

Coal bosses act on South Esk pollution

Coal bosses have revealed that they are securing land in a bid to start cleaning up water coming from historical coal mine workings.

The problem is affecting the South Esk river and, in a letter to local residents, The Coal Authority admit that for many years small quantities of mine water have been discharging from an old drainage tunnel known as an adit.

The water, they say, is entering the river in Dalkeith near Newmills Road and the letter said: "Recently this flow has been increasing and its quality has been deteriorating.

"Previously, the impact on the river was very localised but, as you may now be aware, orange discoloration, caused by dissolved iron picked up from the mine workings oxidising and settling on the riverbed, has become more visible further downstream.

"This could have a negative impact on the river's ecology if left untreated."

The authority confirm that they are working with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) to develop a permanent mine water treatment scheme for the South Esk.

The letter added: "As this is likely to take two or three years, we are working hard to design and implement an interim solution which could be in place in the next six to nine months."

This would treat the mine water until the proposed permanent scheme is developed.

The letter said: "To establish the proposed temporary scheme

we are currently securing the land and hope to start construction in late 2020 so it is operational in spring 2021.

“Our work will have long lasting benefits to the local environment and ensure the South Esk is protected for current and future generations.”