



In the last instance, on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2010, all of our rooms were occupied, every guest had their car parked in the car park and all of them ended up walking in the sewage. This resulted not only in compensation claims but I also had to scrub and disinfect all of the carpets in the accommodation as people had walked on them with contaminated footwear and I could not run the risk of guests walking barefoot over a carpet that had become a health hazard.

Whilst all of my guests who have been affected by this situation over the past two years have been very sympathetic that it is beyond my control and say that despite the sewage they have enjoyed their stay, understandably they have requested compensation for the inconvenience, damage and smell. It has also meant that whilst they would previously have returned for another visit, every guest is reluctant to do so in case there is any significant rainfall. The effect on our business trade has been even more detrimental, one of the selling points of our accommodation for business travellers is the relative safety of the parking next to the accommodation because of the amount of equipment left in vehicles overnight. It has taken a lot of hard work and persistence to get regular business customers from the likes of BT but due to two instances of sewage flooding when people from BT were staying they are no longer willing to use our accommodation. I have also lost a customer who used to stay with us every month because she needed to park near the accommodation and was no longer willing to risk the flooding from sewage.

Everytime that I have seen sewage overflowing I have contacted Anglian Water and the response has been less than satisfactory. I believe that the Kettleburgh Terminal Pumping Station is marked as a priority call-out for tankering and that a tanker should arrive within 4 hours of the overflow alarm being triggered. I know for a fact that in many cases this timescale has not been met, as when I have phoned due to sewage overflow the alarm must already have triggered but even after my phone call it is often much longer than 4 hours before a tanker arrives. In the last instance, the alarm was triggered at some time on the evening of the 25<sup>th</sup> August and it was logged that a tanker had been requested during the night but the first tanker did not arrive until approximately 16:00 hours on the 26<sup>th</sup> August. During all this delay, sewage continued to pour onto my property.

On Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> August, I requested a clean-up crew come to the property because the extent of the flooding was more than I could manage. I was informed that all the crews were extremely busy and that they had 5 days in which to respond to my request but the operator informed me she would do her best to get a team to us as soon as possible because I had more guests arriving on the Friday night. I was told that I would receive a phone call on the Friday morning to update me on the situation and let me know when the clean-up would take place. I did not receive a phone call so I phoned back on Friday afternoon to find out what was happening but just got the response that everyone was very busy, external flooding was not a priority and that they had 5 days in which to respond. I was also told that a Customer Response Manager would be calling me back within 4 hours but, not unsurprisingly, this did not happen. I phoned Anglian Water again on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> September because I had still not heard anything and no clean-up had taken place. I finally received a phone call from Anglian Water on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> September ensuring me that the clean-up would take place on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> September and also that a meeting would be arranged with his manager, both of these things have duly happened.

To date, I feel that I have been extraordinarily patient with Anglian Water having naively expected them to take some action to rectify this ongoing situation because, as their message on the emergency line states, "*their customers are very important to them.*" I have come to realise that the customer is only important to them if they make enough noise and constantly complain otherwise Anglian Water appears to have adopted the attitude of ignoring the customer and hoping they'll go away. I am no longer prepared to be ignored and as it would appear that no action is going to take place I am now insisting that this situation is rectified.