

TAIBACH MARGAM AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA WORKSHOP

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“WORKSHOP to be held by Council with the community to develop an Action Plan to reduce fine particles (PM₁₀) in the outside air”.

- If you represent a local group or have a specific interest in air quality, please complete the tear off slip on the back page **to apply** for a place at the workshop on the 14th March 2002 at the Taibach Community Centre.
- Taibach/Margam since the 1st July 2000 has been an Air Quality Management Area.
- The Council with its partners, i.e. the community, industry, public and non-public bodies, wishes to develop an Action Plan to reduce fine air borne particles (PM₁₀) to meet the standard set in the Air Quality (Wales) Regulations 2000 by the end of 2004.
- The workshop will consist of working groups each assisted by a co-ordinator, considering possible actions, prioritising these and reporting back to the whole group on the day.
- The output of the workshop will be brought together as a series of actions for consideration for adoption by the Council as its formal Action Plan to improve air quality in the Taibach/Margam Air Quality Management Area.

NEWS FROM INDUSTRY:

Corus announce replacement plan for damaged blast furnace

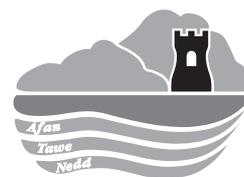
Corus has announced the building of a state of the art blast furnace. Following the tragic accident and loss of life at the Corus steelworks, the company intends to carry out a complete rebuild of number 5 blast furnace incorporating the most up to date air pollution abatement measures, enabling it to contribute to the improvement of local air quality in the area.

Contents

News from Environment Agency Wales -
Corus Intergrated Pollution Prevention & Control (IPPC) permit application

News from Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council-
Unitary Development Plan (UDP) & Air Quality.
Trees & Clean Air.
Environment Strategy.
Energy Efficiency

Air Quality in the Taibach/Margam Air Quality Management Area



**Action Planning Workshop on the 14th March 2002
at Taibach Community Centre - Reply Slip on back page**

NEWS FROM ENVIRONMENT AGENCY WALES

Corus Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) permit application

In October 2000, the Government brought the new European Directive on pollution control into force in UK law. This new legislation known as the Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations is designed to prevent, reduce and eliminate pollution at source by the application of best available techniques (BAT). Over the next few years a range of industries will be brought into this new regulatory regime.

It is now time for the Corus site at Port Talbot to be regulated under this new system of pollution control which covers not only releases to air, land and water but also includes noise and vibration, energy efficiency, environmental accidents and protection of the site as a whole. Details of the Pollution Prevention and Control (PPC) applications, any other additional information and any related correspondence from operators on the Port Talbot site is available on the PPC Public Register. These Public Registers can be inspected during normal office hours by arrangement by contacting the Environment section via the Council offices at Neath Civic Centre and at the Environment Agency offices 154, St. Helens Road, Swansea.

The Environment Agency has consulted with a variety of statutory consultees on the application for the permit, one of which is Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and it has carried out a public consultation. Since air quality impact is a major concern in the Taibach/Margam area, the Council has stressed the need to reduce sources of PM₁₀s affecting the Air Quality Management Area by 31st December 2004. This is reflected in the collaborative work the Agency, Corus and the Council having been doing as a group identifying major contributions from Corus and working towards solutions which can be included in both the PPC permit and the Air Quality Action Plan.

Although the statutory public consultation period ended on the 26th October 2001, the Agency will take into consideration any comments it receives at its Swansea office within a reasonable time before it completes its determination of the permit anticipated to be May 2002.

New flare reduces the potential for blast furnace gas releases from Corus

From time to time, the Council operated continuous air quality monitoring station at the

Groeswen hospital site has recorded higher than expected levels of carbon monoxide. At the end of July 2000, some Prince Street residents reported that their domestic carbon monoxide (CO) alarms had been set off. Earlier, Corus had problems of high pressure with their boilers, which use blast furnace gas which contains about 23% CO. The reports of domestic alarms sounding coincided with the release of excess blast furnace gas from Corus. This incident which has not been repeated, lasted for several days and released a large amount of CO. Following investigations into the incident and regulatory pressure from the Environment Agency, Corus have installed a new blast furnace gas flare system. This additional flare which cost approximately £1 million reduces the likelihood of this problem recurring in the future.

Reductions of Acid gas releases into the air (e.g. sulphur dioxide & nitrogen dioxide) in Neath Port Talbot result in improvements in water quality

Acidification is the lowering of soil or surface water pH. The effect of more acidic surface water is to change the biology of streams and rivers resulting in a less diverse and poorer quality of insect, fish and bird life associated with the acidified water.

Acidic gaseous air pollutants such as sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide are converted in the atmosphere to sulphuric and nitric acid and the deposition of these acidic pollutants is often called acid rain. Most sulphur dioxide and oxides of nitrogen come from combustion processes e.g. power stations, oil refineries etc. with about 46% of oxides of nitrogen produced by road transport. The Environment Agency regulates about 80% of sulphur dioxide releases. Since 1980 there has been a national programme to reduce the releases of these acidic gases.

The Environment Agency has found acidification through biological surveys. Chemical sampling has confirmed that there are intermittent and recurring acidification problems in several watercourses in the upland parts behind Port Talbot.

In recent years the releases of acid gases from the Neath Port Talbot area has reduced dramatically due to site closures and changes in fuel use. Now the latest monitoring results are starting to show improvements in biology and chemistry of the streams above Port Talbot. This improvement indicates a reduction in acidification associated with the improvement in air quality.

NEWS FROM THE COUNCIL:



Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and Air Quality

Public consultation on the draft UDP is by means of the deposit plan which will be available for consultation in late summer 2002. The plan will include the Council's planning policies which include air quality. When applications for planning permission for new development are being considered, the need for the new development and new investment will need to be balanced against any adverse impacts on air quality in the area amongst other considerations.

Trees and Clean Air

Children in Neath Port Talbot schools will soon be planting trees - 23,000 in all, as part of project funded by grants from Forestry Enterprise, in part to improve air quality in our borough. The trees will be planted in several areas - the Gnoll grounds, Margam Country Park and in areas of Pontardawe. The children will, in this way, learn the importance of looking after their environment and of taking responsibility to improve the quality of life for all.

In the Margam area the Air Quality team have suggested that trees could be planted in the corridor between Corus and the M4. These trees would improve the appearance of the area, assist in improving air quality by absorbing a percentage of certain pollutants and assist in combating global warming by reducing carbon dioxide.

Council putting its own house in order Environmental Strategy

The Council's Environmental Strategy will be completed this year. This is the document by which the Council sets environmental targets for itself and puts its own activities in order. It will contain Air Quality targets along with other targets and will be compatible with those being developed in the Air Quality Action Plan for Taibach/Margam, the development of which is the subject of the workshop day.

Energy Efficiency - Win FREE Home Insulation

Insulating your home will save energy, money, slow down the effects of global warming and improve air quality.

More than 50% of heat you have paid for is lost through loft spaces and walls, with a further 20% of heat escaping through draughty doors and windows.

To help you insulate your home, there are several grant schemes available that can provide anything from half price to free, cavity-wall insulation, loft insulation and draughtproofing. For those who are in receipt of certain benefits, you may be eligible for free energy efficient gas central heating.

To find out how you could have a warmer and cosier home for a lot less money than you think, telephone the **Energy Advice Centre FREE on 0800 512012**.

By completing a free home energy check over the telephone, you will be entered into a competition to win **free loft and cavity wall insulation up to the value of £700**. The closing date is **29th March 2002**.

Local Action - ARE YOU DOING YOUR BIT?

Local air quality depends on how we all run our lives, the choices we make and all sections of the community have a part to play, i.e. the public, commerce and industry alike. As a resident of the Taibach/Margam area you can assist in improving air quality by a number of actions e.g:

- Taking the opportunity to walk or cycle where feasible for local journeys.
- Using public transport instead of taking the car.
- Taking part in the safe route to schools initiative to reduce car use on your children's travel to school journey.
- Refraining from having bonfires.
- Also when you do need to use your car ensuring the engine is tuned to operate at its maximum efficiency and that the vehicle is regularly serviced.



INFORMATION

AIR QUALITY IN THE TAIBACH/MARGAM AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA (PM₁₀)

Fine particles (PM₁₀) that is particles no more than one hundred thousandth of a metre in diameter were in excess of the Welsh Assembly set Air Quality Objective level for outdoor air on 38 days in 2001 compared to 61 days in 2000. One cause for the reduction may be the tragic blast furnace accident at Corus causing one of the blast furnaces to be out of commission for 2 months last year.

FURTHER INFORMATION CAN BE OBTAINED ON AIR QUALITY FROM THE FOLLOWING:-

- * Council Web Site: www.neath-porttalbot.gov.uk via A to Z of services under "Air Quality Monitoring" giving latest 7 day pollution.
- * On Ceefax pages 410 to 417, teletext page 106.
- * By contacting the Environment Section on Port Talbot 889500 or 889530.

Footnote: External air pollution is known to increase health effects and mortality in susceptible groups e.g. the elderly and chronically sick people. The effects however are relatively small when compared to the risks of ill health and associated premature death associated with cigarette smoking.

Action Planning Workshop Reply Slip

Application to attend the Air Quality management Area ACTION PLANNING WORKSHOP on the 14th March 2002 at Taibach Community Centre between 9am and 3.15pm.
A BUFFET lunch will be provided for **invited** delegates.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Organisation representing: _____

Telephone: _____ e-mail: _____

Please reply to Peter Hollingsworth, Principal Officer Environment, Neath Civic Centre, Neath SA11 3QZ, e-mail p.hollingsworth@neath-porttalbot.gov.uk by 28th February 2002