

News: Historic Sewer Vent Pipes get revamp



Daniel Bech, Cllr Elizabeth Thomas
& Stefan Wilkinson with contractors from Southern Water

Friday 4 August 2006:

Following a joint campaign between the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council as part of its Clean Neighbourhoods initiative, Southern Water has agreed to refurbish all 25 ornate cast iron sewer vent pipes in the town. Although the early 19th Century pipes are not listed, they are treasured by many local people.

The work will be carried out by Southern Water's contractors who will sand down the columns and repaint them, in the town colours of claret and grey so that they coordinate with other street furniture.

The vent pipes were initially installed at roadside locations to control the pressure that builds up in the sewers below and to this day, some of them still serve this purpose. In the late 19th Century many of the vent pipes were used as lampposts, first fitted with gas and in the early 20th Century, some were converted to electric power.

Cllr Elizabeth Thomas, Portfolio Holder for Planning, said: 'This is an excellent example of partnership working and shows that the Borough Council really do care about what the local community want.'

Daniel Bech, Chair of the Town Forum's "Brighten Up Royal Tunbridge Wells Focus Group", said: 'I find it amazing that Southern Water is restoring these visual amenities of past times and thus save some heritage of the town. With this we get rid of 25 grot spots in one go!'

Stefan Wilkinson, CFSC Customer Liaison for Southern Water, said: 'We are happy to help support the Clean Neighbourhoods initiative at Royal Tunbridge Wells. Southern Water works hard to keep the rivers and seas clean across the south and this is a great way to take part in something that will help improve the towns themselves as well.'