

July 2024

Improving water and wastewater services on the Isles of Scilly

St Mary's wastewater
consultation



South West Water is proposing a major investment to improve water and wastewater services on the islands. Our vision is simple: thriving communities, protecting precious wildlife and crystal-clear waters, all powered by our dedication to high-quality practices and cutting-edge technology.

Since taking over responsibility for water services on the Isles of Scilly in 2020, we've been assessing the water and have been in discussions with regulatory bodies, including the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) and the Environment Agency.

The DWI has issued improvement notices for the five inhabited islands to improve the quality of the water so that it meets legal requirements. Additionally, the existing water supply is not sufficient to consistently meet summer demand.

On the Isles of Scilly, we own wastewater infrastructure on St Mary's and Tresco only. There is an Environment Agency Local Enforcement Position to improve wastewater services on St Mary's. We'll also be replacing the screening plant on Tresco to ensure it meets permit requirements.

As part of our investment programme, we're also carrying out improvement works to existing water and wastewater services starting this autumn. These don't require planning permission as they are being delivered under permitted development rights, but we'll keep you updated on these works as they progress through our public events, website, newsletters and social media.

Our investment programme isn't just about ticking boxes; it's about creating a legacy of resilience and excellence.

Our aims

Clean water

- To provide wholesome and safe drinking water to all island communities
- To maintain a continuous, reliable supply of water that is resistant to drought for the long term
- To deploy modern water treatment technology

Wastewater

- To improve wastewater treatment on St Mary's and Tresco to meet national regulations
- To reduce spills and enhance the marine environment and water quality
- To improve the resilience and sustainability of the wastewater network

Our proposal for St Mary's

Wastewater proposals

We're consulting on proposals to replace the existing Bishop and Wolf Sewage Pumping Station (SPS) with a new, larger pumping station and a screening plant. These will be located within a building on the site of the existing pumping station, to the south of the Bishop and Wolf pub in Hugh Town.

The new building will house new variable-speed pumps to replace the current fixed-speed surface-mounted pumps, which will provide more resilient pumping operations reducing the risk of a spill to the environment.

The screening plant will be housed in the same building. Here, we'll remove objects such as rags, paper, plastics and metals to prevent damage and clogging of downstream equipment, piping and other assets. This will ensure these materials do not enter the marine environment. Once screened, the flows will be pumped to the existing outfall at Morning Point.

We're aiming to have this built and operational by early 2025.

Site location – Bishop and Wolf SPS

The existing pumping station building is 3.90m long by 2.96m wide by 4.44m tall, enclosed by a low wall.

The proposed new pumping station and screening building will be approximately 12m long by 6m wide and 5m tall. A small section of the Bishop and Wolf pub's outside space will be needed for the new development and we are in discussions with them regarding this matter.

The existing access from Little Porth Road will be maintained as will emergency access routes from the surrounding properties. Access will be required for maintenance and operational purposes.

We assessed several options for the location of the screening plant: Garrison Wall, Bishop and Wolf, Porthcressa, Trench Lane, Holgates Green and Upper Garrison.

We assessed each of these against a range of criteria including environmental impacts, carbon impacts, compliance with Environment Agency requirements, constructability and cost.

We've proposed the Bishop and Wolf site as the location which best meets the criteria. Redevelopment of the existing site will allow for the larger pumping station and the new screening plant on the existing operational site.



Location plan

Key considerations

The Isles of Scilly is a precious archipelago, with its pristine coastal waters and environment providing home to a unique blend of nature and wildlife, exceptional heritage, and nationally important habitats and landscapes.

Their status as a National Landscape and conservation area reflects the national importance and the vital contribution these islands make to wildlife, climate and our wellbeing.

We've carried out a number of surveys to inform our plans so far and will continue to do so – you may have seen some of our surveyors on the island.

Landscape and visual

The building has been designed to fit positively within the existing architecture and townscape, by ensuring that it is high-quality, sustainable and contributes to the distinct nature of the islands.

Our proposal will have minimal impact upon the landscape and scenic beauty of the islands due to its enclosed location amongst existing buildings. Additionally, the new building will replace the existing one which is in a poor state of repair.

Heritage

The site is located to the south of the Grade II Listed Bishop and Wolf pub and we've designed our development to enhance the setting of this heritage asset. There is a low potential for undiscovered archaeology due to the existing pump station on the site. There are no scheduled monuments in close proximity to the site. The planning application will be supported by a Historic Environment Statement to assess the significance of any heritage assets potentially affected.



View from Bishop and Wolf; Existing



South elevation



Western Approach; Existing



View from Bishop and Wolf; Proposed



North elevation



Western Approach; Proposed

These images show the current building and architect's impressions of the replacement building and elevations.

Key considerations

Environmental designations

Our wastewater improvements will enhance the marine environment and water quality of these islands by removing solid materials from entering the marine environment. We're carefully designing our proposals to ensure that we respect the landscape, avoiding environmental designations, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) where possible.

There are no designated protected sites directly impacting the Bishop and Wolf Pumping Station, but there are two which are not far from the site*:

- The Isles of Scilly Complex Special Area of Conservation (SAC), approximately 100m south
- The Isles of Scilly Special Protection Area (SPA), approximately 80m south.

*These designations cover all of the sea around the Isles of Scilly.

Our assessments shows that our proposals are unlikely to have a significant adverse effect on the conservation objectives or qualifying features of the SAC or SPA. A Stage 1 Screening Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) will be carried out to ensure any potential impacts are identified.

Ecology

Ecological surveys to date have not identified any specific ecological constraints at the existing site and no habitats have been identified on site. The new development is therefore likely to avoid adverse impacts on existing biodiversity.

The existing building and the stone wall to the east have been identified to have a low suitability for bats. A bat survey will be completed before construction starts to ensure there are no bats roosting in the building.

Sustainability

Across South West Water we're committed to sustainable solutions. We have a target to reach net zero in our operations by 2030.

We're exploring how we can provide further environmental enhancements and sustainable solutions for each of our proposals. Details will be set out in our Sustainability Statement as part of our application. These include:

- The use of low- and zero-carbon technologies
- Use of renewable energy such as solar panels, heat exchange and water turbines
- Measures to maximise water efficiency
- Using recycled materials for construction
- Minimising the import of materials to the island.

Other considerations

We're carrying out a range of assessments, including those outlined below. These will identify whether mitigations are needed during design, construction and operation of the project. Further information will be provided in our planning application and in our detailed design.

Air Quality and Odour – the potential odour source will be within a fully contained building and odour controlled, therefore there is likely to be an improvement to the current situation.

Noise and Vibration – mitigations may include acoustic insulation. Detailed design to be based on the equipment to be installed.

Flood Risk – our proposal is located within Flood Zone 3, therefore a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy will be submitted with our planning application. This will ensure that risk of flooding onsite and in the local area does not increase as a result of our proposals.

Daytime and Sunlight Assessment – we're assessing daylight and sunlight levels to neighbouring properties to determine any potential impacts regarding access to natural light to inform detailed design.

Land Contamination Preliminary Risk Assessment – to assess whether land contamination risks or significant geoenvironmental constraints are likely to be present on the site.



Creating a positive legacy for generations to come

These proposals are part of South West Water's major investment in the Isles of Scilly.

This investment will enable us to:

- Reduce pollution
- Protect the islands' pristine coastal waters
- Protect and enhance the islands' precious wildlife and natural environment
- Provide innovative sustainable solutions to the islands' water quality issues
- Keep bills fair for you.

Across all of our improvements works, we will be sympathetic to the unique nature of the islands and seek to minimise impacts on all habitats, wildlife and communities during construction and operation.

Community and economic benefits

We will work closely with stakeholders and residents to identify areas where we can invest into the community to maximise the benefits of the programme. As well as creating jobs, improving water quality will support tourism.

We're exploring working with local schools, creating internships and are looking to hire as well as create new highly skilled jobs through the construction phase.



Construction

Bishop and Wolf Sewage Pumping Station

Construction of the new pumping station and screening plant at Bishop and Wolf SPS will take approximately six months, completing in spring 2025.

We're exploring a range of measures to minimise construction impacts. These include:

- Where possible, construction will take place over winter 2024/2025, outside of peak tourist season
- Working hours to be agreed with Council of the Isles of Scilly prior to construction
- Management of dust and emissions to reduce impacts to air quality
- Low impact plant and tooling to manage noise, vibration and light to reduce disturbance to people and habitats.

At Bishop and Wolf SPS, a temporary pumping solution will be needed during the construction period. This will be located near the existing site.

Details will be set out in our application which will include a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) and a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP).

Improvement works – Old Town

We're also upgrading the existing treatment works located at Old Town, St Mary's, this will include improving the imported septic tank waste reception facilities.

These works are required to ensure compliance with the Environment Agency's discharge permit requirements.

These works will be delivered under permitted development rights under the Town and Country Planning Act. Construction is expected take around ten weeks. The construction works will remain within the existing site boundary, with an adjacent field used for material storage, for the duration of the construction period.



We want to hear from you

We want to bring local residents and our customers on this journey with us and ensure that we are addressing concerns and taking on board feedback where possible.

Information about these proposals and an online feedback form is available on our website, along with information about the wider investment programme.

Please visit www.southwestwater.co.uk/isles-of-scilly or scan the QR code.



You can also email your feedback to us at IoSProject@southwestwater.co.uk, write to us at **FREEPOST – SWW Isles of Scilly Improvement Works**, or complete a form at our public event and hand it to the team.

Please respond by 16th August 2024.

Next steps

We'll analyse all feedback received which will help inform and shape our planning application.

As part of our application, we'll be submitting a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which will detail how we have engaged with the local community, and where possible, how we have taken on board feedback that we have received.

We'll submit each application to the Council of the Isles of Scilly.

