



**Minutes of the 99th AWE Local Liaison Committee Meeting
Wednesday 22nd July 2020
AWE, Online Meeting**

Present:

Susie Tucker	Chair
Cllr Mark Binns	Swallowfield Parish Council
Cllr Dominic Boeck	West Berkshire Council
Cllr Michael Bound	Basingstoke and Deane
Cllr Avril Burdett	Tadley Town Council
Cllr Sophie Crawford	Aldermaston Parish Council
Cllr Debbie Fisher	Wokefield Parish Council
Cllr Roger Gardiner	Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
Cllr David Leeks	Tadley Town Council
Cllr Clive Littlewood	Holybrook Parish Council
Cllr David Livingstone	Silchester Parish Council
Cllr Royce Longton	West Berkshire
Cllr George McGarvie	Pamber Parish Council
Cllr Susan Mullan	Tadley Town Council
Cllr Barry Patman	Wokingham Borough Council
Cllr Carolyn Richardson	West Berkshire Council
Cllr David Shirt	Aldermaston Parish Council
Cllr Ayo Sokale	Reading Borough Council
Cllr Nicholas Thurlow	Mortimer West End

Rhian Adams	AWE
Alison Atkinson	AWE
Dominic Bethencourt-Smith	AWE
Nick Bolton	AWE
Suzanne Chenery	AWE
Janette Dykes	AWE
Simon Hardaker	AWE
Mark Hedges	AWE
Philippa Kent	AWE
Anna Markowska	AWE
Scott Davis-Hearn	AWE
Cleo Howie	AWE
Michele Maidment	AWE
Gwynneth Page	AWE
Martin Wells	AWE

Regulators:

Gary Cook	Office for Nuclear Regulation
Rob Green	Environment Agency

Architects:

James Holbrook
Nigel Craddock
Robert McMenamin

Apologies

Apologies had been received from Councillors:

Philip Bassil, John Chapman, Jonathan Chishick, Penee Chopping, Stuart Coker, Nicholas Corp, Amy Gower, Graham Hetherington, Max Joseph, Malcolm Large, Mollie Lock, Helen Manghani, Ian Montgomery, Tim Whitaker

Actions from previous meetings

Action 1/98: Provide up to date information on current planning applications particularly the Lidl application. – *Application was refused earlier this month – CLOSED*

Action 2/98: A glossary of terms and acronyms to be created and distributed to the LLC. – *Glossary circulated - CLOSED*

Action 3/98: An advanced copy of the REPIR (pdf) booklet to be issued to members when it's been approved. - *Booklet was sent out in advance and then distributed to approximately 37000 properties for the 2 AWE sites. CLOSED*

Approval of the 98th Meeting minutes

Chairman's update

Introduction

Susie Tucker welcomed members to the 99th meeting followed by an introduction by our new CEO Alison Atkinson.

COVID-19

We are very proud of AWE's response to this crisis. In order to protect our people and our capability as an essential national defence asset we have transformed the way we work; and our sites have remained operational throughout.

We have rapidly expanded our IT capability and are now able to support over 2,000 colleagues working from home.

Working patterns and procedures have been subject to huge changes to make the necessary social distancing possible. Where close working is necessary, we have ensured that colleagues have enhanced PPE to keep them safe and we have created a centralised App to ensure effective distribution.

Our innovative approach to problem solving also saw our scientists develop a process to produce our own hand sanitiser, reducing the pressure on dwindling NHS stocks at the height of the crisis.

We also have been able to support our local communities by donating PPE to local hospitals and loaning two ambulances to the South-Central Ambulance Service.

Biodiversity Action Plan

Coinciding with World Environment Day in June, we published our commitments to improving our wildlife habitats in a five-year Biodiversity Action Plan, the first to be published externally.

Our aim will be to conserve and where possible, enhance the habitats present within our site boundaries. For instance, where the felling of trees is unavoidable, we will ensure these are replaced with native broad-leaved species at a minimum ratio of 3:1

We will also collaborate with our neighbours and stakeholders to achieve wider landscape scale gains for biodiversity and aim to have a 10 per cent Biodiversity Net Gain in all our projects.

Biodiversity is also a key theme of our wider Environmental Sustainability Plan.

Supporting International STEM Campaign

We continue to strive to create a diverse workforce and celebrating the national awareness campaigns is a key part of raising awareness.

AWE celebrated the international awareness campaign for International Women in Engineering Day last month (June 23) with a social media campaign led by Alison and an interactive schools' competition to help raise the profile of women in engineering roles.

We also worked with WISE (Women in Science and Engineering) supporting their campaign '1 Million Women in STEM' and sponsored their national schools' competition which achieved record entries.

We were very proud that one of our graduates became one of the first men to become a member of the Young Professionals' Board and is now a national advocate for the WISE organisation.

New Starters

We are continuing to onboard new colleagues. We will be joined by 133 new graduates on September 21. They will have a virtual welcome week and then a home-based programme, hopefully joining us on site in January 2021.

We have 81 new apprentices joining us in late August, starting on site in October. Our apprentices rotate between onsite and home working to ensure we can observe social distancing in our training facilities and give the apprentices a balance of class based and practical learning.

Next month we also have 49 new colleagues joining our year in industry scheme. Again, it will be a virtual welcome and hopefully they will join in person in November. Plans are underway for an all virtual recruitment campaign for 2021.

Schools Outreach

We have continued to support schools' outreach through remote mentoring and other on-line activities. Details are included in the community slides sent through before the meeting

Looking forward we are currently working with educational partners to map out a remote offering of curriculum linked activities which can be integrated into the schools' timetable in the Autumn term.

Environment, Safety and Health Update

**Nick Bolton,
ESH Service Delivery Lead (SET)**

Nick gave an overview of performance in personal and process safety during the period advising members that the OSHA TRI (Occupational Safety and Health Administration; Total Recordable Incidents) Injury rate for the 12 months to the end of May 2020 was 0.375.

A total of 26 OSHA Recordable Events have occurred in the 12 months to the end of May 2020. 23% were slip/trips/falls and 19% were due to manual handling, lifting or carrying objects.

There are a number of activities in place to reduce the number of injuries on site which include continuous inspections/reviews across the roads and grounds areas, manual handling awareness training, a planned increase in operational alerts/briefings on subjects such as special awareness and ergonomics and reviews of health awareness and injury control.

Process Safety training for supervisors is being rolled out across the company including staff at Coulport. Work is in progress to further define ESH metrics taking guidance from the Nuclear Industry Code of Practice for the development and use of safety performance indicators.

We can confirm that we have complied with the government's guidance on managing the risk of COVID-19 and as an immediate response a central team was set up to manage COVID-19 applying PHE guidance where available. Also, in place are daily briefings to all staff, key personnel only have been allowed on site with additional laptops and software made available to allow increased working from home. We have closed some of the offices and buildings and work activities have been reviewed for safety whilst maintaining distancing.

Employee Wellbeing

Cleo Howie
Wellbeing Manager

Cleo joined AWE in January 2020 as the new Wellbeing Manager and has seen what an impact COVID-19 has had on the business.

Since joining, AWE has received a Bronze Award for 'Achieving Change' in Mind's Workplace Wellbeing Index. We also now have a new Occupational Health provider whose focus is on prevention and early intervention. In addition, we also have in place new wellbeing services which include Physiotherapy and a Mental Health Practitioner.

Ask the Regulators

Gary Cook Lead Site Inspector
Office for Nuclear Regulation

ONR staff have been home working since March and from April to May we carried out remote inspections to look at arrangements which we can do efficiently remotely.

As remote working doesn't cover everything, we are now returning to site. As of this week ONR will have a limited number of inspectors carrying out various duties and this will increase from August and beyond. Usually we have 10-15 inspectors out on site every month but currently these numbers are much lower. Our main priority however will be Inspections carried out in areas where regulation can't be done remotely or to support permissions required for modifying plant.

During this time, we have always had the capacity to visit site for urgent issues as we are all classed as key workers.

Rob Green
Environment Agency

The Environment Agency has adapted to new ways of working, as a result of the impacts of COVID-19, in a similar fashion to ONR. This has meant an increase in home working and a greater focus on undertaking regulatory engagements and inspections remotely, where possible. This has included an inspection looking at AWE's environmental risk mitigation and contingency planning, as part of a co-ordinated audit across all the nuclear sites we regulate, as well as an off-site inspection of AWE's arrangements for the management of land quality at its nuclear sites.

Throughout the period we have continued to engage with AWE via Skype, Teams and other means of communication, in lieu of site-based meetings. AWE has been supportive in ensuring that these meetings remain as effective as possible.

During this time AWE have maintained contact with us on any Abnormal Events or issues of regulatory interest. We are currently targeting the new year period for the resumption of routine regulatory inspections on site, although we continue to remain mindful of the government guidance and any risk of a 'second spike' over the winter period.

Questions arising

Q: Dominic Boeck: We all know that walking the floor often reveals unexpected findings. How do you balance that kind of spontaneous experience, whilst working from home?

A: Rob Green: *We are a regulator and our expectations from a site are that their arrangements are set up to comply with their legal obligations including the Environmental Permit. By checking those arrangements, we can form a judgement on how effectively they can support that. AWE maintain contact with us regarding AE's (Abnormal Events) and other abnormalities. We can then form a view on what impact it has on performance. This can include trends, potential problems and areas with themes emerging. The remote inspection model won't replace completely the 'boots on ground' approach.*

Q: Ayo Sokale: If the trend shows compliance has not being impacted by less on the ground inspection, will the inspection be adapted to reduce the on the ground inspections and will the carbon reduction associated with this approach be captured especially with the EA organisation net zero target 2030 referred in Rob's report?

A: Rob Green: *We have recently produced our 5-year action plan and tapping into the climate emergency is at the centre of that so from that point, COVID-19 has forced us to take stock and look at ways of adapting our regulatory model. In terms of addressing the question. If you're on site less often perhaps you might be less likely to pick things up. You may see an improvement in compliance, you may not. If compliance does start to slip, then we reserve the right to return to site if*

necessary. We believe the approach that we have adopted which is that if something is incorrect, it's often due to an inadequacy in the management arrangements, which we can readily review off-site. In terms of the carbon saving view, we already do track and record carbon saving through travel avoidance to meetings etc and that will be picked up more and more in due course.

Q: George McGarvie: What are the current arrangements for sampling to ensure compliance, the high-volume air and water flow, the annual food survey. Are they ongoing or have periods been extended?

A: Anna Markowska: *In short, through our regulatory monitoring environmental programme, the only impact that we have, the only sampling point that we had to turn off was Burnham Copse School in Tadley. The position of the sampling unit, being on the roof of the school meant that when the school closed, those sampling points became inaccessible to us but now the school is back in operation, it's actually operating now as normal.*

RG also provided clarification that the Environment Agency's independent environmental monitoring programme around AWE's sites has been largely unaffected by COVID-19 and that any samples missed during quarter 2 collections would aim to be picked up in quarter 3.

Site Development – The Hub

**Gwynneth Page – Executive Sponsor, AWE
James Holbrook – Mott MacDonald
Nigel Craddock – Pascalls
Robert McMenamin – Mott MacDonald**

Gwynneth gave a brief overview of what The Hub is and details of what the benefits are. The building will consolidate around 100 aging buildings into one modern campus and will include science labs, engineering and technology workshops, corporate archive areas, offices etc and will cater for up to 3,000 employees in Aldermaston. It will protect 20 of our mission-critical science and engineering capabilities, improve employee offering in a modern working environment and will be more efficient and sustainable for the environment.

Our architects, James, Nigel and Robert provided a detail walk through of the plans and what kind of environment they are aiming to achieve.

Questions arising

Q: David Shirt: I confirm John Steele presented to Aldermaston PC in Feb. Of major interest to us is traffic impact on A340. John assured us that this development is replacing accommodation and not introducing additional facilities. I would appreciate it if this could be confirmed by the speakers.

A: Gwynneth Page: *The Hub is replacing existing facilities only. There will be no new capabilities nor any headcount growth. There will be no additional traffic, maybe less traffic as office staff will be working offsite 2 days of the week. This is an estimated average.*

Q: Roger Gardiner: Which buildings will you be replacing, and will they be demolished?

A: Gwynneth Page: *There are too many to list here. There are ~100 buildings that will be closed as a result of the Hub (labs, workshops, offices, stores etc). They will be made cold and dark and then demolished over a longer period of time.*

Q: Mark Binns: What concessions have been made to support pollinators across the site? Would the team consider having an apiary on site? I'm looking for good sites across the area. It offers a good opportunity for staff to get involved in weekly inspections for well-being reasons.

A: Robert McMenamin: *We have been in discussion with the bio-diversity team at Aldermaston and currently there are some strongly held views in relation to what are classified as indigenous species. There is one element of the landscape design which we didn't touch upon in relation to a gardener's club area which we will seek to undertake once we go to planning.*

Anna Markowska: *Aside from the things that we are doing for The Hub and the biodiversity there, we have already designated some 'no-mow' zones. This means that there are areas where we have deliberately not cut the grass. We have also sprinkled some wildflower seeds, so these areas are now flourishing on site. We have also done an insect count which shows that there has been an increase in the population of both bees and butterflies.*

Q: George McGarvie: My understanding is that the carpark will be outside the wire which will improve traffic flow. Is that correct?

A: Gwynneth Page: *We are still working on the plans for that. For visitors certainly it would be useful to move it to where the Orion building is and we are developing plans for options.*

Q: Debbie Fisher: How long do you anticipate the construction taking, should the project receive planning approval?

A: Nigel Craddock: *We estimate 2-3 years.*

Q: Sophie Crawford: Can you briefly explain how you satisfied WBCs initial concerns about traffic congestion during the construction period?

A: James Holbrook: *It was really to do with numbers, regarding the control of when deliveries and contractors coming in and coming out of site so that traffic moves quickly without having any impact on the A340 and it does partially go back to the point raised about car parking. We are considering the impact of the site as a whole and not just this one project.*

Q: Ayo Sokale: In terms of the asset long-term management, has the carbon been modelled/calculated? Was the embodied carbon for the proposed design calculated? Please could you clarify if it was BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) 'excellent' or 'good' standard the design was aiming to meet?

A: Robert McMenamin: *We are doing an embodied carbon calculation with regards to the proposed structure of the site. In terms of environmental scoring we are mandated under MoD terms and we are required to meet an 'excellent' standard but we aim to provide a higher threshold than that.*

Q: Ayo Sokale: How does the building include neuro diverseness people specifically?

A: Gwynneth Page: *we have worked with our neuro diverse teams to understand what is important. The key ones from the top of my head are around quiet entrances rather than walking through the street, quiet working areas dotted around, a specific quiet room, acoustics, colour scheme etc.*

Any other Business

Close

Proposed 2020 Meeting Dates

18th November