

Outgoing Chair's statement



In this my final Chair's Statement for SES Water I look back on the past year, and indeed the past decade, and I am greatly encouraged at what the Company has achieved during some very challenging periods.

“I am delighted Dave's significant knowledge and experience of the Company and sector will continue to benefit the Board, our colleagues and customers. He will be an outstanding Chair.”

Jeremy Pelczer
Outgoing Chair

Getting to know the people in the Company over the years has been a real highlight for me. As a smaller company there has always been a local feel to it, especially given a lot of our colleagues also live in the area. That feeling really comes across when you see the care and passion everyone puts into their work.

The Company has always been both community focused and customer-centric. However, there is always more that we can, and must do, to continuously improve our service to our customers and I am confident this will remain a very high priority moving forward.

Launching our new billing system in September last year was a huge milestone for the Company and is just one example of how our programme of digital transformation is improving the experience for our customers, as well as our engagement with them.

There have also been some really important roles introduced into the business in recent years, as we have bolstered both the executive and senior leadership teams, as well as technical specialists, to ensure we meet the challenge of delivering a resilient and sustainable Business Plan.

I would also like to thank our Wholesale Services Director Tom Kelly for his sustained contribution to our resilient operational performance.

Just as important is our commitment to protecting our environment and doing all we can to minimise our impact on it. Launching our net zero carbon route map last summer is a great example of this work in action as we look to achieve net zero by 2030. It is also very pleasing to see the continued recognition we are getting for encouraging biodiversity across our sites, including being awarded our second Biodiversity Benchmark, and also the continued expansion in our fleet of electric vehicles.

As noted above, I know we have areas to improve upon, most notably with our C-MeX and D-MeX scores, but I know a lot of work is being put in behind the scenes to give a better customer experience and help us rise up the rankings.

There are also a number of areas culturally we continue to strengthen, including health and safety and operational resilience. It was great to see us being recognised earlier this year with a Gold Award from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents

(RoSPA), a testament to the systems, processes and teams that have been developed to put health and safety at the heart of the Company. It was good to see recognition for the level of support provided when it comes to mental health wellbeing. That said, complacency can be the greatest barrier to consistent Health, Safety and Wellbeing performance. Therefore, we are always extremely keen to ensure a relentless high level of awareness is evident in this critical aspect of the business operations.

We are also nearing the completion of our water supply resilience programme that means by 2025 every property in our supply area can be supplied by more than one treatment works if needed.

When it comes to the water industry overall there are of course some challenging times ahead, not least with regards to the investigations by Ofwat and the Environment Agency into non-compliant operations in relation to sewage treatment. Even for companies like ourselves, which don't treat wastewater, the impact of this will not go unnoticed.

We are also still emerging from the pandemic and navigating our road to recovery from that, just as the rest of the sector is. In the prior year we deferred the dividend payment twice due to the impact of COVID-19 and are grateful our shareholders have been so supportive of this view. Despite the wider impacts of COVID-19 on our revenues, I'm pleased to see we remain financially resilient, while still being able to deliver for our customers.

I do feel the biggest opportunity for the Company over the next five to ten years is the advancement of technology and innovation. With significant investment in the new customer billing platform and leakage detection technology across the network, the Company is well placed to provide an even better service to its customers in the future. This also of course depends on supporting employees with the right training and investment in their personal development.

I look back on the past nine years with very fond memories and pride at what the Company has achieved in that time. While there is always some sadness in moving on, and I will certainly miss the people in the business, it is the right time to move on after three consecutive terms of 3 years each.

The Company is very fortunate to have Dave Shemmans as its new Chair and I know he is ideally suited for the role. Given that he has already served as a non-executive director on the Board for a number of years now, I know the future at SES Water is a bright one with him taking the baton. It is extremely encouraging for me to know that, with Dave as Chair, Ian Cain as CEO and the tremendous team at SES Water, the business is in safe hands and I am excited to follow its future success.

Jeremy Pelczer
Outgoing Chair

Dave Shemmans (left) and Jeremy Pelczer (right)

