

Bentham Town Council

Date: 27th June 2024

Dear Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Town Councillors

Following your visit to Angus Fire on 30th May, we, as promised, would like to provide you with an update;

We were very pleased to be able to host Malcolm Birks, Labour Party Parliamentary Candidate for Skipton & Ripon, at Angus Fire on Tuesday 25th June. In addition to providing Malcolm with a tour of the Bentham site, we were able to provide him with a comprehensive update about what we were doing in relation to PFAS at the Bentham site, including the key points set out below.

- Angus Fire has never manufactured PFAS (also known as “forever chemicals”). PFAS was, however, contained within one of the raw materials formerly used in our class B foams.
- Since 2022, all fire testing at Bentham has only used foam that does not contain PFAS, known as Fluorine Free Foams. In 2023, Angus Fire publicly announced that it was stopping the manufacturing of foams containing PFAS and has since gone a step further and ceased the manufacturing of all foam products at the Bentham site.
- The Angus Fire Borehole, where PFAS samples were taken by the UK Environment Agency has been capped off and has never been used for drinking water.
- As Yorkshire Water’s CEO, advised “...*Angus Fire is not within the direct raw water catchment for our treatment works*” and “...*we do conduct routine testing of our raw water, including monitoring the level of PFAS. In doing so we are compliant with the expectations of the Drinking Water Inspectorate*” (Yorkshire Water – 17th June 2024)
- United Utilities has advised that the River Lune is a very healthy river. In relation to PFAS specifically, they advise: “...*Of the 8 samples that have been taken since June last year, two detected the presence of an individual PFAS, which were at concentrations that would place the source (even prior to blending, as any abstraction from the Lune would be blended with other raw water sources prior to treatment) in Tier 1 (the lowest of the Drinking Water Inspectorate’s categories)*”. (Source United Utilities - June 2024)
- At present, we are not aware of any impact on the local area as a result of PFAS at the Bentham site. To clarify that matter, we have commissioned independent environmental consultancy Ramboll to undertake PFAS sampling – which it is currently engaged in – to provide us a comprehensive view of any PFAS levels present. We will continue to work with Ramboll to determine the impact of PFAS on-site and to resolve any impacts identified.
- Ramboll is a well-known and highly respected consultancy with an annual turnover of ~£1.9bn, over 18,000 employees and they operate in more than 35 countries.

- Ramboll have now taken their Phase 1 groundwater and soil samples (both on and off-site). This includes the fields to the west of the Bentham site and, at the request of the Town Council, the Bentham playing fields and gardens on Duke Street. The results of the Phase 1 testing will be presented to Angus Fire and the Environment Agency in July, which will determine what sampling will be required as part of a Phase 2 sampling programme. We will provide an update ahead of the August Town Council meeting.
- As a precautionary measure, and until we have the results from Ramboll's PFAS testing on site, we are not releasing any surface water rainfall directly from concrete surfaces at the redundant foam plant and the fire test site and are instead pumping it into storage vessels.
- We are also investigating new filtration technologies, which would filter out PFAS from surface water and we hope to have something in place in the coming months.
- Furthermore, the lagoons, which are no longer used and only serve to collect rainwater, will have covers fitted over them to stop rainwater entering and in turn, stop rainwater from having to be pumped into storage vessels.
- We are treating this matter extremely seriously and we are not a company to avoid our responsibilities. Angus Fire has always operated its site in accordance with Environmental Agency regulations.
- In addition, Malcolm's letter to Angus Fire referred to asbestos on the Bentham site and we confirmed that Angus Fire does not manufacture products that contain asbestos, and it is our understanding that this activity stopped at the site in the 1950's. Angus Fire is not aware of any asbestos contamination in the local area resulting from historical operations at the Bentham site.
- Comprehensive asbestos surveys are undertaken annually by specialist asbestos contractors and a register is kept to identify where materials containing asbestos are located on site, which is a legal requirement. A more detailed 5-year asbestos review was last carried out in 2023.
- Angus remains committed to protecting the health and safety of our employees, neighbours, and the environment. We will keep the local community updated on any matters that impact them as promised to yourselves.
- We will continue to provide regular updates to the Town Council, as we work through these challenges and encourage anyone with concerns to contact us directly.

Angus Fire is a responsible company with over 100 years of community engagement. We employ many people in Bentham, many of whom have spent their working lives with us. It is extremely important for us to maintain our positive relationship with the local community.

Yours faithfully

Paul Williams

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Managing Director

Angus Fire Ltd

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