



Earlier today environment councillor Daisee Aguilera took part in a Sant Ferran presentation of a pilot programme to track water use remotely. With Eduardo del Castillo, head of the Balearic arm of Aqualia, and Luis López, the company's regional production chief, the demo got under way at 11.30am in the plenary hall of the Formentera Council's central office.

The smart tracking system of real-time, daily controls eliminates the need for manual checks of the metres, thus allowing remote, automatic readings to be sent directly, every eight seconds, to a central processing unit at Aqualia. Data on consumption travels back to the unit for processing and cost calculation by a management programme.

A plus for users

The new system carries many consumer advantages, first the elimination of house calls and, by extension, the need to estimate readings. Detection of internal leaks can provide early indicators to possible equipment failures and help avoid ballooning bills. By highlighting irregular metre activity and delivering hourly breakdowns on water use, the previously unavailable technology enables technicians to pin down leaks owing to breakage or fraud.

Mr del Castillo said the enhanced efficiency of real-time tracking would translate into increased sustainability and greener consumption habits, not to mention a safer, more secure management of the water supply—"particularly important here on Formentera," he added.

Mr López cited 393,600 remote readings of 205 metres in the first three months since the programme was launched. In 2016, the total number of manual readings in all of Formentera was 11,200.

As for the system's ability to detect leaks, López pointed to five cases already spotted in Sant Ferran this year. The average loss of each, said the Aqualia spokesman, was 17 litres (l) per hour, "the equivalent of 12,240l per month and 146,880l annually". The town's remote tracking system, which produces readings of various manufacturer models and allows for operation across a local interface, also cuts out the need to periodically renew third-party licence

agreements.

Aguilera, for her part, assured there would be no direct impact on water rates and pledged that fuller data on the supply grid would make for better return on Formentera's investment.

In the councillor's words, "this innovative system hands municipal waterworks detailed, objective input on water use in the area that will be instrumental to defining future infrastructure investment. Privy to irregularities like spikes in use or malfunctioning equipment, consumers will have the tools to avoid wasting water".

Using the Smart Aqua app, Sant Ferran residents will soon be able to see their water use broken down by the hour, even tracking consumption remotely.