

## **SAVE OUR ISLAND ARTICLE FOR APRIL 2023 HAYLING HERALD**

THIS IS an update on Portsmouth Water's & Southern Water's Havant Thicket and Sewage Conversion Proposals saga.

On 15 February 2023, a Public Meeting was held between Havant Borough Council, representatives from the two water companies, and 150 members of the community. All of the questions related to the need and validity of the Havant Thicket Proposal, which were met mainly with obfuscation and rebuttals. We can assume that the Proposals will now be presented to Defra unchanged, with the meaningless assurance that 'the community has been consulted.'

At the meeting, we were treated to an operatic performance from the Portsmouth Water CEO, who, with faux altruism, said that Portsmouth Water felt duty bound to help Southern Water as they had asked for help. I do not think we would find this objective in their constitution, which is probably focused on maintenance of water quality, good customer relations, and profitable growth. Given that these proposals do nothing for water quality or customer relations, we can assume that the sole reason for offering to help is financial gain, a question which was posed but not answered at the meeting.

We now have an inter-connected application from Southern Water to drill two boreholes 30 and 60 mtrs deep for 18 months in Bidbury Park (APP/23/00004) with Southern Water stating that it is to test the suitability of the land for the pipelines to and from the Havant Thicket reservoir. Looking at the length and routing of these pipes, it is unlikely that testing in this one site can achieve the stated objectives.

It is far more likely that Southern Water are again hiding the real reason for this activity. We should remember that Southern Water, in the overall proposal, deliberately hid the fact that the Portsmouth Water customers are to receive their drinking water from the processed output from Budds Farm.

It is probable that Southern Water are drilling to see how much additional water can be extracted from the aquifer. This drilling is in the same area as the Bedhampton Wells, and the 60m depth of the boreholes would point to this as the more likely intent.

In addition, sanctioning drilling into the Portsmouth Water drinking water source would require a detailed risk analysis before any reasons could even be considered, and we have asked Havant Borough Council to refuse this application.