GS explained how partnerships with the prison service are already in motion, including with HMP Feltham, HMP Ford and HMP Downview.</p> <p>GS explained how our work on the re-circulation of medical equipment in Surrey had been highly commended at the Awards for Excellence.</p> <p>MR also asked about whether we work with HMP Ford - GS confirmed SUEZ do, alongside HMP Downview.</p> <p>GS also touched on the SUEZ scheme employing prisoners released on temporary licences, including a number who have subsequently secured permanent employment via the scheme. He noted that HMP Downview have asked for a reuse workshop to re-upholster furniture and provided an overview of our work with HMP Ford to re-purpose bikes.</p>	GS
6.0	Communications	
6.1	<p>WH provided an update on the team's communications related activity, starting with an update on the Revive Community Fund. He noted that the first funding round of 2024 had now closed, with over £17,000 set to be awarded and 40 matched projects to shortlist. The scheme has raised over £68,000 since 2018.</p> <p>WH elaborated on the team receiving a Highly Commended award at the recent Awards for Excellence ceremony in the 'Reuse initiative of the year' category for SUEZ's project putting mobility equipment back into circulation – in partnership with Surrey County Council, HM Prison and Probation Service and the NHS.</p> <p>WH also brought attention to a couple of recent good news stories at our community recycling centres including lost bagpipes found by the team at Leatherhead CRC and re-iterating the diary recovery at Charlton Lane mentioned by GS.</p> <p>WH concluded that SUEZ will be at the 2024 Shepperton Fair, providing a chance for the Eco Park team to engage with the local community.</p>	
7.0	<p>Terms of Reference</p> <p>WH presented an updated Terms of Reference with suggested tracked changes. This included the following updates:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aims have been amended to reflect the updating role of the CLG rather than raising awareness. Similarly, it is now playing a more active role of responding to enquiries rather than identifying new problems. • The remit section has been streamlined to avoid repetition • The membership section better reflects the current composition of the CLG membership and includes a bullet point on enhancing diversity and inclusion when a new vacancy arises. • Responsibilities section has been streamlined as has the code of conduct. • On meetings, it's proposed to hold a third meeting of this year in October, before moving to two meetings per year from 2025 onwards. <p>PH mentioned a tracked change which cut off wording mid-sentence in relation to recruiting new members. This has now been corrected in the final version accompanying these minutes.</p> <p>SD asked when SUEZ proposed to hold the two annual meetings from 2025 onwards, to which GS suggested one in Spring and one in Autumn to avoid downtime.</p> <p>KH asked whether regulatory bodies should be invited, to which CJ said the Environment Agency is invited as the main regulator. GS said that we need to get to a place where the CLG should reflect the issues we are dealing with now. The site is running well and in strong compliance. If there were problems the Environment Agency and planners would be involved.</p>	WH
8.0	<p>Questions</p> <p>No questions were submitted ahead of the meeting.</p>	
9.0	<p>AOB</p> <p><u>Footpath</u></p> <p>A discussion opened up about the footpath. AK and KH said local people are not happy with the fact that they can't access it.</p> <p>GS said SUEZ will address the footpath at the appropriate juncture, but that it currently has to follow through with other priorities.</p> <p>KH suggested it should have been looked at before the site was operational and suggested the planning is not being complied with. AK concurred.</p> <p>MR said it was the responsibility of SUEZ to keep the diversion footpath clean. GS explained from where it is diverted it is clean, but not the original part as it is not under SUEZ's remit and it can only manage what is in its curtilage.</p> <p>MR insisted that it is what is required under the planning permission.</p> <p>KS clarified and GS confirmed that SUEZ is only responsible for the footpath from the point it is diverted.</p> <p>MR asked when SUEZ is going to open the footpath down the middle to which GS said SUEZ hope to do it in the summer, and it cannot open the footpath when it is a risk to public health. Currently there is mobile plant and the waterlogged area has to dry up.</p> <p>AK said that this has always been a problem and MR said the issue could be solved by planting.</p> <p>AK said that there was definitely a part of the footpath which is a SUEZ obligation. GS confirmed that SUEZ is definitely responsible for an element of it and will maintain this area of the footpath.</p>	

<p>KH then asked a question about the fencing which has been down for months and MR asked why it could not be opened up until mobile plant is required.</p> <p>GS said we can't compromise on safety if we have a lane that is open and we do not know who comes in this becomes impossible to manage. He confirmed we are getting to a point where the footpath will be opened.</p> <p>KH suggested we look to Shepperton Studios who have done a good job on their footpaths. JF highlighted that they have a larger budget and GS said he was delighted that they have done such good work but perhaps they are not subject to the same restrictions.</p> <p>As an action it was noted that the issue of the footpath was raised again by members and for SUEZ to come back with a date on rectifying the issue.</p> <p><u>Beehives</u></p> <p>KH asked for an update on the beehives, asking whether they were standing in the correct position. JF confirmed they are and that they have had their first harvest.</p> <p><u>Planning</u></p> <p>A discussion took place about the environmental permit application submitted to the EA. RW explained how it was submitted to the EA in April last year and has been allocated to a permitting officer, with it now been 'duly made', therefore kickstarting the determination process.</p> <p>CJ explained how this means the EA have formally told us they have enough information to determine the application.</p> <p>KS asked why the environmental permit application is proposing an increase in tonnages.</p> <p>There was confusion in the meeting about the exact numbers involved. For clarification, the application proposes to increase the amount of waste the pre-treatment for the gasification facility can potentially accept by 38,879 tonnes per year, and at the same time proposes a corresponding decrease of 38,879 tonnes per year to the amount of waste the bulking facility and recycling centre can handle.</p> <p>When asked by KS on the rationale, GS explained it is designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the discrepancy between the contract year (April to March) and the permitting timetable (calendar year), which cover different 12 month periods but have the same tonnage limits • Create the flexibility to process additional waste in the future to account for changes to the composition of the waste, or to optimise operations to improve the efficiency of the process. <p>There were questions among members asking whether the proposals will result in overall changes to the amount of waste processed at the site. As part of this conversation, GS was asked if SUEZ is varying the permit to increase the tonnages above current limits and said it is not. This was a miscommunication - as well as the increase for MPT as already discussed above, there is a proposed corresponding increase for permitted throughput to the gasifier from 44,710 tonnes per year to 61,320 tonnes per year.</p> <p>However, if the permit variation is approved, the <u>contract</u> tonnage of 55,460 tonnes per year for the gasification facility would continue to be in place. Any future increase in practice beyond this number would be subject to discussions with Surrey County Council and then the formal planning application process that involves consultation with the local community, where local people can give their views on plans.</p> <p>GS explained that there was a Local Enforcement Position issued by the Environment Agency to increase the throughput of the pre-treatment plant (but not the thermal treatment aspect of the gasifier itself) across the calendar year on the</p>	<p>GS</p>
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	<p>understanding that the contract year limit is not exceeded. This expired on 31st December 2023. CJ said that a Local Enforcement Position is a tool used by the EA in certain circumstances where it is unable to determine permit applications in a timely manner (especially relevant as it is facing a considerable backlog in applications)</p> <p>GS also provided an update on the planning application to accommodate more green waste at the Eco Park, extending planning permission to accept the extra 10,000 tonnes coming in.</p> <p>In relation to the applications above, JS asked whether vehicle movements would be taken into account. GS confirmed they would be.</p> <p>KS asked for an update on Ivydene Cottage. GS explained there is ongoing work to look at a solution that will allow different units to use it and various options are being considered including a community centre, re-use cafe, bicycle café, with different opportunities to use space locally and contribute to the local community. He explained that it will be determined by Surrey County Council as it is for a change of use application, with Spelthorne consulted.</p> <p>KH commented that there was never a chance it was ever going to be reverted back to residential as originally intended.</p> <p>KS raised the planning application for a BESS facility near the site, noting it has had over 320 objections, and asked for an update on SUEZ's view. It was also noted that the proximity to the gas storage facility has been raised in the objections. As an action, GS said he would follow up with SUEZ's planning team.</p> <p>CP said he would also be interested to get SUEZ's viewpoint on this as it is expected to become a major issue as time goes on.</p> <p>AK highlighted that local residents are very concerned about it and that some of the views of the local community had been misrepresented.</p> <p>KH mentioned how at the last meeting here was a long discussion about the dangers posed by lithium batteries and that therefore SUEZ should reject the use of lithium at BESS. CJ explained that we would need to speak to the planning team, who will judge the application on its merits.</p> <p>Since the meeting it has been confirmed that the application has been withdrawn. SUEZ's planning team have asked Spelthorne Council to be added to the list of contacts for any future consultations on planning applications on this land.</p> <p><u>Other</u></p> <p>PH raised that he wanted to ask a question about the collection of plastic cartons which he says is always too full. GS explained that this is out of SUEZ's control and the solution is increased consumer responsibility. CP recommended Tetra Pak as a potential solution which is totally recyclable.</p> <p>JS also asked whether there would be an official opening to mark the Eco Park being fully operational. As an action, GS said he would consider this suggestion.</p> <p>SD asked about an update on the scout's area. JF said he was dealing with Paul Joseph at Scoutmasters. He mentioned how it had been suggested re-tarring the road was a responsibility for SUEZ, which is not correct – rather the original agreement was to maintain and install lightning systems, with M+W responsible for resurfacing the roads. JF explained that the quote is in excess of £30,000 and this was an M+W commitment. SUEZ continues to liaise with M+W. As an action, he agreed SUEZ would work to try to find a resolution by the time of the next meeting.</p>	<p>GS</p> <p>GS/ WH</p> <p>JF</p>
10.0	Date of next meeting	
10.1	It was confirmed that the next meeting will be Monday 7 th October between 2-4pm.	

