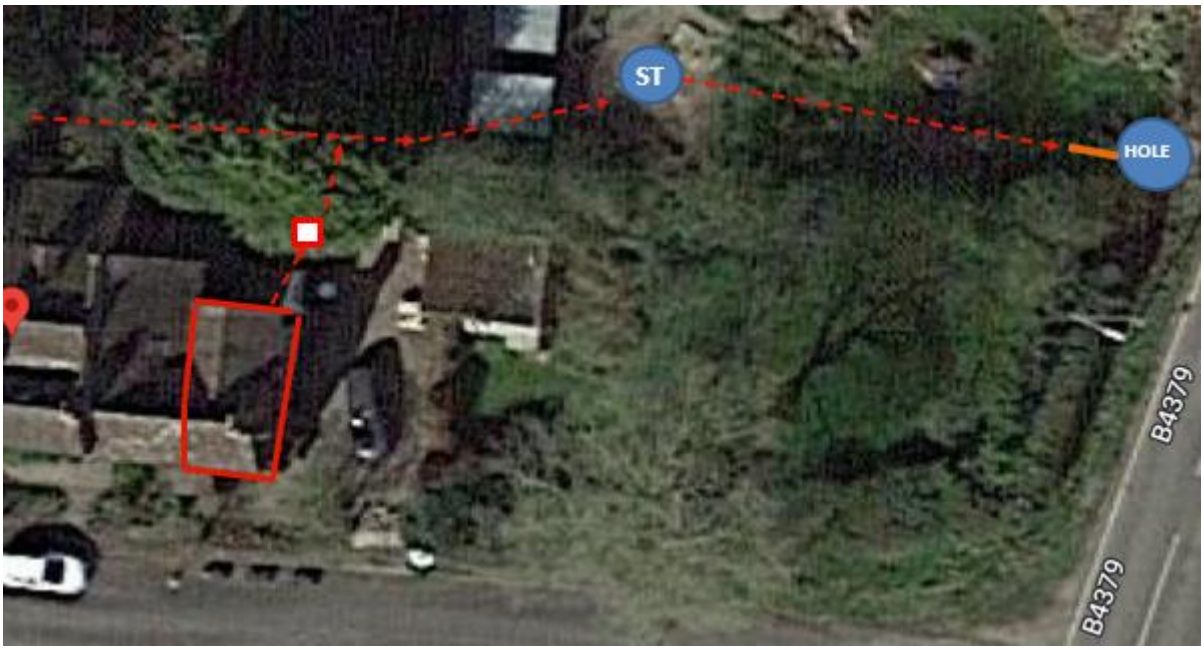
Mr & Mrs Paterson
Langley Cottage
Kemberton
Shifnal
TF11 9LB

20th May 2022

Dear Mr and Mrs Paterson

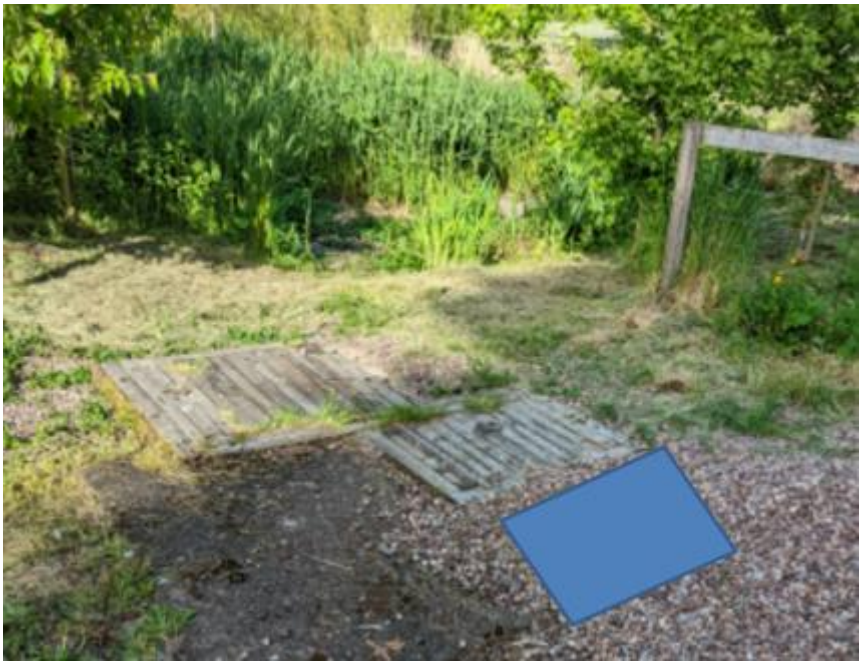
Following our site visit last week, we have reviewed your current arrangement with regards to waste management, as well as the specific requirements going forwards to support Langley Cottage in isolation.

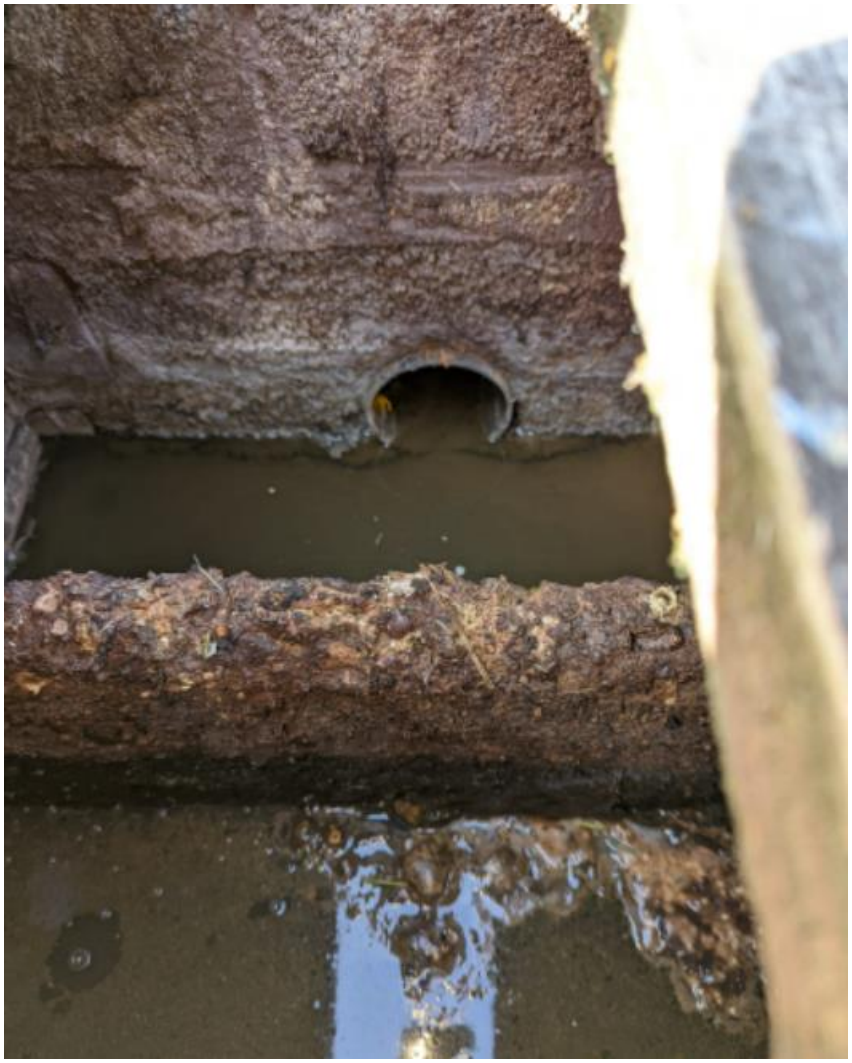
The existing foul drainage management is in situ to service both Langley Cottage, as well as the large adjacent 5 bed / 5 bathroom property. I have detailed below the existing set up.



The foul waste only from both properties runs in to an old 3 chamber brick built system that is in a poor state of repair and not suitable or cost effective to be 'upgraded' to a more future-proofed and legislatively compliant system. (See images below – blue section is the approx location of the first chamber)

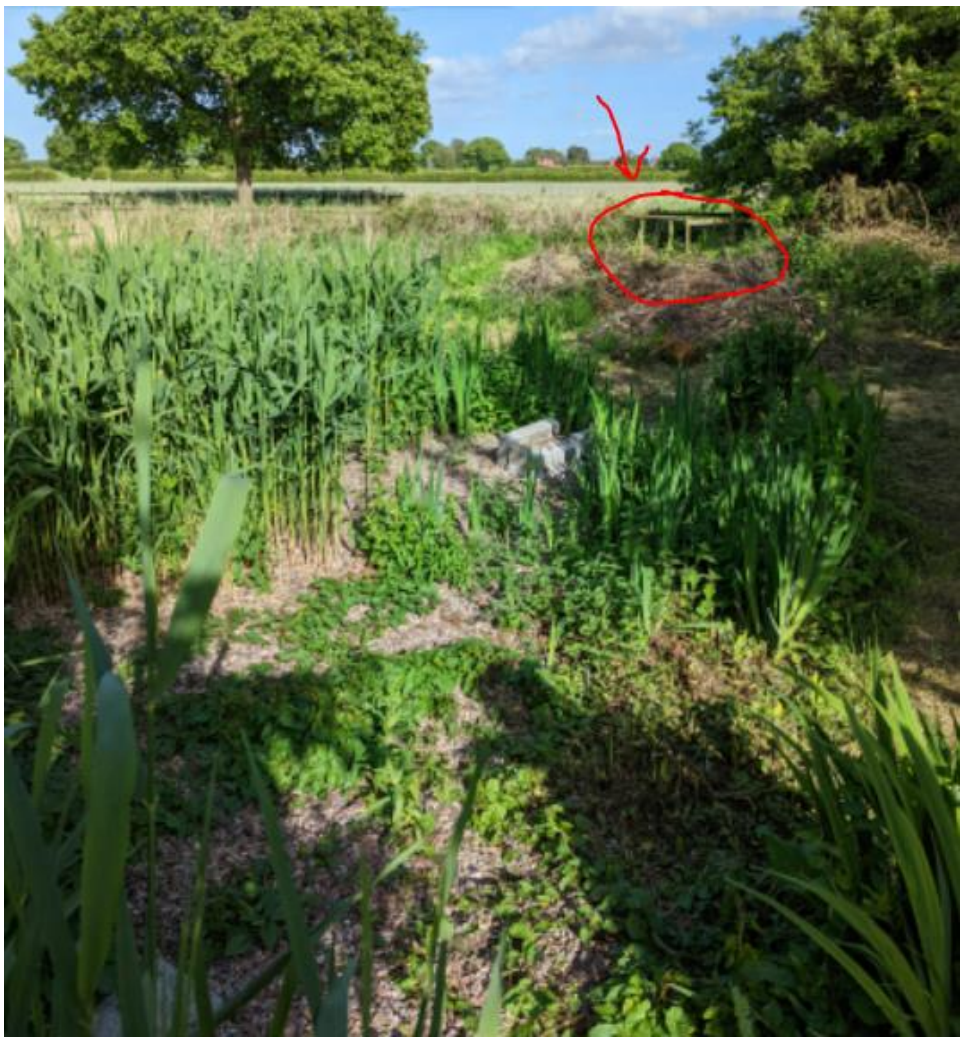
Drain Doctor Plumbing Unit 2a Plant Lane Business Park, Plant Lane, Burntwood WS7 3GN
T: 01922 477716 W: www.draindoctorplumbers.co.uk **E:** info@draindoctorplumbers.co.uk



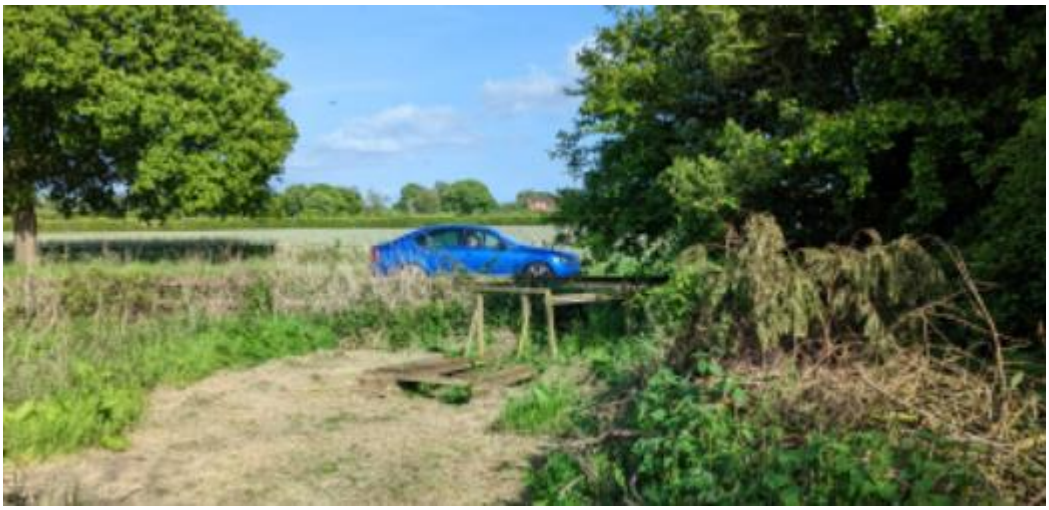


Drain Doctor Plumbing Unit 2a Plant Lane Business Park, Plant Lane, Burntwood WS7 3GN
T: 01922 477716 W: www.draindoctorplumbers.co.uk **E:** info@draindoctorplumbers.co.uk

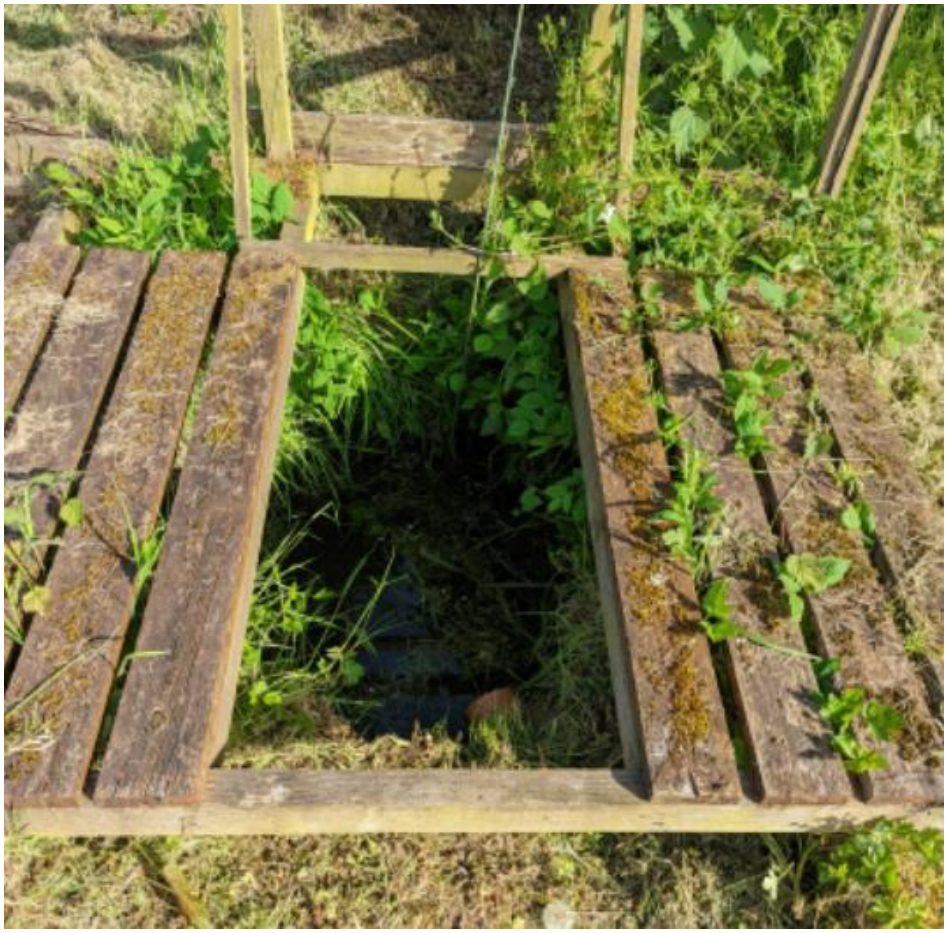
Red ring is the location of the open drainage ditch

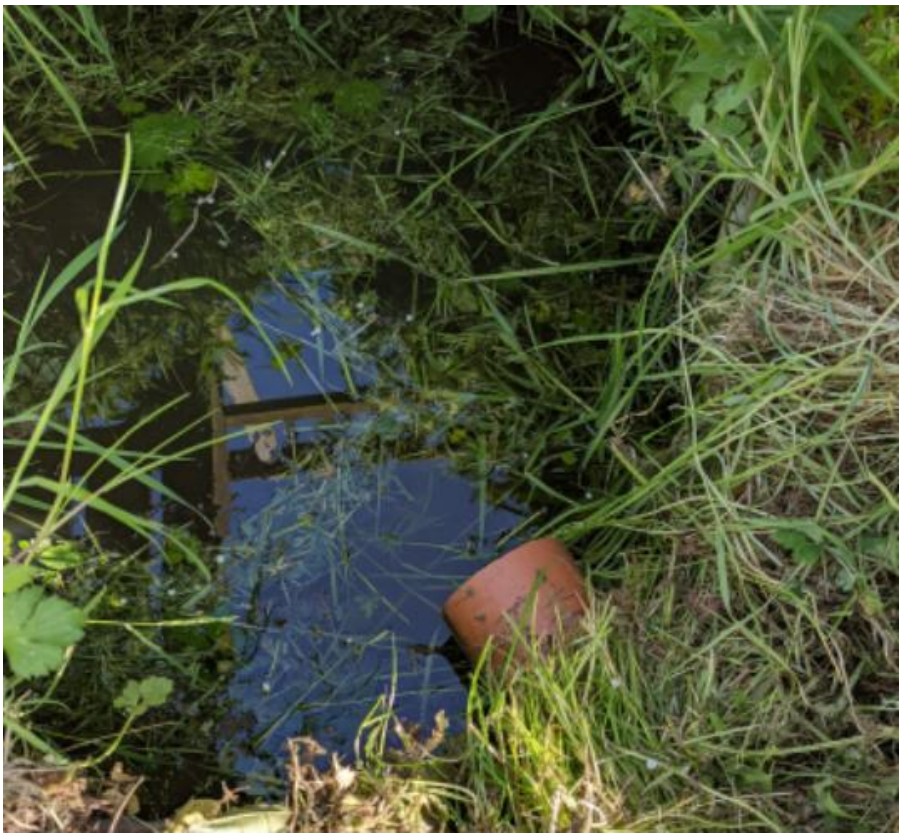


Showing proximity to the road / existing SW drainage system

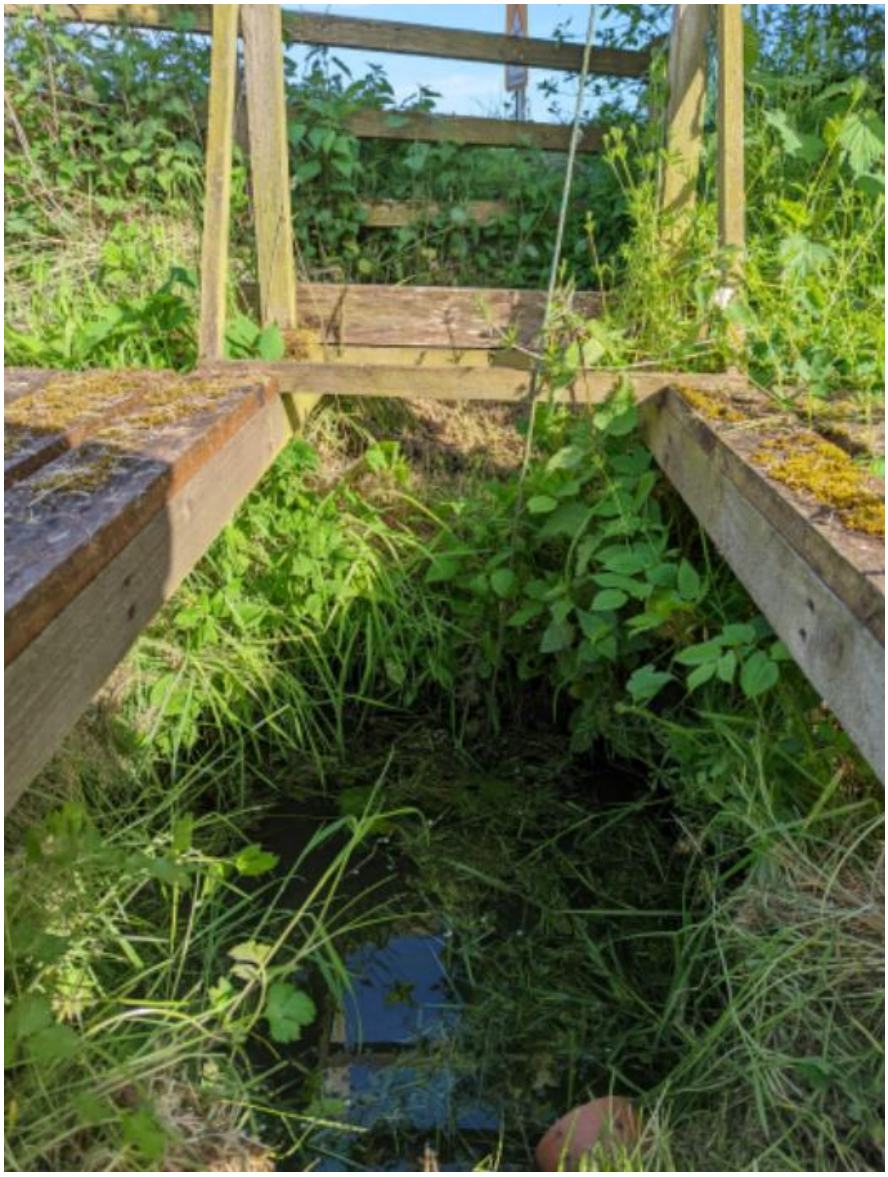


Drain Doctor Plumbing Unit 2a Plant Lane Business Park, Plant Lane, Burntwood WS7 3GN
T: 01922 477716 W: www.draindoctorplumbers.co.uk **E:** info@draindoctorplumbers.co.uk





Drain Doctor Plumbing Unit 2a Plant Lane Business Park, Plant Lane, Burntwood WS7 3GN
T: 01922 477716 W: www.draindoctorplumbers.co.uk **E:** info@draindoctorplumbers.co.uk



There has been some relatively recent changes in legislation arounf off-mains drainage:

The requirements changed on 1 January 2015. If your system was installed and discharging before 31 December 2014 you have an ‘existing discharge’. If your system was installed and discharging on or after 1 January 2015 you have a ‘new discharge’.
If your discharge causes pollution you may be committing an offence. The Environment Agency will give you advice to help you fix the problem. If your discharge continues to cause pollution the Environment Agency may take enforcement action against you.

Rules for existing and new treatment systems:
Use the correct treatment system
You must use a small sewage treatment plant to treat the sewage if you’re discharging to a watercourse such as a river or stream. A sewage treatment plant (also known as a package treatment plant) treats sewage to a higher standard than a septic tank.

Drain Doctor Plumbing Unit 2a Plant Lane Business Park, Plant Lane, Burntwood WS7 3GN
T: 01922 477716 W: www.draindoctorplumbers.co.uk **E:** info@draindoctorplumbers.co.uk

Discharges from septic tanks directly to watercourses are not allowed under the general binding rules.
You should get advice from a competent service engineer if you need help understanding what:

- treatment system you have
- you are required to do under the general binding rules

British Water provides a list of accredited service engineers. There may be other competent service engineers.
If your septic tank discharges directly to a watercourse, you need to do one of the following as soon as possible:

- connect to mains sewer
- install a drainage field (also known as an infiltration system) so the septic tank can discharge to ground instead
- replace your septic tank with a small sewage treatment plant

You must have plans in place to carry out this work within a reasonable timescale, typically 12 months.
You cannot use a septic tank conversion unit or a reedbed for discharging effluent to a watercourse under the general binding rules. Instead you must either upgrade to a package treatment plant or apply for a permit so that the Environment Agency can assess the risk of using this sort of system in your location. If you apply for a permit you will need to include supporting information to show that the treatment system will treat your sewage to an appropriate standard.
Buy or sell a property with a septic tank
If you are buying or selling a property with a septic tank that discharges directly to a watercourse, you should agree with the buyer or seller who will be responsible for the replacement or upgrade of the existing treatment system. You should agree this as a condition of sale.
New sewer: first time sewerage scheme
If more than one property needs to replace or upgrade their sewerage system, your sewerage undertaker may have a legal duty to build and pay for a new sewer for you to connect to. This is known as a first time sewerage scheme. Contact your sewerage undertaker to find out how to apply. Contact the Environment Agency if you:

- cannot identify how to make an application to your sewerage undertaker
- want to appeal your sewerage undertaker's decision

Your treatment system must meet the right British Standard
Your treatment system must meet the relevant British Standard that was in force at the time of installation. The standards currently in force for new systems are:

- BS EN 12566 for small sewage treatment plants
- BS 6297:2007 for drainage fields

Your treatment plant met the British Standard in place at the time of installation if:

- it has a CE mark
- the manual or other documentation that came with your tank or treatment plant has a certificate of compliance with a British Standard
- it's on British Water's list of approved equipment

You can also ask the company that installed your equipment to confirm that it complies with the British Standard that was in place at the time the equipment was installed.
If your treatment system was installed before 1983 there was no British Standard in place. You do not need to do anything to meet the British Standard requirement. You must still meet all the other general binding rules.
Your treatment system must be installed properly and have enough capacity
Your treatment system must be large enough to handle the maximum amount of sewage it will need to treat. If you install a new small sewage treatment plant you must check with the installer that it meets the sizing requirements in British Water's Flows and Loads 4 guidance.

Drain Doctor Plumbing Unit 2a Plant Lane Business Park, Plant Lane, Burntwood WS7 3GN
T: 01922 477716 W: www.draindoctorplumbers.co.uk **E:** info@draindoctorplumbers.co.uk

If the amount of sewage the system needs to treat increases (for example, because you've extended your property or connected an additional property) you must make sure the treatment system is still big enough. You must also recalculate the maximum daily volume of your discharge and apply for a permit if it is more than 5 cubic metres (5,000 litres) a day.

Your treatment system must be installed in line with the manufacturer's specification (the instruction manual or technical set of requirements that comes with the equipment).

If you're in a tidal area (an area where the water level changes according to tides), you must make sure the top end of the pipe that releases sewage is below the 'mean low water spring mark'.

This is the average low water mark at the time of spring tides. Find out the low water mark where you live on the Admiralty tide tables.

Contact the Environment Agency if your exact location is not shown.

Have your treatment system regularly emptied and maintained

You must get the sludge which builds up in your sewage treatment plant removed (desludged) before it exceeds the maximum capacity. As a minimum, you should have your treatment system desludged once a year or in line with the manufacturer's instructions.

The company you use to dispose of your waste sludge must be a registered waste carrier. Ask the company to confirm this when you arrange to have your tank emptied or ask the tanker driver for a copy of the company's waste carrier's certificate.

You should have your treatment system regularly maintained in line with the manufacturer's instructions. If these are not available, ask your local maintenance company for advice.

You must have your treatment system repaired or replaced if it is not in good working order, for example if it has:

- **leaks**
- cracks in tank walls or pipes
- blocked pipes
- **signs that the effluent is not draining properly (pools of water around the drainage point)**
- **sewage smells**
- a failed motor
- a failed pump
- a failed electrical supply

Anyone who carries out maintenance on your system must be competent. Competent people include those on British Water's list of Accredited Service Engineers.

You sell your property - tell the new owner about the sewage treatment system

If you sell your property, you must tell the new operator (the owner or person responsible for the sewage treatment plant) in writing that a sewage discharge is in place.

Include:

- a description of the treatment plant and drainage system
- the location of the main parts of the treatment plant, drainage system and discharge point
- details of any changes made to the treatment plant and drainage system
- details of how the treatment plant should be maintained, and the maintenance manual if you have one
- maintenance records if you have them

You stop using your treatment system - make sure it's properly decommissioned

You must remove anything that could cause pollution (for example, remaining sludge) when you stop using a septic tank or sewage treatment plant.

Drain Doctor Plumbing Unit 2a Plant Lane Business Park, Plant Lane, Burntwood WS7 3GN
T: 01922 477716 W: www.draindoctorplumbers.co.uk **E:** info@draindoctorplumbers.co.uk

This does not apply if you only stop using the equipment temporarily, for example if your property is empty.
You can ask a maintenance company for advice on how to decommission your septic tank or treatment plant properly.
Building regulations and planning approval
You must have building regulations approval if you have or are planning to install a new sewage treatment plant. You may also need planning permission.
Check if the discharge point is in or near a designated sensitive area
If you have or are planning to start a new discharge to a surface water in or near to a designated sensitive area, you must apply for a permit.
You will need a permit if the new discharge will be in or within 500 metres of any:

- special areas of conservation
- special protection areas
- Ramsar sites
- biological sites of special scientific interest
- freshwater pearl mussel population
- designated bathing water
- protected shellfish water

You will also need a permit if the new discharge will be in or within:

- 200 metres of an aquatic local nature reserve
- 50 metres of a chalk river or aquatic local wildlife site

Contact the Environment Agency to check if you're in or near a designated sensitive area and to find out if you need a permit.
Make sure the surface water has flow
New discharges are not allowed to a ditch or a surface water that does not contain flowing water throughout the whole year. That is unless there is a drought or an unusually long period of dry weather.
New discharges to watercourses that seasonally dry up are not allowed under the general binding rules, nor are discharges to enclosed lakes or ponds.
Contact the Environment Agency if you are unsure whether the surface water you want to discharge to is suitable.
Using a partial drainage field - check it meets the requirements
A partial drainage field (also known as a seasonal soakaway) is a system for discharging to water which allows effluent to drain into the ground when levels in the watercourse are low, and into the watercourse when groundwater levels are high.
If you're using a partial drainage field for a new discharge, you must install it within 10 metres of the edge of the watercourse and you must only use it with a small sewage treatment plant, not a septic tank.
See the full list of general binding rules published by the government.
If there are any rules you cannot comply with contact the Environment Agency to discuss what you need to do.

Whilst there is an awful lot of information to understand here, I have highlighted in **BOLD** the areas which I believe to be relevant.

- There is an argument to say that this existing solution is creating pollution
    - It expels in to an open 'ditch'

Drain Doctor Plumbing Unit 2a Plant Lane Business Park, Plant Lane, Burntwood WS7 3GN
T: 01922 477716 W: www.draindoctorplumbers.co.uk **E:** info@draindoctorplumbers.co.uk

    - It is within 2m of the road where there is an existing SW drainage system. This is not currently serviceable and as a consequence floods over on to the land where the 'ditch' is located, causing waste levels to rise and often overspill / permeate the roadway.
- A septic tank conversion to the existing system (or the existing reed bed) would not be suitable for discharging effluent to a water course (river or stream). The existing system does not do this as such, but if the waste is compromising the surface water drainage on the adjacent road, then by default it will be compromising the water course.
- The treatment system is not in good working order, neither has it historically been well maintained. For that reason alone it is in a state of disrepair and should be replaced

We have outlined costs in the accompanying document for a more 'fit-for-purpose' system to service Langley Cottage only. It is a fully compliant treatment plant with a suitable drainage field (TBC dependant on percolation test results).

Should you have any further questions, or need any more information or support regarding this project, please feel free to get in touch through our offices.

Yours sincerely,

RAScandrett

Richard Scandrett
DIRECTOR

Drain Doctor Plumbing Unit 2a Plant Lane Business Park, Plant Lane, Burntwood WS7 3GN
T: 01922 477716 W: www.draindoctorplumbers.co.uk **E:** info@draindoctorplumbers.co.uk