

## PARISH COUNCIL 24 JUNE 2020

Thank you for this opportunity. I have been a farmer in Lytchett for the last 25 years and have lived here for 40. I am speaking tonight on behalf of some 20+ residents, most of whom have lived here for many years and some with a background in agriculture. I mention these facts to allay any thoughts that we are a group of incomers who know nothing about farming.

It may often seem that this is just a problem about manure spreading, a regular seasonal activity which local people should accept as normal. I want to give the Council 5 reasons why this is in no way normal and why after several years we have been driven to begin an unofficial campaign not just to complain but to try to find a solution.

1. THE SMELL of digestate is quite unlike manure, being not just obnoxious but nauseous to some people.
2. The smell is STRONG, WIDESPREAD AND PERSISTENT. In the first days after spreading it reaches throughout the village, invading our houses and even our clothing and washing, and making it impossible to open windows. After some days it will not affect the village centre but in the south it hangs in the air and is always noticeable when outdoors. This will last for some time depending on atmosphere. For example the recent spreading on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> June was very strong until the rain on the 18<sup>th</sup>, but despite this rain it is still noticeable now in the vicinity and may become more so with hot still weather. This claim can easily be checked by visiting Halls Rd..
3. The FREQUENCY of the spreading. From our observation this takes place 6/8 times a year on the two farms, continuous throughout the year. It is our opinion that this is driven as much by the needs of waste disposal as by the needs of farming.
4. Small black FLIES come into our homes after spreading.
5. SPREADING ON GROWING CROPS and allowing the digestate to lie on the ground as has happened in the last two weeks. All the above problems are amplified when this happens. If the digestate was quickly ploughed in there could be little to complain about. It is our contention that this is an unacceptable practice, infringing DEFRA guidelines '*you need to consider how close you are to populated areas*'. Moreover this is not a practice used by many or any other farmers. I have spoken to one farmer 5 miles from here who tells me he only sprays in autumn and spring, is very conscious of his neighbours and always ploughs it in in 24 hours.

We are not asking for the Council to endorse our point of view. We are asking for the Council to convene a limited, not public, meeting with the farmer, the landowner, councillors and some residents affected in order for all of us to be able to understand each other's interests and to share information to prevent misunderstandings. The DEFRA code in fact states the farmer '*should take steps to discuss with local authorities methods of delivery and application*'. On our part we intend to approach such a meeting in a constructive fashion in order to find an agreeable way forward for the future. We are all neighbours after all.