



**Albion Water**

## Knowle Village FAQs

### **Is Albion Water responsible for both my water and sewerage services?**

No, Portsmouth Water continues to be responsible for your water supply and billing, this has not changed. Albion Water is responsible for sewage treatment provision and for billing from 1st September 2009.

### **My property is part of a joint ownership scheme with a Housing Association, as part of my service charge I am already billed for sewerage, why are Albion Water also billing me?**

Unless an agreement exists between Albion and your landlord or managing agent, in which a third party recovers our sewerage charges from you, your sewerage services will now be billed directly to you by Albion Water. If such an agreement exists we will write to you to confirm this prior to our first billing run.

### **Does Albion's bill cover all sewerage services provided at Knowle?**

Albion's bill covers the provision of the public sewerage network, surface water disposal and sewage treatment for your property from the 1st September 2009. From this date, in the absence of alternative arrangements, you should no longer receive a charge for public sewerage services within your managing agent's service charge (although your service charge will continue to be payable under existing arrangements). However, you will continue to be liable for charges relating to the maintenance of private drains from Consort Property Management (formerly Peverel).

### **What is the status of Albion's adopted asset base at Knowle?**

Adoption is the process of transferring ownership of an asset from one company to another (in this case a developer to a licensed sewerage undertaker). Once sewers are adopted the roads under which they run may become adoptable by the Highways Agency.

Albion has adopted the sewage treatment works and a length of the main gravity sewer feeding into it, all other assets within Knowle Village are currently part of an ongoing adoption process. This process involves asset condition checks and the remediation of infrastructure that is unlikely to meet satisfactory standards of serviceability. If you would like specific information about a particular asset please contact our Customer Service Helpline on 0845 604 2355 or email us at [customerservices@albionwater.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@albionwater.co.uk).

### **What are private drains and sewers?**

A private drain is a pipe which carries foul and/or surface water from one property to a sewer. A private sewer is a pipe that collects and conveys foul and/or surface water from several properties and which has not been adopted by Albion Water. In an emergency, Albion Water is able to arrange clearance of blockages from both private drains/sewers and public sewers. If the blockage occurred in a private drain/sewer then those customers discharging to that drain or sewer will be financially liable for clearance costs.

### **What does the Standing Charge cover?**

Our standing charge covers a fixed fee for surface water management; the costs that we incur for customer billing, account maintenance, payment collection and answering enquiries.

### **What is the rateable value (RV)?**

The rateable value only applies to properties of a certain age. Each property was assessed by the local authority and given a rateable value under the 1973 Valuation Act; these were updated in March 1990. This value was based on a number of factors including the size of the property, its general condition and the availability of local services. It is not the same figure as your property's council tax band.

If your property has a rateable value (and no meter), your bill from Albion will be calculated on this basis and you will see 'rateable value (RV)' identified on your bill.

If you believe that we should be charging you by rateable value then please provide us with a copy of your most recent Portsmouth Water bill which will allow us to verify the figure and update our records.

### **I have a soakaway/surface water from my property runs directly into a river, can I claim back surface water drainage charges?**

A fixed fee to pay for surface water management is included within your standing charge. If you are able to prove to Albion's satisfaction (e.g. a surveyor's report) that your property does not have any surface water discharge connected to the sewerage system then a lower standing charge will be payable. Please check your bill to identify whether surface drainage has been charged prior to claiming a rebate - properties without surface drainage managed by Albion Water should already benefit from a reduced standing charge. In the event that grounds for a rebate are proven, Albion will reduce the standing charge in line with the fixed surface water element for the current and future charging years.

### **How much will I be charged for the sewerage provision to the property that I occupy?**

This will depend upon a number of factors, for example: whether or not your property has a meter, if your property has a rateable value, or if you qualify for special assistance. Please refer to our Scheme of Charges for further information. Alternatively contact our Customer Service Helpline on 0845 604 2355 or email us at [customerservices@albionwater.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@albionwater.co.uk)

### **Have I been charged VAT?**

Sewerage charges to both domestic and commercial customers do not normally attract VAT. VAT is charged at standard rate on the maintenance, cleaning, unblocking etc of sewers and drains. Where we charge VAT we will indicate clearly on your bill which elements attract VAT and the amount of VAT payable. If VAT is included on your account and you feel you should not be charged, please contact us.

### **I am having trouble paying my bill, what should I do?**

Should you find yourself in financial difficulty, requiring assistance to cover sewerage bills, Albion recommends that you contact our customer helpline to notify us without delay. Temporary arrangements could possibly be made to spread payments. We will check that you are on the most appropriate plan for your circumstances and we will recommend other organisations that may be able to offer you debt counselling services.

### **I receive benefits and I understand that I may be eligible for assistance with my sewerage charges, is this correct?**

You may qualify for our WaterSure tariff or Special Assistance Fund, depending upon your circumstances and account type, please contact our Customer Service Team and we will talk through the options with you.

### **I would like to have a water meter installed at my property, what do I need to do?**

If you wish to install a meter, arrangements should be made directly with Portsmouth Water (see 'Useful links' section of the 'Online services' web page). Portsmouth Water will then be responsible for meter readings, maintenance and testing.

### **I think that a mistake has been made on my bill, what should I do?**

Please contact our Customer Service Helpline and we will look into the matter and try to resolve it with you.

### **What do you use my personal information for?**

We may use information about you to:

- i) Provide you with sewerage services and give you information about your sewerage provision and related products.
- ii) Manage your account including collection and recovery of charges.