



Water cascading over Derwent Dam wall

Conclusions

Since privatisation, emphasis by the water industry has not surprisingly been on profitability. After all, companies are there to reward shareholders and encourage investment. In 2020/21, Severn Trent Water (STW) lost 414,600,000 litres water each day through leaks, that is 151,329,000,000 litres each year. In the Upper Derwent Valley (UDV), this is more than 3 times times the total volume of Ladybower, Derwent and Howden reservoirs disappearing between collection and delivery through the tap. If STW fixed their leaks, no devastation of the UDV would be necessary.

Large civil engineering projects are disruptive and capital and carbon intensive. They are unlikely to stand up to rigorous, academic sustainability analysis. These are preferred, arguably, because of the perceived beneficial publicity, reputational gains and Government guarantees to support the funding.

In their literature, Derwent and Howden Dam walls have been described by STW themselves as magnificent structures. They are prime examples of the greatest civil engineering achievements of the twentieth century and are the most impressive Man-made structures of the Peak District National Park. They are Grade II listed, historic structures of Victorian Gothic design and of considerable industrial architectural significance. They have been described as iconic jewels of the Peak District National Park and are specifically visited every year by civil engineers from around the world to view the outstanding quality of Victorian design and Edwardian workmanship.

STW is a business and so is mandated to be profitable leading to increased dividends and senior staff bonuses. STW have paid out £223 million to shareholders since 2010. Dividends from Ordinary Shares have increased from 45p in 2000 to 102.14p in 2022.

In 2022, the Chief Executive Officer of STW received a rise in pay of £830,000 to £3,900,000 per year of which almost £3 million were perks and bonuses related to performance

If Ofwat approve the proposal, STW have said that they will seek a Development Consent Order (DCO) from the Government and this will be signed off by a Secretary or Minister of State (probably Defra) giving the go-ahead. A DCO confers all the necessary consents/powers to enable the scheme to proceed, including planning permission, compulsory purchase powers, authority for highway and street works, listed building consents etc. It means that it would not be necessary to secure a raft of different consents from different bodies. The UDVRE will devastate the heart of the Peak District National Park which is enjoyed by over 13 million visitors each year.

The damage to the Peak District National Park, to listed structures which provide a memorial to the sacrifices made during

World War II and the upper part of a UNESCO river are unacceptable.

If raising reservoir levels are the chosen options, visitors must realise that the reasons they come to the UDV i.e. the dam walls and all that they mean - would no longer be there. Whichever option is chosen, this wonderfully wild area would suffer cultural, ecological and biodiversity loss which can never be replaced.

The danger is that this will set a precedent in a very sensitive moorland landscape at the entrance to the Dark Peak. Consequently, all national parks will be open to major developments such as new quarries, wind farms, solar array farms and if reinstated, fracking.