

MINUTES OF THE CORNWALL REGIONAL WATERSHARE + PANEL MEETING (PUBLIC)  
Lanhydrock Memorial Hall, Trebyan, Bodmin  
26 November 2024 at 10am for tours and 11.45am for the meeting

**Present:**                   **Panel:**  
Carole Theobald – WaterShare+ Panel Member and Regional Chair for Cornwall  
Ben Harper – WaterShare+ Panel Member and Regional Deputy Chair for Cornwall  
Lord Matthew Taylor – WaterShare+ Panel Chair (Restormel tour only)

**In attendance:**       **Customer attendees:**  
12 customer attendees

**Company representatives:**  
Carolyn Cadman – Director of Natural Resources  
Sue Clarke – Head of Customer Research and Customer Strategy  
Richie Adams – Head of South West Water DWS Networks  
Guy Doble – Drought and Resilience Programme Director  
Paul Carne – Head of Drinking Water South West

**Meeting secretary:**  
Sophie Hooper Lea of Ebonstone

**Apologies:**               None

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction to WaterShare+ (slides 3-6)</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
1.1	Following tours of the Restormel Water Treatment Works, Regional Chair Carole Theobald welcomed everyone to the first regional public meeting held by WaterShare+ in Cornwall. The Chair provided background on the WaterShare+ Panel and share scheme, introducing her Regional Deputy Chair Ben Harper and the company representatives at the meeting. The WaterShare+ Panel is recognised by Ofwat as the company's independent challenge group (ICG) and holds the company to account on behalf of customers. Carole explained the structure of the WaterShare+ Panel and its areas of focus (slide 5). She also highlighted three key local issues that the Panel will be scrutinising in the coming year: the desalination scheme; protection of the environment and progressive charging trials (slide 6). The Regional Chair then handed over to Carolyn Cadman for the next stage of the meeting.	Panel
<b>2.</b>	<b>Welcome from South West Water (slides 8-10)</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
2.1	Carolyn welcomed everyone to the meeting on behalf of South West Water. She described her background including her former role as Chief Executive of the Cornwall Wildlife Trust. Carolyn provided background information on South West Water and explained how the company's business plan for 2025-30 will invest in areas that are priorities for customers (slide 8). Carolyn described the company's planned £220m investment in the local area (slide 9) and highlighted current initiatives that are enhancing the local environment (slide 10). The Chair thanked Carolyn for her contribution and handed over to Regional Deputy Chair Ben Harper to run the question and answers session.	

3.	Questions and Answers	ACTION
3.1	Ben welcomed customers to the meeting and introduced himself before asking for questions from attendees.	
3.2	Customer 1 asked if there is a conflict of interest between providing a public service and having shareholders, stating that the company will earn a finite amount of money but that the shareholders will want as much of this as they can get. Carolyn Cadman explained how water companies are financed in the UK. The amount of money that customers pay in their bills is not enough to cover the amount of investment needed in water and waste water services. Water companies therefore need to borrow money from banks and other lenders and they also raise capital by having shareholders. When a company borrows money, it has to pay a cost for that borrowing such as paying dividends to shareholders. The Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat) sets out how much water companies can borrow and has rules around the amounts that can be paid in dividends and as executive bonuses for company leaders.	
3.3	Customer 2 asked when the company last built a new waste water treatment works. Guy Doble replied that Ottery in East Devon was completed within the last three years. Guy mentioned the company's 'Clean Sweep' programme, which has significantly improved beach water quality in the South West, and described how the company undertakes improvements identified by the Environment Agency. He also highlighted ongoing work to support the region's growth and development. Carolyn Cadman stated that all water companies recognise that reliance on storm overflows is no longer acceptable. She referred to her earlier presentation on how the company is reducing its reliance on storm overflows and highlighted Ofwat targets in this area. Carolyn referred customers to the South West Water website storm overflow map - <a href="https://www.southwestwater.co.uk/storm-overflow-map">https://www.southwestwater.co.uk/storm-overflow-map</a> . This provides information on overflow locations, water quality and investment planned during 2025-30. She also explained how storm overflows work (a full explanation and video can be found at: <a href="https://www.southwestwater.co.uk/storm-overflows">https://www.southwestwater.co.uk/storm-overflows</a> ).	
3.4	Customer 3 raised concerns about the desalination plant and asked whether other opportunities could be used instead. Guy Doble stated that the company recognises the local interest and concern around the desalination plan. The company is taking time to conduct additional environmental surveys and is aiming to achieve a desalination plan that has no negative impact on the environment. Guy highlighted that desalination is only one part of the company's plans for increasing local water resources. He also described how the company is repurposing disused quarries such as Hawks Tor and Blackpool Pit as well as making improvements to the Restormel Water Treatment Works. Guy explained that the desalination plans would create a climate-resilience water supply for the local area, which is important in a time of climate change. Guy stated that the pipeline route has been assessed carefully and highlighted that the company is working with Natural England, which has recently produced a survey of maerl habitats in St Austell Bay. He highlighted that there will be more public consultation events in the future and invited attendees to participate. Guy also described the company's focus on leak reduction. He described how the company is using new technologies to find and fix leaks as quickly as possible.	
3.5	Customer 4 had worked in sewerage and highlighted the issue of roof, surface and other water all going into drains and overwhelming the sewerage system. He talked about old,	

	leaky sewers and old drains still being in place despite new sewage treatment works being built. Carolyn Cadman stated that the Water Commission, chaired by Sir John Cunliffe, will be looking into this issue and that we may need a national strategy for rainwater. Carolyn stated that the existing system can cope with domestic waste water, but water run off is a huge problem that needs to be resolved.	
3.6	Customer 5 raised an issue relating to expensive phosphate permissions impacting planning permission on housing he is building. He asked the company when its phosphate removal projects (slide 9) will take place. Carolyn Cadman stated that she would ask colleagues about whether the company's phosphate removal projects are related to phosphate permissions in housing developments. She invited the customer to speak to her further after the event.	CC
3.7	Customers 6 and 7 stated that they were still struggling to understand the need for desalination. They said that they have been asking for 18 months for the business case for the company's desalination plans and have not received an answer. Shouldn't the company instead by focusing on mending leaks and other water sources such as pits and quarries? Guy Doble thanked the customers for their question and explained that leaks are not a static issue because of the multitude of connections between water treatment works and customer properties. He reiterated the company's focus on proactively detecting leaks and stated that the company's target is for the vast majority of leaks to be fixed within three days, explained that some leaks will take longer to fix because of safety concerns and/or access issues. Guy described some of the extensive measures that the company has in place and is investing in to reduce leakage. RA highlighted satellite and other technologies being used to get to leaks quicker as well as significant mains replacement programmes to avoid future leaks and pressure management schemes that will also reduce leakage. Guy described desalination is just one part of the 'jigsaw' in securing water resources for the future.	
3.8	Ben Harper thanked attendees for their questions and invited attendees to stay for lunch and to take the opportunity to speak further to Panel members and company representatives. He also encouraged attendees to visit stalls at the event that focused on Net Zero & Environment, Affordability & Vulnerability and Desalination.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Meeting close</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
4.1	Ben brought the meeting to a close at 13:00.	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Further actions arising from the meeting</b>	
5.1	Customers were invited to submit questions ahead of the meeting, and attendees were given opportunities during and after the meeting to speak further with company representatives and ask additional questions. Two customers raised questions that required a response after the meeting, as follows:	
5.2	A customer raised the issue that Luxulyan has experienced major issues with the current Water Treatment works based very near to the village. They have had to engage Cornwall Council's Environmental Management in some matters over the past few years, so they would appreciate a possible insight into what the 10-year project plan is for operations/expansion. Company to provide an explanation of the company's future plans in relation to Luxulyan.	Company

5.2	A customer who works at Trewithen Dairy stated that they have been impacted as a business by reduced water supply. They are about to start the largest private business expansion project in the county next year but are very concerned that South West Water will not be able to supply them with adequate water. They asked what the company can do to help. Company to contact the customer to discuss concerns over water supply to Trewithen Dairy.	
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**Actions/Matters Arising**

Action No	Meeting Date	Ref	Action	Owner	Comment / Target date
534	26/11/24	1.1	Panel to scrutinise the company's desalination plans on behalf of customers. (The Panel is already scrutinising the two other key areas identified – how the company is protecting the environment and progressive charging trials.)	Panel	2024/25
535	26/11/24	3.6	Carolyn Cadman to ask colleagues about whether the company's phosphate removal projects are related to phosphate permissions in housing developments.	CC	December 2024
536	26/11/24	5.1	Company to provide an explanation of the company's future plans in relation to Luxulyan.	Company	December 2024
537	26/11/24	5.2	Company to contact the customer to discuss concerns over water supply to Trewithen Dairy.	Company	December 2024