

Connect

Committee is a vital link

Acting as an important link between AWE and the local community, the Local Liaison Committee (LLC) also holds AWE to account for maintaining safe, secure and environmentally responsible operations.

Established in 1993, the LLC acts as a two-way channel for information. Not only does it keep the local community informed about past, current and future operations of AWE, it also enables discussions on matters of interest to the local community.

Along with AWE representatives, the LLC is made up of around 30 local representatives from a number of parishes and regions in close proximity to AWE. These members act as representatives for the local community by making AWE aware of local opinion and raising questions and issues on behalf of their constituents.

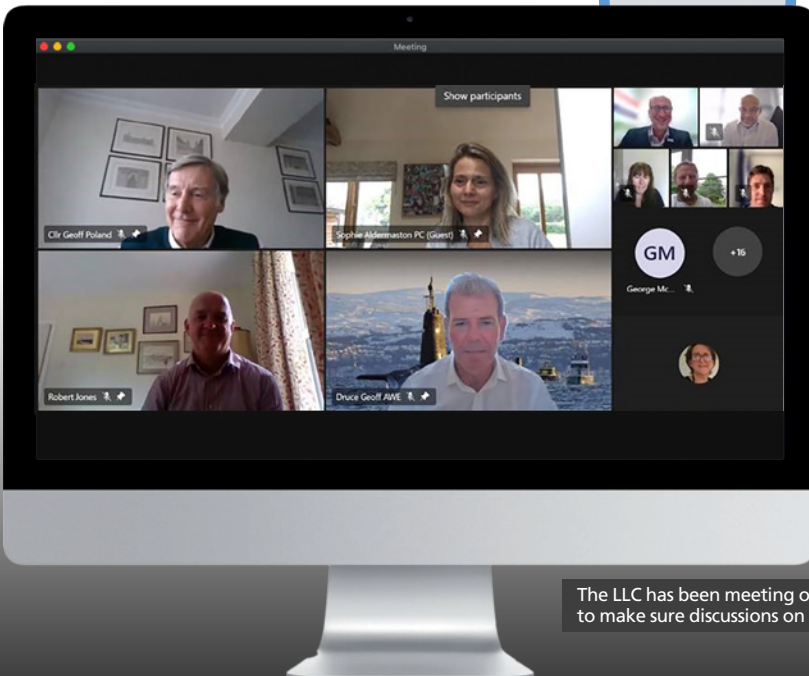
The LLC meets three times a year and is chaired by AWE's Executive Director Operations Haydn Clulow, who says: "It's



Questions from residents are always welcome – these can be sent to an LLC member or to the LLC secretary via our community email address communityandschools@awe.co.uk

A full list of our current LLC members can be found on our website at www.awe.co.uk/responsible-business/local-liasion-committee/

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The LLC has been meeting online during the pandemic to make sure discussions on relevant topics continue



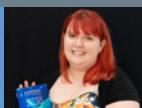
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WELCOME TO THE SUMMER EDITION OF *CONNECT*, AWE'S COMMUNITY NEWS MAGAZINE

While the last 16 months have been anything but normal, it's still seen AWE staff continuing to work both on and off site.

This commitment was recognised by Best Companies who gave special mention to AWE remaining operational throughout the pandemic, along with the holistic and supportive approach it adopted in recognition of staff's efforts. This year, we've seen a slew of awards, including the 21st Best Big Company to work for – read more on pages 6 and 7.

Our support also extends beyond our staff to local charities and schools.

We remain with our charity partner Thrive, whose Reading centre has now reopened, allowing their clients to benefit from the expertise and support available to them.

Fundraising has badly impacted a number of charities and AWE and its staff have continued to support a number of them during a difficult time – read pages 10 and 11 for more.

We are looking forward to resuming more of our face-to-face work with schools. In this issue, you can read how our STEM Ambassadors and outreach work have continued to inspire pupils, albeit at a distance.

As a large company and employer, we continue to take our local responsibilities seriously, not just for staff but the surrounding communities.

Central to this is our partnership with the Local Liaison Committee or LLC – comprising local councillors and external bodies, including regulators. This two-way forum is a great way of discussing, informing and listening to ideas and issues from those living nearby, and you can read more about its history and work in the lead story.

Your comments and suggestions on *Connect* are always welcome – please email them to communityandschools@awe.co.uk

The Editor

incredible when you think that the LLC represents approximately half a million residents who live in the parishes and boroughs around our sites. "It's an important platform as it allows local residents to gain a better understanding of our activities. Plus, it's a great way for us to stay in touch with topics of mutual interest."

Also in attendance at LLC meetings are representatives from AWE's independent regulators – the Office for Nuclear Regulation and the Environment Agency – with both providing independent updates on company performance and progress.

"It's a great way for us to stay in touch with topics of mutual interest."

Haydn Clulow
AWE's Executive Director Operations



Flashback to 2012 and the official opening of the cycle path

Cycle path plan came to fruition

One LLC recommendation that came to fruition was a cycle path between Aldermaston village and Aldermaston Wharf. This was first identified in the Aldermaston Parish Plan completed in 2006, when the only way to walk between the two was along the fast A340. The AWE-funded cycle path now provides greater access and links with the national cycle path along the Kennet and Avon Canal towpath, completing circular walks with existing footpaths.

INTRODUCING LLC MEMBERS

One of the longer serving members of the LLC is Dave Shirt, who has lived in Aldermaston Village since 1987 and sits on Aldermaston Parish Council. Following a career as a chartered engineer, Dave decided to become even more involved in community issues when he retired.

What made you decide to become a local councillor?

I've been a member of Aldermaston Parish Council for most of the time I've lived in the parish. When I retired, I agreed to become its Chairman, a position I have recently relinquished. I believe it's important to support the community you live in.

When did you become involved in AWE's LLC?

About the time I retired. The LLC meets during the working day, which makes it difficult for parish councillors who hold full-time jobs to attend, so I was happy to offer my services.

What do you see as the main role of the LLC?

It provides a two-way flow of communication between a major employer and local residents.

How does the LLC help you and your local community?

Aldermaston Parish is unique in that it totally surrounds one of AWE's sites, so we have a special interest in its activities, especially building development and travel plans.

Any memorable LLC moments or successes?

Because we were close to AWE and they knew our aspirations, they agreed to fund the construction of the popular cycle path between Aldermaston village and Aldermaston Wharf as part of their developer contribution for the Gemini project. We work closely with AWE on local planning applications such as the one for Aldermaston manor house and grounds.



Dave Shirt

Avril Burdett is currently Chairman of Tadley Town Council, having been a councillor for 20 years.

What made you decide to become a local councillor?

I was press ganged into joining by Tadley Town Councillors who were members of the LLC! I attended a couple of meetings to see what happened and was hooked.

When did you become involved in AWE's LLC?

It was a case of poacher turned gamekeeper! I used to work in AWE's Communications Group in its infancy, so was there when the LLC started and, until my retirement, I'd been to and organised just about every meeting. I then jumped sides, becoming a member of the LLC in 2016.

What do you see as the main role of the LLC?

For me, the LLC is very much about working to dispel the myths and rumours associated with such a large industrial, scientific and manufacturing neighbour, plus sharing information on many aspects of AWE's work and safety performance.

How does the LLC help you and your local community?

As a councillor, I've increasingly seen the benefits of a forum which has evolved over 102 meetings to meet the needs of its members on both sides.

Any memorable LLC moments or successes?

My lasting memories will be of briefing so many MDs and executive staff about the role and importance of the LLC – now I'm able to see things from outside the fence. Over time, it's been good to see respect for the LLC grow along with its confidence in responding to questions.



Avril Burdett

Emergency plan available

Last spring, a public information booklet was circulated advising local residents and businesses what to do in the unlikely event of an emergency at the AWE Aldermaston or Burghfield sites.

This updated booklet – produced by West Berkshire Council and AWE in conjunction with Hampshire County Council, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, Reading Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council – was in response to new Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2019, also known as REPPiR 2019, which strengthened the already robust national emergency preparedness and response arrangements for radiological emergencies.

The booklet contains details about the extent of the emergency planning zones around the AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield sites, along with details of how you would be alerted and what actions to take. If you would like to view or download a copy, then visit West Berkshire Council's website info.westberks.gov.uk/awe

West Berkshire Council's website also covers:

- Details on what to do in an emergency.
- Responsibilities and arrangements.
- Interactive maps of the detailed emergency planning zones.
- Discover more at info.westberks.gov.uk/awe

We're making good progress on enhancing our biodiversity

We recognise the importance of protecting and enhancing the biodiversity of our sites – for the benefit of both current and future generations. AWE's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was launched last year and we're making good progress across our objectives. For example:

- Where we need planning permission for our development projects, we're making sure they reach at least 10% biodiversity net gain*.
- We've undertaken surveys of breeding birds, ancient and veteran trees and put appropriate measures in place to protect them.
- We're actively managing wildlife habitats. For example, we've reduced mowing on around

10,000m² of our land to help pollinator insects.

- We've installed artificial nest boxes for peregrine falcons to compensate for those redundant buildings which are being demolished as our sites are renovated. Time will tell if the falcons return and use the new boxes, but we hope they do and we can continue to support this rare species on site.

A copy of our BAP is online at www.awe.co.uk/responsible-business/our-environment/biodiversity/

*Biodiversity net gain is an approach to development that aims to leave biodiversity in a better state than before.

Henry VI was King of England when our oldest oak tree was putting down its first roots – an astonishing 591 years ago. Oak number 3474 is one of 15 Aldermaston trees surveyed by our environment team this year to record their details and estimated ages. Nine oaks are categorised as 'ancient' – the oldest status – while four hold the slightly younger title of 'veteran'. Bats and birds often use their hollow branches and some lichens, fungi and insects can only be found on older trees. One is also a roost for a barn owl, which is a protected species with declining numbers.

This ancient oak is nearly 600 years old

MOD new owner of AWE

As of 1 July 2021, AWE plc transferred to government ownership, becoming an arms' length body (ALB) owned by the Ministry of Defence. Our primary focus remains the continued safe and secure operation of our sites, as we maintain progress on our critical programme.

The change in operating model will further strengthen the relationship between the MOD and AWE plc, enhancing the management of the UK's nuclear warhead programme while also delivering on core MOD objectives and value for money to the taxpayer.

Day celebrates gender equality

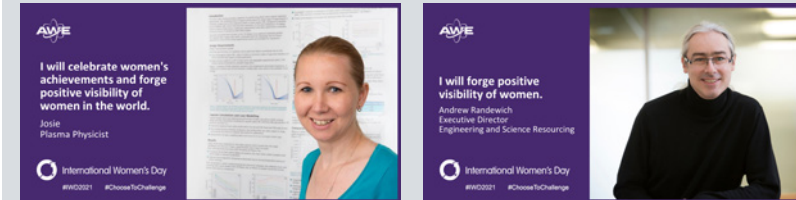
International Women's Day offers a great opportunity to celebrate the achievements of women and raise awareness about gender equality.

This year's theme was Choose to Challenge and saw a number of AWE staff make personal pledges – including helping others to speak out or encouraging positive visibility of women.

On the day, keynote speaker Zeb Farooq MBE, recipient of the 2019 Women into Science and

Engineering (WISE) Man of the Year award, gave a thought-provoking talk surrounding gender equality in the workplace and the historical portrayal of women.

A series of virtual events also gave staff the opportunity to hear different viewpoints and experiences through the sharing of interviews from a wide range of people involved in the nuclear industry. To round off the day, there was a lively panel discussion on Choosing to Challenge.



Choose to Challenge pledges to mark International Women's Day

Career returners get a helping hand

AWE launched its first career returners programme in the spring – designed to support experienced professionals returning to their field following a career break and help with their transition back to work.

The programme is open to anyone who's taken a break from their career for two years or more – but is mainly aimed at women who've taken time out to bring up children.

The programme offers a reintroduction to the workplace, helping with confidence building and gaining industry-specific knowledge.

Returners can use the transferable skills they've gained – even away from the workplace – putting them into good practice at AWE and restarting their career.

The programme is being run in partnership with Working Mums, which connects employers with professional women seeking positions on their return to work.

"The career returners programme will give you an amazing support network. My flexible hours work perfectly for my family, while giving me enough time to do my work."

Thea, from AWE's Supply Chain Management, who had a four-year career break to bring up four young children



A full list of opportunities can be found online at workingmums.co.uk

The awards keep coming

Role model Sian praised by peers

Sian Butler, now former Executive Director at AWE, was honoured at the annual Women in Nuclear UK (WiN UK) Awards.

Sian was awarded the Mission Possible award in recognition of her outstanding work as a role model and for inspiring women across AWE and the wider nuclear industry.

WiN UK's awards are given to individuals and organisations that have worked hard to improve gender balance and diversity.

Throughout her career, Sian has been passionate about developing the nuclear industry's people capability, with a particular interest in encouraging future generations and promoting the role of women in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).

Sian joined AWE more than 30 years ago as an analytical radiochemist and over the last three decades has held various roles.

She was commended by WiN UK for being the first female in multiple roles – demonstrably breaking traditional norms as a member of the Executive team and the most senior female scientist at AWE.

● Sian wasn't the only AWE winner on the night, with the Women in Nuclear Central England regional team, including four AWE employees, winning the Regional Innovation award.



Sian Butler

"It is a real honour to be acknowledged in this way by my peers. I hope my achievements will make young girls consider studying STEM subjects as I can testify that it provides such amazing opportunities."

Sian Butler, WiN UK Mission Possible award winner

It's official – AWE is a great place to work!

AWE has surpassed itself by coming 21st in the list of the 2021 Top 25 Best Big Companies to work for – up by three places on the 2019 position.

The Best Big Companies award is open to companies with more than 2,000 employees – with those achieving the highest Best Companies Index (BCI) scores featuring in the top 25.

Companies making the grade show commitment to their employees along with high levels of engagement.

In addition to the Best Big Company Award, AWE was also named as seventh best construction and engineering company to work for, 32nd best company to work for in Scotland, and the 79th best company to work for in the South East.

During the virtual ceremony, Best Companies gave special mention to AWE remaining operational throughout the pandemic and the holistic and supportive approach it adopted in recognition of staff's efforts both on and off site.



Alanna with her Women in Defence award

Scientists recognised at prestigious awards

Two AWE scientists were recognised at the prestigious Women in Defence Awards which attracted more than 500 entries.

Set up as a LinkedIn group in 2011, Women in Defence has become a strong community of women and men focused on the achievements of individuals, teams and organisations working in the defence industry.

At the virtual event, AWE Radiochemist Alanna was crowned winner of the Emerging Talent category for consistently championing the importance of quality, as well as helping to

promote equality for those who are neurodivergent and disabled.

In addition, AWE Physicist Paula was a finalist in the Most Collaborative category for the work she has done to foster, develop and strengthen strategic collaborations in the defence industry.

Commenting on her win,

Alanna says: "To not only be considered alongside such inspiring women in such a tough competition, but to win it, is amazing."

"I will continue the hard work that got me nominated, particularly in breaking down taboos around hidden disabilities and mental health."



"I am delighted that we have achieved these accreditations and our people consider us to be one of the best places to work."

Alison Atkinson, Chief Executive and MD

Covid-19 has made the past year hugely challenging for schools. And it has also meant AWE has had to come up with new ways of engaging with young people. We feature some innovative examples here...

Lego club's world challenge

Lego enthusiasts at the Vyne School in Basingstoke have used a donation from AWE to help them compete in a worldwide robot competition.

The school's Lego club, which includes Year 8 and 11 pupils, is taking part in the First Lego League Challenge, which sees young

people design, build and programme an autonomous robot to solve a series of missions.

The challenge is a global STEM programme for teams of young people that encourages an interest in real world themes and helps develop key skills for their future careers.



The Vyne School's Lego club practising with their robot Blue Jay

Careers inspiration goes online

The last year or so has proved challenging when it comes to engaging with young people about career opportunities.

However, an innovative use of technology has seen many careers events move online – giving hundreds of young people the opportunity to interact with local employers and help them make informed decisions about their future career.

Earlier this year AWE, along with other local businesses, attended Get Inspired – a virtual careers fair and live business-led activities day for young people.

Taking part in two of the Get Inspired Q&A panels allowed AWE volunteers to engage with 250 Year 9 and 10 students from Aldworth School, Bishop Challoner Catholic Secondary School and Dove House School Academy. More than 1,000 students took part in the live event day.



Ambassadors offer remote support

Essential to our school outreach work are our STEM Ambassadors, who work in partnership with local educational charities so we can engage with students from primary age right through to sixth form and college.

Since the start of the pandemic, we've had to do things differently. To tie in with national events, including British Science Week and World Environment Day, or local events such as careers fairs, our STEM Ambassadors have continued to offer remote support through materials, presentations or virtual learning.

Week puts STEM in the spotlight

Each year, British Science Week offers the chance to celebrate STEM with thousands of events and activities across the country. This year saw us develop activities to complement our ongoing STEM outreach work.

As a visual and engaging way for young learners to discover more about science, our STEM Ambassadors and apprentices developed presentations – on varied topics, such as green energy and the science behind detergents – for teaching staff in our partner schools.



Pupils from Cold Ash St Mark's CE Primary School busy at their biodiversity workshop

Pupils tackle science challenge

Primary school pupils in Years 5 and 6 across West Berkshire and Hampshire have again risen to the AWE Primary Science Challenge with great enthusiasm.

To tie in with World Environment Day, we created worksheets and checklists to help local pupils identify and create micro-habitats such as bird boxes, bug hotels, compost bins and rock gardens, which are a great way of attracting different types of wildlife.

This challenge is now being rolled out in local primary schools through

our partnership with Education Business Partnership South and West Berkshire. Pupils submitted their work to a panel of AWE STEM Ambassador judges as part of the challenge against other schools.

"We are delighted AWE has continued its inspirational work with local schools during a very challenging academic year and the materials and workshops make a real difference for students and teachers," says Michelle Smith, CEO of Education Business Partnership West Berkshire.

Rainbow video is a bright idea

One of our STEM Ambassadors, Damaris, adopted a colourful and creative approach to engaging with pupils at South View Federation schools in Basingstoke.

Ablly assisted by her son Caleb, Damaris created a video that explained how rainbows naturally occur by using props – including a fish tank and marbles – to explain refraction.



STEM Ambassador Damaris and her son Caleb

Damaris and Caleb expertly discussed not only refraction, but wavelengths, prisms and colour spectrums – so South View pupils understood where rainbows came from. Pupils also heard about Damaris' love of science and how she ended up becoming a Materials and Analytical Scientist at AWE.

"I became a STEM Ambassador because I want to help enthuse the next generation about science. We need to break the mould and show the next generation that STEM is anything you want it to be, and anyone can do it – it's in all the 'ordinary' things you do."

Damaris, Senior Materials and Analytical Scientist at AWE and STEM Ambassador

Distance learning solution by graduates

This year's Spotlight on STEM team adopted a different approach to their outreach work that's designed to promote STEM to local students.

The team of AWE graduates adapted a series of experiments to create an innovative set of STEM resources to support distance learning that could also be reused for future students, including case studies, videos and worksheets. These STEM resources were provided to our partner EBP for distribution to the Reading, Newbury and Basingstoke-based schools in time for British Science Week.

"Spotlight on STEM has been a fulfilling and incredible project, says AWE graduate April, a team leader of Spotlight on STEM. "Delivering STEM resources virtually has allowed us to reach more schools, encouraging students to pursue exciting careers in the field and inspire the next generation of young minds."



AWE graduate April

At a time when charities' finances have been seriously impacted by Covid-19, AWE has continued to support them through donations or individual fundraising...

Charity partnership blooming

AWE's charity partner Thrive has received a donation of £11,520 to help its client gardeners flourish during weekly sessions at the Reading centre where they receive bespoke support.

Thrive is one of the leading gardening for health charities and uses gardening and plants to improve the health and wellbeing of its clients who have a wide range of disabilities, health conditions and support needs.

Trained horticultural therapists work with clients to improve their physical and psychological health, along with their communication and thinking skills.

The pandemic and lockdowns have proved difficult for many Thrive clients, with them missing the routine and companionship offered by the charity. To help with ensuring a Covid-secure environment, AWE provided funding for a marquee that offered additional all-weather teaching space, allowing clients to be taught outdoors in 'bubbles'.



One of Thrive's regular clients, Aaron

Donation gets New Beginnings off to a great start

Local charity New Beginnings was chosen by AWE staff as worthy recipients of a £5,000 donation.

Each year, AWE staff can nominate local charities or good causes close to their heart. A shortlist of the nominations is

drawn up with all staff able to vote for which charitable cause should receive a £5,000 donation from AWE's Charity Fund.

New Beginnings is a relatively new charity that helps those who are homeless or in need. Volunteers

transformed a pub in Reading so it could be used for a number of services, including an all-night café, a night shelter for the homeless, and an after-school café offering meals, clothing and support for parents and children. There was also a community fridge for distributing free food to those in need.

Grace Gomez, founder and chair of New Beginnings Reading, says: "The start of this year saw a rise in demand, with our food bank providing provisions to nearly 3,000 people. In addition, our weekly clothing and toiletries services have seen a steady increase in service users as well. This funding will help us to continue to support the most vulnerable and those experiencing poverty, homelessness and hardship."



Volunteers at New Beginnings



Jess Keeble, second right, with fellow Community First Responders

Lifesavers' equipment boost

An AWE donation to the South Central Ambulance Charity has provided specialist equipment to help Community First Responders (CFRs) make swift responses to medical callouts.

CFRs provide medical assistance by tending patients ahead of the ambulance arriving and are trained to assist with emergencies such as cardiac arrests, breathing difficulties, strokes, seizures and falls.

Along with new wipe-clean kit bags, the donation also provided an emergency lifting cushion that's specifically designed to assist a user safely back on to their feet, particularly after a fall. For the additional safety of patients, some slip-sheets are also being purchased.

AWE employee and CFR Jess Keeble, who requested the donation from AWE's Charity Fund, says: "This new equipment will help us continue to offer essential care to members of the local community."

Fundraising is a family affair

Lucy Rodger from AWE raised money to support ambulance staff – to help others like her sister Heather, who is a paramedic.

Throughout the pandemic, Heather has been helped by two support groups focused on the wellbeing of frontline staff – The Ambulance Staff Charity and Frontline 19.

As a thank-you, Lucy and Heather organised the 10-mile 'Hope Challenge 21' during Mental Health Awareness Week to encourage others to get out and about.

More than 90 people took part – either running, walking or using self-powered transport to achieve the 10 miles – with each being awarded a medal for their efforts. More than £660 was raised, with more donated directly to the organisations.



Fundraisers received a Hope Challenge 21 medal

Holiday miles help hospice

With overseas holidays currently pretty much out of bounds, some of our staff are using an imaginative way of raising funds for the Sue Ryder, Duchess of Kent Hospice.

As they were unable to travel to their beloved destinations, they've created a route featuring some of their favourite places to holiday, complete with mileage.

The team are now doing the difficult bit of exercising the miles of the route – using a range of options including walking, running or cycling. The team plan to cover off an impressive 9,548 miles to boost the funds of a great charity.



Hannah, Louise, Rachel and Daryl covering the miles for charity



Autism awareness in the spotlight

Autism Acceptance Month provided the opportunity to raise awareness of the autistic spectrum – what to look for, ways of helping and supporting others and the realities associated with living with it.

At AWE, a significant number of individuals are impacted by autism, be it through diagnosis and/or association with a colleague, friend or family member.

AWE believes that with the right environment, autistic employees can be among the most productive we have, and wants to make sure autism is embraced, rather than merely acknowledged.

Autism is a complex, lifelong developmental disability that can impact social skills, communication, relationships and self-regulation. It is a spectrum condition with many attributable behaviours that affect people in various ways.

To mark this year's event, members from the N-Able-D group – our disability and neurodiversity network – organised a number of activities including panel discussions and guest speakers, plus internally launching the Sunflower Scheme.



THE SUNFLOWER SCHEME

During April 2021, we publicised Sunflower Scheme products for those staff who need them. Wearing the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower discreetly indicates to people around the wearer, including staff, colleagues and health professionals, that they need additional support, help or a little more time. The success of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower and the positive response it has received has increased awareness of the challenges that adults and children with hidden disabilities can face.

Nature benefits are highlighted

This year's Mental Health Awareness Week (MHAW) felt particularly poignant, given the challenging year many of us have had. MHAW is hosted by the Mental Health Foundation, with the aim of raising the profile of issues relating to mental health and encouraging conversations.

The focus for MHAW 2021 was 'Nature'. More of us have discovered the benefits gained from a walk in the countryside or a park, watching the wildlife and taking in our natural surroundings during lockdown, and there's clear evidence that being in nature is crucial for our mental health and wellbeing.

During the week, Paul Scott, from our charity partner Thrive, gave an inspiring talk to staff on the positive benefits of nature and gardening and how it can support our personal wellbeing.

A number of nature-themed activities, mental health webinars and mindfulness classes were also available to staff throughout MHAW.

"Because we spend so much time at work, it's important we can talk comfortably and confidently about any difficulty we face in life, especially in relation to our health, and get the right support."

Cleo Howie, Wellbeing Manager



Cleo Howie



Your comments and suggestions on Connect are always welcome – please email them to communityandschools@awe.co.uk