



the newsletter for AWE's neighbours

# Connect

## Our responsible business commitment

AWE launched its first Responsible Business Report in November.

But what exactly is a 'responsible business'? AWE's Julie Lane explains: "I think most people are familiar with the idea of corporate social responsibility and the responsible business concept builds on that, but in a more concrete way.

"It's about capturing how a business is committed to working in an ethical, sustainable way, how it invests in its people, the way it works with communities and suppliers, plus how it gives back and reduces environmental impact.

"The report focuses on those issues highlighted as important from our materiality assessment. This is a consultation with our stakeholders which helps us target themes that are important, not

only to the business, but also our stakeholders (find out more on the next page).

"The report also sets out how we're aligning our Responsible Business areas with seven of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, demonstrating how we're contributing to a greater purpose globally," says Julie.

"Of course, health and safety are at the heart of what we do – so it's imperative we adhere to the highest standards of quality, health, safety, security and environmental management."

As Julie points out, an organisation that works in a responsible way is more resilient and able to meet not only current demands, but future economic, social and environmental changes. Part of this means having a

workforce that is as diverse as possible – we want the best people out there, regardless of gender or background.

You can view the report at the Responsible Business section of our website [www.awe.co.uk/responsible-business](http://www.awe.co.uk/responsible-business)



There's more on our diversity and inclusion work on pages 10-11

WISE 1 OF THE MILLION



**Preeya**  
Project Manager, AWE

Preeya works within the heart of AWE to support the business in delivering the UK's Nuclear Deterrent Programme

#1ofTheMillion

Project manager Preeya joined in WISE's celebration of 1 million women in STEM roles in the UK

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**WELCOME TO THE WINTER EDITION OF CONNECT, AWE'S COMMUNITY NEWS MAGAZINE**

2020 has proved to be a year like no other. We've all had to adapt and look at ways of doing things differently and AWE is no different.

The pandemic has proved a catalyst for change, with many organisations re-evaluating their impact. Our lead story highlights a first for AWE with the launch of our Responsible Business Report that sets out how we operate as a business and manage our long-term impacts on society and the environment.

This edition highlights how our Charity Fund and employees have helped some local organisations that provide essential support to others during these turbulent times. We've enabled local charities to put their donations towards PPE or supporting the additional demands on their invaluable services.

The outreach work we do with local schools can no longer be face-to-face, so is moving online but should still enable some great engagement with staff and students.

We wish you and your family well during these difficult times. As always, we welcome your feedback on this issue and suggestions for future editions.

**The Editor**

## Responsibility's several strands

A crucial part of the responsible business process involved AWE conducting a materiality assessment to gain an understanding of what is most important to its key stakeholders and to AWE as an organisation.

The insight gained from this assessment helped pinpoint priority issues that will inform and shape our future responsible business activities.

There are several strands in AWE's responsible business approach, ranging from working with the local community through education partnerships, community outreach, charitable donations and a volunteer programme, to ensuring suppliers observe high standards of

sustainability and ethical employment practices.

For AWE, social value is high on the list. This sees us working closely with education, community and charity partners, to raise awareness of STEM careers and academic opportunities. In addition, our investment in skills and training and dual focus on reducing environmental impact and enhancing biodiversity are valued highly by both external and internal stakeholders. These areas are also important to potential employees, suppliers and community partners, helping to make sure AWE is recognised as a great organisation to work for and to do business with.

**There's more about AWE's work with education partners on page 12**

**You can read how we've continued to support the local community and charities throughout the Covid-19 pandemic on pages 6-8**



**We know from the results of our materiality assessment, which identified the key social and environmental issues for AWE, where we can make the biggest impacts**

## Supplier partnerships reducing our footprint

Part of our commitment to be a responsible business involves us focusing on sustainable consumption. One way of achieving this goal is working with suppliers to reduce our resource footprint.

A great example of this has been our collaboration with Low Level Waste Repository Ltd (LLWR) over the safe and efficient disposal of low-level waste.

Our work with LLWR has seen the development of a service that is safe to operate, and one that returns metal to the supply chain and makes sure the volume of waste committed to disposal is minimised. This operation helps contribute to our goal of reducing impact and conserving resources.

More recently, through the LLWR metallic waste treatment framework, a competitive tender process was undertaken and Cyclife selected as preferred supplier. In collaboration with LLWR, our Waste Management team has worked with Cyclife to help prepare, lift and



**Low-level waste tanks being lifted for removal**

remove a number of low-level waste tanks off-site. Efficiencies surrounding this removal have seen a reduction in the volume of low-level waste for disposal and resources returned to the supply chain through metal smelting.

AWE's Geoff Druce is delighted with this approach: "An immense team effort and cross-company working has resulted in greater efficiencies for waste management and seen a reduction in our operational impact and resource footprint.

"This collaboration on waste management will continue so we can reap the environmental and efficiency benefits, while operating in a safe way that meets our regulatory requirements."

## Positive feedback to electric vehicle pilot

UK legislation to ban the sale of internal combustion engine-vehicles by 2030 will result in a rise in the number of electric vehicles (EVs) on the road.

In fact, by 2050, forecasts predict there will be 35 million electric vehicles on the road in the UK. With businesses under pressure to significantly reduce their carbon footprint and find greener ways of using energy, it makes sense to research ways of incorporating this into business planning.

As a result, many businesses are considering whether to introduce EV charging points in their workplaces. AWE rolled out a pilot scheme at its Aldermaston site to understand how this would help reduce its overall carbon footprint, establish any required infrastructure development, and support those already with an EV while encouraging others to consider this type of vehicle.

AWE's Andrew Lowe says: "We had clear objectives for this pilot, one of which was to make sure we could provide this facility at a very low cost to users.

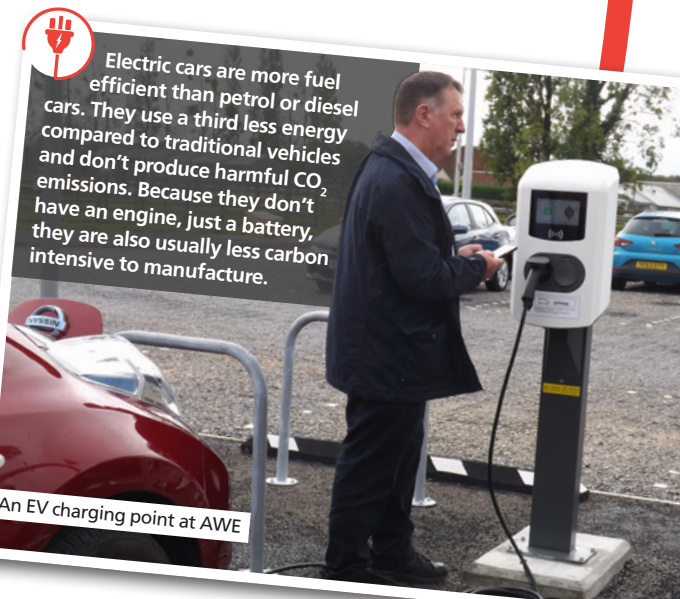
"The main driver, of course, was to support decarbonisation of the AWE visitor and staff transport network by enabling EV charging in the workplace.

"We know that one of the things that puts people off buying, or even using, EVs is anxiety around access to charging points. The charging

points we provided in the pilot can charge a small to medium-sized car in just a few hours.

"We see other benefits as well. For example, it will improve local air quality, be accessible to both AWE staff and visitors, and hopefully prove a positive factor for employee recruitment and retention.

"We've had positive feedback from users during the pilot, so now we have to look at how this could be implemented across our sites."



**Electric cars are more fuel efficient than petrol or diesel cars. They use a third less energy compared to traditional vehicles and don't produce harmful CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Because they don't have an engine, just a battery, they are also usually less carbon intensive to manufacture.**

**An EV charging point at AWE**



AWE offers around 80 apprenticeships every year, with more than 600 former apprentices currently employed by the company

## Academy's 'fantastic recognition'

The awards keep rolling in for our Skills Academy, with our apprenticeship team celebrating another successful year...

During 2020 AWE was honoured at an awards ceremony celebrating outstanding achievements in the apprenticeship market.

At the virtual ceremony in September, we were named as one of the Top 100 employers by RateMyApprenticeship – a review-based platform to help those seeking apprenticeships.

This online platform is based on student-written reviews and

provides genuine apprenticeship experiences – from companies such as AWE – to help young people consider their options after school or college.

Commenting on the announcement, Marcus Hutchings from the Academy says: "It's fantastic to have been recognised by our own apprentices in this way and reflects our commitment to development and offering



opportunities to grow and build a career.

"We're incredibly proud of the results achieved by all the young people on our programmes and find them all incredibly rewarding to work with."

### PHYSICS ACHIEVEMENT

The Skills Academy has received the Apprenticeship Employer Award from the Institute of Physics in recognition of our commitment and contribution to scientific and engineering apprenticeship schemes, and the positive outcomes that apprentices bring to the organisation.



### EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR SUCCESS

To round off an incredible year, we were proud to receive the QA Award as Macro Employer of the Year winner for the South East region at this year's National Apprenticeship Awards.

All of these awards are further endorsement of AWE's apprenticeships that are already rated Outstanding by Ofsted.



# You can learn and earn in our apprentice family

If you, or someone you know, wants to become part of our apprenticeship family, then there is still time to apply. Our apprentices all come in via different routes with their own preferences and passions. But don't just take our word for it – here are some of their stories...

### MEGAN LAB TECHNICIAN

Megan, who recently completed her Lab Technician apprenticeship, decided to study with AWE as she found us more accommodating due to laboratory experience not being an essential requirement. Coming straight out of A-levels, Megan didn't fancy doing further textbook learning and opted to earn money while she was learning and gain hands-on experience. She's loved the variety of work offered during her apprenticeship and the amount of knowledge she's gained throughout it.



### MARK CONTROL AND INSTRUMENTATION



Mark started out on his apprenticeship slightly later than some of his colleagues, joining us in his mid-twenties. It was the chance for lots of practical experience that appealed to Mark. Since starting, he's particularly enjoyed the networking opportunities our apprenticeships offer, with the chance to meet people from different trades who can offer advice and guidance. Already, Mark is looking to the future and possibly studying an HNC or HND later on.

### TANSY ELECTRICAL MAINTENANCE

Tansy didn't particularly like formal education and wanted an interesting environment to work in that offered hands-on experience. Since starting her apprenticeship, she's enjoyed learning in the workshop and discovering a range of new skills. She likes the different career paths and options that gaining an apprenticeship offers. Tansy's advice to anyone considering an AWE apprenticeship is 'go for it'!



### CONSIDERING AN APPRENTICESHIP?

These are just some of the roles available:

- Business administration
- Civil engineering
- Electronic maintenance
- Lab technicians
- Quality inspectors
- Precision machining
- Mechanical maintenance
- Control and instrumentation
- Technical author
- Electrical maintenance
- Mechatronics

Check out our website for more details and how to apply – but be quick! Visit [www.awe.co.uk/careers/future-careers/apprentice-scheme](http://www.awe.co.uk/careers/future-careers/apprentice-scheme)

2020 has been a difficult year for many, but particularly for charities who have seen their activities and fundraising seriously impacted by Covid-19. AWE and its staff have made a series of donations and found ways of supporting local charities so they can continue their great work during such turbulent times...

## SHOWING OUR SUPPORT

CONTINUED

### Oliver's charity feat

Throughout October, AWE's Oliver May ran 60 miles to raise money for Prostate Cancer UK. Having rediscovered his love for running, Oliver smashed his distance and fundraising targets, raising a brilliant £440 which was boosted by AWE's Charity Fund.



Oliver May

### Partnership is thriving

AWE's charity partner Thrive – one of the leading gardening for health charities – has been given a £5,000 donation to help it continue its invaluable work during Covid-19. The funding is going towards personal protective equipment (PPE) for staff and clients at its Reading centre and gardens.

Therapeutic horticulture programmes have recently resumed at Thrive and the PPE will assist with the phased return of client gardeners to a Covid-secure environment. The donation has helped provide face shields, masks, hand sanitiser and PPE consumables, plus gazebos allowing outside activities.

Explaining how the equipment will help, Paul Scott, Thrive's Regional Centre Manager in Reading, says: "All our centres have extensive safety measures in place and a critical component of these is ensuring we have sufficient PPE stocks to maintain social distancing guidelines."

This is the third year Thrive has been AWE's charity partner. The charity's trained horticultural therapists

work with clients so they can enjoy the health benefits gardening and spending time with nature can bring. The charity's clients have a wide range of conditions, including physical or learning disabilities, mental health support needs, sensory loss or autism.

You can find out more about Thrive's work at [www.thrive.org.uk](http://www.thrive.org.uk)

In addition to the donation, AWE staff have also been busy fundraising for Thrive. Simon Roberts has handed over £150 this year as a result of running a second-hand book sale at AWE. As Simon explains: "I started off selling my unwanted books, which proved a simple way of raising money for AWE's charity partners. However, other staff started to donate their books, as well as buying them, so it's turned into a bring and buy sale. Over time, we've raised around £700, which has helped boost our charity partner's funds and supported their great work."



One of Thrive's client gardeners

### Conservation work benefits 'outdoor escape'

Greenham and Crookham Commons, near Newbury, is a valued nature conservation area and public recreation space enjoyed by many in the local community, including walkers, cyclists and nature groups. Over the years, it's offered a great open space for many to boost their mental and physical wellbeing and has proved a welcome outdoors escape for many during the pandemic.

This area of open grassland and heathland forms the largest continuous tract of open heath in Berkshire and the Greenham and Crookham Conservation Volunteers (GCCV) help maintain and improve the commons.

Following a request from one of

its volunteers Steve Gales, who works at AWE, a donation from our Charity Fund has allowed the purchase of tools to help the group's conservation work. This has helped GCCV buy clearing tools such as pruning saws and lopping shears, along with some heavy-duty tools for maintenance of the commons.

Steve and his partner Christelle both volunteer with GCCV's conservation work on a monthly basis and regularly run there, taking advantage of the trails at the commons. Steve says: "The tools will help with GCCV's conservation work of clearing and maintaining this

invaluable local space. In particular, the heavy-duty tools will help the volunteers maintain the infrastructure of paths, gates, fences, boardwalks and footpath signs at the commons."

The commons are a haven for wildlife, particularly rare ground nesting birds, so this work is very much in keeping with AWE's Biodiversity Action Plan 2020-25 to increase local biodiversity.



Volunteers installing a gatepost



Steve Gales and his partner Christelle regularly help with the conservation work

## SHOWING OUR SUPPORT

### 'Timely' donation boosts advice team



Three of the Tadley Citizens Advice team making use of their screen dividers

Citizens Advice in Tadley has benefited from a donation from AWE's Charity Fund to help them operate during the pandemic. The donation helped purchase PPE consumables along with screen dividers for use at desks, allowing the Citizens Advice team to continue providing advice, support and information to local people.

The donation was timely as, nationally, Citizens Advice has seen a significant demand on its services to help people navigate the worst impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

The new equipment will contribute to a Covid-secure working environment at the Tadley office as Rachel Campbell, Chief Officer at Citizens Advice Tadley, explains: "This has allowed us to purchase new screens, so we are ready for some of our amazing home-working advisers to safely return to the office and for our new volunteers to come in for training and to see how we work."

### Foodbank support 'amazingly generous'

With foodbanks up and down the country facing a far greater demand due to the economic hardship caused by Covid-19, AWE's Charity Fund has made a £1,000 donation to the Basingstoke branch.

Basingstoke Foodbank is part of a national network, co-ordinated by the Trussell Trust, working to combat poverty and hunger across the UK. AWE's contribution has gone towards providing local emergency food and support to those in need. The charity and its volunteers distribute food parcels containing nutritionally balanced, non-perishable food for individuals and families.

Phil Thomas, Basingstoke Foodbank's Chair of Trustees, says: "This amazingly generous donation to the foodbanks in Basingstoke and Tadley from everyone at AWE is a fantastic demonstration of community spirit, and will help us continue to supply crisis food to those most in need in Basingstoke and surrounding areas."

AWE and its staff have supported foodbanks in Hampshire and Berkshire for some years through financial donations and contributions to food collection. Since 2015, AWE has supported the Trussell Trust's Christmas hamper collection and donated on average 1.5 tonnes of food each year.

More recently, AWE's Charity Fund also supported West Berkshire Newbury Foodbank, making a £1,000 donation.



Food is sorted by one of the foodbank's volunteers

### E-book celebrates 70 years of service

During 2020, AWE celebrated 70 years of service to our national safety and security. Details of our heritage and achievements have been included in an e-book – this online album contains some amazing archive footage and historical facts, plus our work with communities and within the world of innovation.

Some notable visitors feature in the e-book, with rare footage of a speech from then Prime Minister Harold Macmillan while visiting AWRE in 1957 and on-site pictures of the royal visit from Her Majesty the Queen and HRH the Duke of Edinburgh in 1979.

The book can be found within the Our History pages of AWE's website at [www.awe.co.uk/about-us/our-history/](http://www.awe.co.uk/about-us/our-history/)



### AWE transferring to government ownership

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has announced that AWE plc will transfer to government ownership, becoming an arm's-length body owned wholly by the MOD.

On 2 November, the Secretary of State for Defence Ben Wallace announced that the contract with Lockheed Martin, Jacobs and Serco

(AWE Management Ltd) would be terminated next year, as of 30 June, 2021.

AWE plc will work closely with the MOD and with AWE Management Limited to ensure a smooth transition. It will focus on the continued safe and secure operation of AWE sites and

maintaining progress on its critical programme.

A transition team has been appointed to manage the transfer from a shareholder-operated organisation to the new arm's-length body, which will come into existence on 1 July, 2021.

### Visionary celebrated

We celebrated a pioneering mathematician and the world's first computer programmer on Ada Lovelace Day in October.

The annual day is used to increase the profile of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and encourage more girls into STEM. Our graduates developed resource packs for local schools to deliver primary science activities.

For AWE employees, the graduates organised three online Q&As with women from across the business. More than 200 employees heard from panellists drawn from different career stages – including CEO Alison Atkinson.

#### ADA LOVELACE

The daughter of famed poet Lord Byron, Augusta Ada Byron, Countess of Lovelace – better known as Ada Lovelace – showed her gift for

mathematics at an early age. She translated an article on an

invention by Charles Babbage and because her extensive notes introduced many computing concepts, Lovelace is considered by many as the first computer programmer and one of the earliest visionaries in the history of the computer.



# Creating an inclusive culture

As a large employer, we're focused on creating a workplace where everyone can thrive. We're making great strides in creating a culture of inclusivity, diversity and innovation – which is essential to unlocking and accessing the high-level talent AWE needs, both now and in the future. Here are some of the things we did during 2020...



## SILVER ENEI AWARD

In recognition of our improved diversity and inclusion (D&I) activity during 2019/2020, we received the Silver Award Standard from the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (enei). This benchmarking award was in recognition of our progress in three areas: recruitment, communication and procurement.

AWE has been a member of enei since early 2018 and uses its resources to help with following best D&I

practice. The benchmarking process allows us to demonstrate to others how we're creating an inclusive environment for both today and tomorrow.



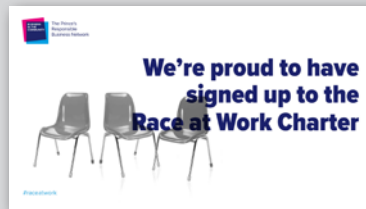
## RACE AT WORK CHARTER

In May, we signed the Business in the Community (BITC) Race at Work Charter, an initiative designed to improve outcomes for black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) employees in the UK.

Signing the Race at Work Charter showed our commitment to tackling barriers that ethnic minorities face in the workplace and ensuring their representation at all levels of their organisation.

In response to the Charter's calls to action, AWE has set out a framework to measure its progress in taking actionable steps regarding ethnic diversity and is following the 5 Steps to addressing ethnic disparities in our workforce.

Susie Tucker, Executive Sponsor for AWE's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Diversity and Inclusion group, says: "We aim to create a culture where everyone can thrive and celebrate the differences they bring. We already meet some of the Charter's calls to action and I welcome the opportunity and accountability the other commitments give AWE."



## NATIONAL INCLUSION WEEK

In October, we celebrated National Inclusion Week and shared some great practices to help build momentum and highlight opportunities for inclusion.

During the week, we acknowledged the ways diversity and inclusion have become embedded within our work and how it is underpinning our company strategy.



**National Inclusion Week 2020**  
28th September - 4th October



To celebrate INWED20, we showcased some of our amazing employees, such as Project Manager Preeya, left, and CEO Alison Atkinson, who encouraged all female engineers from across the world to help shape the future of engineering for women

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN IN ENGINEERING DAY

AWE and many other organisations celebrated International Women in Engineering Day (INWED20) – an international awareness campaign which raises the profile of women in engineering and celebrates the good things they do. The day also serves to inspire others to embark on a career in engineering.

To mark the day, a number of AWE's engineers, including CEO Alison Atkinson, discussed their experiences and offered advice on being a woman engineer. Our graduates were also busy promoting INWED20 and its importance to local students.

One of AWE's key commitments is encouraging more girls into STEM from an early age. Our network of STEM Ambassadors support the learning programme across the UK and we provide special leave for our employees to take part in these initiatives, encouraging them to participate and inspire young minds across the country.



## LGBTQ+

Unfortunately, we were unable to be part of this year's Reading Pride celebrations as they were cancelled due to Covid-19.

Our AWE Pride working group has continued to be active and network throughout 2020 and has been founding members of Pride in Defence – the cross-UK defence sector network for people of all sexual orientations/gender identities.



## 1 OF THE MILLION

During the summer the 1 of the Million campaign was launched, marking the significant milestone of more than one million women working in core STEM roles in the UK. AWE staff featured in an online campaign – organised by WISE (Women in Science and Engineering) – that showcased the many women working in STEM to inspire others to consider it as a career option.



#1ofTheMillion

# We're helping schools carry on learning

To continue our STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) outreach work with schools and young learners, we've had to get creative.

A new programme of remote schools' outreach activities is being developed in conjunction with our partner schools and local educational charities.

We're now utilising more technology and looking to deliver a range of activities – including one-to-one mentoring, curriculum-linked experiments and careers chats – via the Microsoft Teams platform in the new year.

Already our graduates, along with A-level students from our educational partner Queen Mary's College (QMC) in Basingstoke, are filming a range of science and engineering activities for inclusion in remote learning programmes.



## Here's what else we've been up to...

### CAREERS TALKS

We've still continued to discuss careers options with young learners, albeit virtually.

Our Skills Academy Manager Marcus Hutchings joined other leading local employers as part of an online careers talk organised by Reading University Technical College (UTC).

UTC specialises in engineering and computer science and helps build a talent pipeline of the skills needed in the local economy. Marcus discussed opportunities available at AWE, and highlighted the varied levels of apprenticeship available, the scheme's benefits and available disciplines to help inform young people about available career paths.



### HI-TECH HORIZONS

We've joined up with Hi-Tech Horizons – run by charity Education Business Partnership (EBP) West Berkshire – to provide young people with insight into the world of work.

EBP works with businesses of all sizes from all sectors, together with students from primary schools, secondary schools and colleges across the Thames Valley.

This new collaboration will open the students' eyes to the wide variety of opportunities available within hi-tech sectors if they choose STEM subjects. It's a great way of inspiring our future workforce and tackling the skills shortage.



### STEM STAR AWARDS

In partnership with QMC, we're running a competition for students to showcase their STEM skills.

The prize-winning STEM stars will be selected from students who have completed a STEM research/development project which involves carrying out experiments or producing something in an area of interest, such as computer programming, robotics or biofuels.



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