

Press Release

Water company installs ultrasonic system to kill off algae



ULTRASONIC sound waves are being used to kill off algae at an East Dorset reservoir.

Sembcorp Bournemouth Water (SBW) has installed an ultrasonic algae control system at Longham Lakes.

The system, supplied by Dutch company LG Sound, is used widely in mainland Europe but is the first to be installed by an English water company.

It uses underwater sound waves on scientifically proven frequencies to eliminate common algae, including toxic blue-green algae.

The ultrasonic waves 'pop' the air bubbles in the algae causing it to lose buoyancy and sink to the bottom of the lake and die.

The environmentally-friendly system is run on solar energy, requires no chemicals and has no harmful effects for fish, water plants and insects.

Longham Lakes is integral to SBW's water supply process. The water in the lakes is abstracted from the Avon and Stour.

Algae growth in the lakes can cause blockages which is why SBW needed to find a 'green' solution to the problem.

Tim Latcham, Head of Water Supply, said the system was installed in February and has been fully operational since March.

"We're working closely with the supplier who is able to fine-tune the sound frequencies to deal with specific outbreaks of algae.

"It's early days and we haven't hit the peak time for algae but following the first significant outbreak, we've already seen a dramatic reduction which is very encouraging," said Tim.

The algae control system includes a master buoy and three slave buoys which are attached to three 60kg weights to keep them in place.

The master buoy measures water quality by collecting information every ten minutes including chlorophyll (indicating the level of algae), blue-green algae, water clarity (turbidity), pH (acidity), dissolved oxygen levels and temperature.