



**Minutes of the 103rd AWE Local Liaison Committee Meeting
Tuesday 30 November 2021
AWE, MS Teams**

Present:

Simon Hardaker	Chair
Cllr Avril Burdett	Tadley Town Council
Cllr Jonathan Chishick	Tidmarsh with Sulham Parish Council
Cllr Sophie Crawford	Aldermaston Parish Council
Amy Gower	West Berkshire Council
Cllr Robert Jones	Padworth Parish Council
Cllr Micky Leng	Reading Borough Council
Cllr Clive Littlewood	Holybrook Parish Council
Cllr Mollie Lock	Stratfield Mortimer Parish
Cllr Royce Longton	West Berkshire
Cllr Helen Manghnani	Reading Borough Council
Cllr George McGarvie	Pamber Parish Council
Cll Ian Montgomery	Shinfield Parish Council
Cllr Susan Mullan	Tadley Town Council
Cllr Barry Patman	Wokingham Borough Council
Cllr Geoff Poland	Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council
Carolyn Richardson	West Berkshire
Cllr David Shirt	Aldermaston Parish Council
Cllr Nicholas Thurlow	Mortimer West End Paridh Council

Rhian Adams	AWE
Nick Bolton	AWE
Scott Davies-Hearn	AWE
Val Hincks	AWE
Phillipa Kent	AWE
Carolyn Porter	AWE
Allan Russell	AWE
Andy Scargill	AWE
John Steele	AWE
Brenda Watson	AWE

Regulators:

Gary Cook	Office for Nuclear Regulation
Rob Green	Environment Agency

Apologies

Apologies had been received from Councillors: Philip Bassil, Mark Binns, Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Stuart Coker, Stuart Frost, Malcolm Large, David Leeks, David Livingstone, Ian Morrin, Penny Waterfield and Paul Woodley.

Actions from previous meetings

- **Action 101/4:** Avril Burdett: We've had a spate of antisocial behaviour and I'd like to know to what extent the MoD police are involved in the local community. Could we please have that as an item at a future meeting?

A: Servator have been invited to attend an LLC meeting and it is hoped this will be in March 2022

Approval of the 102nd meeting minutes

Chairman's update

Introduction

Simon Hardaker welcomed members to the 103rd meeting.

Membership Changes

There have been no membership changes since the 102nd meeting in July.

Organisational Changes

In the July meeting members were updated on the change to AWE being back in the public sector as a Non-Departmental Public Body. With these changes, Exec directors that were Lockheed Martin employees have left and recruitment followed to replace them.

Barry Hunter has been appointed CFO, taking over from Peter Morton, Iain Stevenson has taken over from Kevin Au in Mission Delivery.

In other news, Paul Hollinshead, the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) – Director Warhead in DNO will be leaving shortly to take up his new role as CEO of DSTL. Replacement to be announced.

Successful site exercise AWE(B) in September

AWE had a site Exercise earlier this month which will be covered in a separate brief later during the meeting. This was the first opportunity, due to Covid, to conduct an exercise on this scale, and some useful lessons were learned which we'll hear more about in a moment from Allan Russell.

Covid Update

AWE has continued to manage the risks posed by the pandemic with a response cell permanently manned by its Business Resilience Team who work closely with the Thames Valley Health Protection team from UKHSA and the West Berkshire Council COVID team. We provide Lateral Flow tests for all employees to use twice a week (whether they are coming to site or not) as this helps to minimise the potential for transmission by asymptomatic persons and continue to respond robustly to any symptomatic cases and where our employees or contractors have tested positive. AWE has taken a conservative and cautious approach to management of potential close contacts of confirmed cases – although, since Step 4 of the Governments Lockdown plan, anyone who is fully vaccinated does not need to isolate, we have further mandated that they must obtain a negative PCR test before they are allowed to return to site. This provides us with added confidence that we are reducing the potential for any on-site spread.

Whilst nationally, the requirements to social distance and wear face coverings have been lifted, AWE has also continued to remain cautious to protect our staff and contractors. We continue to require the wearing of face coverings in a range of environments and maintain our enhanced cleaning regimes and the provision of hand sanitiser stations across the estates. We communicate with our teams every week, sharing our statistics and advising of any changes to our approach and controls.

As you may expect, we have had our share of positive cases, but our analysis has confirmed that the rates we are seeing are consistent with the rates of infection in the local areas.

COP26

AWE is committed to playing its part in addressing the climate crisis. In fact, we have a target to reduce our carbon emissions from site heating and use of electricity by nearly 50% by 2030. Our Environmental Sustainability Strategy includes setting annual targets on Carbon, Biodiversity, and Waste and Resource Management. Progress against these goals is reported directly to the Responsible Business Group, chaired by Alison Atkinson, CEO. We published a Sustainability eBook on our website in November and the link to that can be found [here](#).

In line with Government reporting, AWE is also working on the successor to its Responsible Business Report in the format of Environment, Social and Governance. We expect to publish this in the new year and will send a link to members when it is ready.

Community News

For those of you following AWE on social media you will have seen that our Graduate and Apprentice career vacancies have opened in the last couple of months representing a great opportunity for young people in the region.

Resident enquiries

We have been working with Cllr. Poland to respond to a local resident's concerns regarding two issues:

- (i) the incident involving MDP in January of this year (munitions spill and recovery; it was in the media). The response to this came from the MOD, via Cllr. Poland, who provided the resident with the full response as he'd received. The resident has also been advised that they can contact MOD directly if they have any additional queries
- (ii) the same resident has also raised concerns over the potential for an aviation accident and its impact on the AWE Aldermaston site. This issue was mentioned at a previous LLC and I explained that a no-fly zone is in place and that any potential infringements would be dealt with by the CAA. The resident has also been informed that stringent security and operational protocols are in place on-site and that training exercises are conducted regularly, in which a response to any serious incident on site is tested.

Tadley Citizens Advice

We supported through the AWE Charity Fund, Tadley Citizens Advice Community Liaison Lunch. It was a great opportunity for their network of charities and organisations to get together again, learn how they are all operating post COVID, and share how CAB can help the residents of Tadley and surrounding villages together. We received thanks afterwards from Rachel Campbell, Chief Officer Citizens Advice

STEM Ambassadors (SA) have supported 'Physics at Work' sessions with University of Cambridge. Promoting physics as a degree and career to 14 - 16 yr olds and participated in 'Working with Neurodiverse Learners & making STEM Communication Accessible' session through STEM Learning. Between July and September the SA completed 18 activities reaching 4275 students and logged 102 hours in total for local schools.

Outreach - Primary Science Challenge. Working in partnership with external education charities we delivered workshops and a biodiversity competition. Michelle Smith, CEO of Education Business Partnership who you met virtually in a previous LLC said, 'We are delighted that AWE has continued their inspirational work with local schools, during a very challenging academic year. The materials and workshops make a real difference for students and teachers. We've seen great uptake of the adapted programme from schools and great student and teacher feedback'. We are expanding our work with Education Business Partnerships to include Hampshire now, so expect to hear more about that in future.

Update to our policy on charities

As a public body there are limitations on the way AWE spend money . We're still able to support charitable activities directly related to our business such as STEM outreach and we will continue this. From April 2022 though we will be pivoting to provide support to more charities through volunteering activities. The Board agreed this in principle in May this year and the policy was approved last week for launch in April 2022. I very much look forward to seeing this grow into a valuable contribution back into our local communities.

Topics for next meeting

- MDP; how they work with us and in the community. If you'd like other topics added, please let me know.

The next meeting of the LLC will be in March, date to be confirmed. I promised at the last meeting to look into a site visit, especially for new members of the LLC but open to all and have secured 3rd February from 1000 to 1500 for this purpose – details to follow. I hope many of you will be able to attend, some for the first time and others will see just how much has changed at Aldermaston in the last few years.

Environment, Safety and Health Update

Nick Bolton

ESH&Q Service Delivery Lead

Nick gave an overview of performance in personal and process safety during the period advising members that the OSHA TRI rate to the end of September 2021 was 0.231, slightly higher than this time last year. There were a total of 18 Recordable Injury Events in the period compared with 16 in the same period last year. The injury rate has come down over the last couple of months and is now at 0.177 which is the lowest since February of this year.

The majority of injuries arose from manual handling, lifting or carrying tasks trip/ fall of persons at the same level. We continue to raise awareness of injuries of this type especially going into this time of year where we start to see ice, leaves and snow on the ground.

Members were advised that since the last LLC meeting in July 2021 (covering events up to end of May 2021) there were no process safety events raised in the period June– September 2021 that also required an INF1 to be submitted to the regulator

Questions arising:

Cllr McGarvie asked whether records of accidents that happen at home whilst people are working were recorded. Nick advised there are no records made for accidents at home.

ACTION 1/103: Nick Bolton to look into recording work related accidents in the home.

Site Operations Update

Allan Russell

Head of Asset Operations Management

There was a successful Site exercise in September with strict Covid protocols in place. Some learning opportunities were identified, including the communications route for activation of some of our responders. Areas of good practice were also recognised, for example good communications and briefings between the teams across the response areas and command and control locations. The scenario contained some stretch objectives which gave additional challenges for the responding teams to deal with.

Another exercise took place at Aldermaston in November.

These exercises give the emergency response teams the opportunity to practice what they would do in an emergency and provided areas for learning.

Questions arising:

Cllr Burdett mentioned that she'd heard reports of a pile driving noise that residents have heard. Can you tell us what is this?

ACTION 2/103 : Allan Russell to investigate noise and report back.

AWE Reports

Simon Haraker

Director Corporate Affairs

Members were told of AWE's [Sustainability Ebook](#) which highlights the steps AWE is taking to reach the UK's net zero ambitions, and of its [Gender Pay Gap Report](#). Links provided.

No questions arising

Estate Development Update

John Steele

Head of Estate, Development & Planning

Details of the plans for the development of the Hub were shared. This includes the West End development of the Aldermaston Site where roads will be moved and a pedestrianised access to the

hub will make travelling around site safer. There will be improved access via the Falcon gate for cyclists and pedestrians and car park facilities are to the outer edge of sites.

John told members that potential government departments may be interested in utilising some of the facilities becoming redundant in the SE corner of site.

Plans for Burghfield were also shared and similarly this includes releasing the southern part of the site for occupation by another government department.

Questions arising:

Cllr. McGarvie asked whether there was any news on plans for the Rec.Soc.

John Steele told members that the land is owned by the MOD. The DIO (Defence Infrastructure Organisation) is undertaking a survey of the facility to establish whether there can be a lease agreement. The Rec.Soc is an important part of the local community and the The Rec.Soc committee need to be forward looking and agree to work with the DIO.

Cllr Burdett asked whether the influx of people taking up redundant office accommodation on both sites is going to change the way AWE look at local planning applications for housing and the way the DEPZ is viewed.

John Steele advised that there would be no change, they are not linked. The populations that are coming to the site are in the local area already.

DEPZ is a completely independent matter to planning policy and housing because it's about safeguarding.

Ask the Regulators

**Gary Cook Lead Site Inspector
Office for Nuclear Regulation**

The ONR report was circulated prior to the meeting and covers the period from 1 June to 30 September.

Gary told members that the LC36 (Organisational Capability) Improvement Notices are due to be complied with by AWE in December 2021. Though some work is still required, an enforcement letter will be issued to ensure work is seen through to completion.

Two reactive investigations have been undertaken by ONR. One is in relation to AWE's management of radioactive materials in the Explosives Technology Centre and the other is related to the circumstances that led to the accelerated deconstruction of a legacy stack within a decommissioning facility. ONR has completed its on-site activities and is now considering its regulatory response in both investigations. A further update will be provided in the next LLC report

Questions arising

Cllr McGarvie asked what accelerated deconstruction meant and whether the stack was up and vulnerable to wind conditions. Why wasn't it picked up in the periodic review?

Gary Cook advised that in previous LLC meetings, he'd spoken about periodic reviews of safety across all facilities, it's one of the licence condition requirements (LC15).

This facility would have been no different in terms of having periodic reviews, but the stack vulnerability wasn't picked up as part of an LC15 review. A lot of the investigation centers around the reasons it wasn't picked up and what decisions were made in the past. Concentrating on why issues weren't acted upon, rather than the structural integrity itself.

Cllr Shirt spoke of the report in the Newbury Weekly News recently criticising AWE following a recent ONR report. He said that residents are concerned about aging facilities and asked why this wasn't addressed in the ONR report. He questioned the timing of the regulators report shared today (up to the end of Sept) and how councillors can support AWE if information is not shared. He said he would expect AWE or ONR to comment on the newspaper report.

Simon Hardaker advised that AWE did make a statement about the report.

Gary Cook explained the process and timelines of the report written for this meeting and told members that anything post September, he is happy to discuss at the meeting. He advised that the newspaper report focussed on operations at AWE during 2020 (as part of the CNI report) and that the LLC receives more current updates through the three LLC reports that have been published during 2021. He advised that the ONR is focussing on operations moving to suitable, modern standards buildings at Aldermaston and Burghfield.

Cllr Crawford asked what triggers an investigative enquiry into an incident.

Gary Cook stated it could be as a result number of a variety of factors. AWE will not hide anything. Sometimes the poor quality of (internal) investigations, inspection findings or site events (singular or cumulative) could all be triggers for ONR investigations. Site exercises are AWE driven and the purpose is to gain confidence that onsite safety procedures are working properly and to a high level of performance.

ACTION: Scott Davies-Hearn to ensure an observer attends the next exercise.

Rob Green
Environment Agency

The EA report was circulated prior to the meeting.

Rob told members that [The RIFE](#) (Radioactivity in Food and the Environment) report covering the 2020 calendar year was published on Gov.uk on 4 November 2021. The report shows that doses of ionising radiation to members of the public from radioactivity discharged from the Aldermaston and Burghfield Sites remain at very low levels.

Rob informed the members that the Environment Agency was in the process of determining an application from AWE to change its environmental permit covering radioactive waste disposals at Burghfield Site. Rob explained that the application was required by AWE in order to allow it to undertake some work to characterise some legacy materials being stored at Burghfield Site.

The Environment Agency has completed a number of on-site regulatory inspections over the period. These have included inspections at the Labs Technology Centre, Hydrodynamics Area and Uranium

Technology Centre at AWE Aldermaston Site. No non-compliances were recorded during these inspections but a number of regulatory observations and recommendations were made. One particular inspection to highlight was a joint inspection undertaken with Office for Nuclear Regulation focusing on decommissioning and the management of ageing facilities. During the inspection we recorded two minor non-compliances with AWE's environmental permit. These related to maintenance issues observed on a section of pipework used for disposing of low level radioactive liquid waste. We have placed actions on AWE to remedy the issue.

Rob highlighted the publication of the Environment Agency's 2020 regulatory report: 'Regulating for People, the Environment and Growth'. The report sets out the key statistics, trends and messages relating to the performance of regulatory activities during the 2020 calendar year. This report covers the whole range of the Environment Agency's regulation, including waste management, industry regulation and the water industry. The Nuclear Regulatory side of the Environment Agency's regulation is included also but represents a relatively small part of its wider regulatory activities. The report is available on Gov.UK and Rob recommended it as a potentially informative document for LLC members who might not be aware of the Environment Agency's broad regulatory role.

Rob also informed members that, during October 2021, the Environment Agency published its new Adaptation Report: 'Living Better with a Changing Climate', ahead of COP26. It is a landmark report that shapes the EA's future work around eight important themes for action - thinking differently, collaborating, investing for change, working with nature, designing low carbon futures, strengthening community resilience, helping businesses prepare and stepping up to level up.

Questions arising

Cllr McGarvie mentioned that the RIFE report records a lot less than 0.005 millisieverts per year and asked whether this is because below that level it can't be measured?

Rob Green advised that there will be minimum limits of detection on instruments that are used to undertake the analysis of environmental samples, so when undertaking analysis it might be that the levels are so low that the instrument can't measure the precise value, as the amount of radioactivity in the sample is below the amount that the instrument or analytical method is able to detect. This can also be a function of the statistical methods that are used in the process

Any other Business

- Discussion around the timing of the ONR and Environment Agency reports presented at the LLC and Cllr Shirt request that they are as up to date as possible and covering the same time period.
- Cllr Pollard referred to the incident involving MDP in January of this year and was advised that though a response went back to the concerned resident, they can contact the MOD directly should they wish.
- With regards to the concern over the potential for an aviation accident and its impact on the AWE Aldermaston site, members were reminded that there is a 'no fly zone' in place and that any potential infringements would be dealt with by the CAA.
- Cllr Burdett was asked by the Newbury Weekly News to comment on the recent article about AWE. She declined.

- Thursday 3 February 2022 is the date scheduled for the proposed site tour, which is open to all members.

Proposed 2022 Meeting Dates

Wednesday March 16

July – tbc

November - tbc

Close