

The Chief Executive (by email)
Southern Water Services Limited,
Southern House,
Yeoman Road,
Worthing, West Sussex



20th June 2021

Dear Mr McAulay,

I write to you as Leader of Thanet District Council to express my utter dismay at the failure of your wastewater pumping station at Foreness Point on Wednesday night.

You claim this occurred due to a lightning strike, however, given the repetitive failure of this plant for over a decade, I do not accept that an act of God is in any way an excuse for this latest environmental and financial disaster in our District. Surely your Company has an emergency protocol in place to mitigate against any such eventuality at what is a critical part of your infrastructure.

In a court case in September 2016, Judge Adele Williams, who imposed a £2m fine on Southern Water said: "The message must go out to directors and shareholders that repeated offending of this nature is wholly unacceptable." Also, she added Southern Water's problems at Margate had first been identified in 2010.

However, yet again, we find ourselves back in the same catastrophic situation with beaches closed and businesses that are struggling to recover from the pandemic losing tens of thousands of pounds in trade.

Despite Southern Water Director Simon Oates at the time apologising unreservedly for the failure at Foreness Point, and confirming since 2012 that £4m had been invested in the site and a further £6m investment plan was in place, you clearly have not resolved the issue.

On behalf of the residents and businesses of Thanet I request that Southern Water recognises its failures and compensates both TDC for the costs incurred with the clean-up operation and all local businesses for their loss of trade.

I invite you to address TDC Members at a briefing to firstly, explain the failure at Foreness and secondly, what guarantees you are prepared to give that this situation will not reoccur and what steps you will be taking to ensure the same.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ash Ashbee', written over a horizontal line.

Cllr Ash Ashbee
Leader

Cc by email: Madeline Homer, Sir Roger Gale MP, Craig Mackinlay MP, Cllr Pugh, Cllr Everitt, Cllr Stuart Piper, Cllr Garner.

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