

Whinney Hill landfill – Frequently asked questions

This covers focus areas raised through the community which we hope will provide some context to how the site addresses these issues. We log and investigate all complaints to ensure that the measures we have in place are working as they should be.

Pests

Due to its nature, landfills can attract unwanted pests and vermin, such as seagulls, rats and flies. We work with external contractors who specialise in this subject who help to manage this for us as part of our plan.

Gulls

Within our Environmental Permit, we are required to use appropriate measures to minimise or prevent pests such as gulls from the site. As such we use a range of approved measures to scare them away from the site, which are monitored by the Environment Agency, including birds of prey, gas cannons and blank firing pistols. SUEZ employ a specialist pest control contractor to manage pests, and as part of this service we are able to use emerging technologies when they become available. We acknowledge that there has been an increase in gull activity at Whinney Hill, which we believe is due to a range of factors.

As there are a few protected species within the gull mass, and they fall within a protected zone due to the proximity to the Bowland Fells, we are very limited in terms of the options available to try to change their behaviour. As such, we have been taking advice from external stakeholders, including Natural England.

We recognise and apologise for the disturbance caused in the local community by the gulls, and we have listened to feedback from the community in relation to the timing of the gas cannons as well as trying to drive the birds away from the tipping face into alternative parts of the site as opposed to in the local community. We will continue to work to change the behaviour of the gulls with advice from Natural England.

We have limited the operation of the gas cannons and are installing hay bales behind the cannons to provide some noise screening. Unfortunately, our efforts to deter the gulls, as per our management plan, will inevitably generate some noise during the day.

Rats

We prevent rats from feeding and living within the waste through the use of compaction and the covering of waste each day.

We have humane traps around the edges of the site in the areas that we are currently tipping to allow us to assess activity, following community reports of an increase in rat activity. We have been advised by our pest control expert that there is currently no evidence of track marks from or to the site, and surrounding land, but we continue to monitor this as part of our management plan.

Flies

Our contractors perform fly checks and spray any areas identified on the landfill site as part of our management plan.

There are different species of flies, and those most commonly found feeding on landfill sites are different to those often found in communities/outside of landfill sites. They are also more prevalent during warmer weather.

Odour

Odour at a landfill site is primarily caused by the waste itself as it is travelling to and tipped off on site, which is predominantly household waste that you would find in your general waste bin at home. This is mitigated through the waste being compacted and covered each day. We also have odour masking spray units around the perimeter of the site near to the tipping area to help to reduce any off-site waste odours.

Unfortunately, the weather can impact landfill odours. We conduct daily odour checks, both on and off site in surrounding areas, which we record. These checks include wind strength and direction, and other environmental factors such as air pressure.

Site tidiness

As part of our site management plan, we conduct frequent litter picks around the perimeter of the site. We also have infrastructure on site to try to prevent litter leaving the site, including along the perimeter fencing.

We always investigate reports of litter, and have the ability to stop operations on site during periods of extreme weather such as in the recent high winds which damaged some of the preventative infrastructure on site.

We also have a wheel wash which is used by all vehicles exiting the site to prevent any excess mud or material leaving the site.

Community engagement

We strive to be a good neighbour to the communities that surround our operations.

We have always supported local community initiatives and fundraisers and will continue to do so.

We have future plans for the site to support schools and community groups with education around ways to reduce waste. In the meantime, we have a range of **educational resources** available via our website - <https://www.suez.co.uk/en-gb/our-offering/communities-and-individuals/education-tools-and-resources/stem-education-resources>

Landfill taxes also contribute towards the Government's Landfill Communities Fund which supports community and environmental projects close to landfill sites. In Lancashire, this is operated by the **Lancashire Environmental Fund** which is fully funded by SUEZ. It was set up in 1998 and has since contributed more than £25million to projects benefiting the local community across Lancashire.

In 2024, the fund supported five projects in Hyndburn with £112,886 donated. For more information about the fund or to apply for funding, please visit <https://www.lancsenfund.org.uk/>

We host a quarterly **community liaison group** which is an opportunity to hear about the operations at Whinney Hill, as well as to provide a transparent forum to raise any concerns on behalf of the local community. The group includes councillors and council representatives, as well as the Environment Agency and local residents.

Residents, local representatives and businesses are welcome to join the group - if you are interested, please contact us at whinneyhillfs.uk@suez.com.

Misinformation

There has been some misinformation regarding SUEZ' involvement in another landfill site in Fleetwood.

SUEZ previously owned and operated the landfill on Jameson Road in Fleetwood. Under SUEZ, the site stopped accepting waste in 2017 and was subsequently sold in 2023. The site was operated in accordance with its environmental permit and no issues that are currently being reported locally were reported during that timeframe. The problems being experienced now are not a result of previous operations or issues with previous infrastructure, as the new infrastructure is only necessary due to the site being reopened for waste acceptance.