

# **East Lothian village residents anger over sewage and disruption**

**Angry residents in a small East Lothian village are having to put up with tankers pumping raw sewage at the bottom of their gardens after nearly 100 houses were built with no mains link.**

The waste collections take place on land which is supposed to be a children's play area but after housing developers Bellway were unable to link their new homes to a mains sewage system as initially planned, it is used as access to the local sewage tank.

And every Monday, Wednesday and Friday tankers arrive to pump its contents out of one underground container before putting it into main drains on a different part of the developers site.

Villagers say the smell caused by the regular trips is unbearable at times while the noise generated by the tankers can go on for hours.



Elphinstone

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Sewage tankers empty a local tank at the bottom of Graham Drummond's garden several times a week



Tanker collects sewage at bottom of Elphinstone garden

Graham Drummond, whose home backs onto the collection site, said some Mondays the visits go on all day.

He said: "After the weekend, in particular, they make several trips and can be here from 9 in the morning til late afternoon pumping out the sewage.

"It can create a smell and is noisy, it makes using our garden impossible and we are concerned it will carry in until the summer as there seems to be no solution coming forward to

solve the problem.”

Earlier this month East Lothian councillors delayed a decision over more houses being built on the new estate by Bellway after hearing the sewage issue was causing anxiety among residents.

And they heard it was not the only issue to raise concerns in the village after flooding issues were raised by residents living in homes south of the homes already built.

Homeowners in Waterloo Place, in the village, say their gardens remain waterlogged every time it rains after the developer built more than 80 homes on the site, which was agricultural land.

They are demanding more action is taken to protect people living in the village before plans for another 111 homes on the site are approved.

Rob Moore said the suds ponds created at the bottom of the field were not stopping water pouring into gardens in his street with no solution coming forward.

And he and his neighbours have been left infuriated after Bellway applied for permission to create a footpath from the new homes through their street, requiring a small woodland to be cut down and the loss of a grass play area.

Rob said: “This is a prime example of what happens if you build on agricultural land, taking away the natural protection. Our gardens are waterlogged and nothing is being done to fix it.

“Now Bellway want to push ahead and create a footpath which will remove more woodlands and cross amenity land which belongs to our homes.

“No more housing should be allowed on this site until a proper enquiry into what has gone on so far has been carried out. The

council should not allow the development to continue.”

The views of residents in Waterloo Place is mirrored by Graham as he faces regular sewage uplifts at the end of his garden.

He said: “It beggars belief that houses on this estate were signed off and people allowed to move in without all of them being connected to a mains sewage. The council needs to take action now before anything else is allowed to happen here.”

Bellway said it is installing pumps on the site to stop the need for tankers while it awaits the go ahead from the ‘Highways Department’ to undertake roadworks to connect to main sewage in the village.

They said: “Regretfully we can only fully connect the sewer when granted permission to do so that is outside of our control.”

On the issues at Waterloo Place they declined to comment saying it was a ‘live planning matter.

A spokesperson for the company said of the sewage situation: “Bellway has been addressing concerns of the local authority and residents on the site waste solution.

“The approved design for the site has two connection points at Elphinstone which connects to the Scottish Water drainage network. One of these was connected in May and June and this takes a portion of the site waste and it is working as designed.

“The connection of the second connection to the waste network has been delayed due to external issues in connecting the system. It is a complex piece of work which has been delayed and we intend to resume these works again in the New Year.

“As a result of the delay initially, we implemented the chamber and tanker solution. When the chamber fills we vacuum this to the other chamber on site, which discharges into the

existing drainage network. We are currently installing underground pumps on site as an interim measure until the second connection to the waste network is completed, which will negate the need for the tanker solution.”

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter