

Minutes of the 31st AWE Local Liaison Committee Meeting

Held Thursday 28th November 2002

Present:

Bill Haight	AWE	Chairman
Alan Brandwood	AWE	
Frank Winter	AWE	
Jonathan Brown	AWE	
Graeme Hammond	AWE	
Avril Burdett	AWE	Secretary
Pamela Bale	Pangbourne Parish Council	
Mike Broad	Tadley Town Council	
Roger Brown	West Berkshire Council	
Malcolm Bryant	Wokingham Unitary Authority	
Angus Campbell	Wasing Parish Meeting	
Bill Cane	Mortimer West End Parish Council	
Chrissie Clemson	Aldermaston Parish Council	
Margaret Dadswell	Aldermaston Parish Council	
Maurice Eden	Holybrook Parish Council	
Des Hoad	Theale Parish Council	
David Leeks	Tadley Town Council	
John Mazillius	Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council	
Ron Meredith	West Berkshire Council	
Doug Mundy	Burghfield Parish Council	
John Priest	West Berkshire Council	
Murray Roberts	Padworth Parish Council	
John Southall	Purley-on-Thames Parish Council	
Peter Taylor	Brimpton Parish Council	
Colin Thomson	Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council	
Graham Ward	Woolhampton Parish Council	
Tim Whitaker	Mapledurham Parish Council	

Observers:

Darren Baker	Environment Agency
Martin Sayers	Nuclear Installations Inspectorate
Mike Jeal	Nuclear Installations Inspectorate
Chris Kemp	Nuclear Installations Inspectorate

1. Apologies

Malcolm Hutchinson, Chairman of the LLC sent his apologies, the meeting would be chaired by Bill Haight, Managing Director of AWE. Apologies also from Sheila Allen; Peter Beard; Chris Bridges; Geoff Eddy; Terry Faulkner; Tony Ferguson; Peter Hobbs; Michael Lochrie; John Parfitt; Tom Payne; Alan Sumner; Jeff Moss; Gerry Traynor.

2. Actions from the last meeting

30/1: Southampton University Study on the Website. Action Complete, see the AWE website at www.awe.co.uk

30/2: Members to supply numbers to Secretary for call-out system. Action Complete. The test will be carried out shortly. More at item 6.

30/3: Report back on the expansion of the web site

AWE had to meet stringent regulations on security for the AWE web site, so options for service providers were limited. It was expected that the expansion would be provided in the near future and would include a search engine.

30/4: Presentation at next meeting on REPIR will be presented at the next meeting. George Sallit unavailable.

3. Chairman's remarks: Bill Haight, Managing Director

Commercial Success for AWE Inventions

Two AWE inventions resulting from 'spin-off' technology from AWE's core business were on the verge of commercial success. Agreements had been signed with two industrial companies to market Boron Carbide moulding and Calixarenes. Sintec Ceramic would work with AWE to develop a process for the use of Boron Carbide in the manufacture of light but strong personnel and vehicle armour for military purposes and Pre Mac International for the manufacture of Calixarenes.

Bill Haight explained that Boron Carbide was one of the hardest materials known to science but its uses had been limited because it was difficult to form into shapes and quickly blunted cutting machinery. AWE scientists had invented a unique and novel moulding process that allowed the material to be manufactured commercially. The agreement with Sintec would enable the Company to prepare Boron Carbide plates at their plant and prove them in prescribed Ministry of Defence tests. If successful an exploitation agreement would be developed to allow production for an international market.

The second breakthrough had great potential in the environmental field. Calixarenes, cup-shaped molecules which could be chemically engineered to 'capture' the atoms of heavy metals, making them invaluable for the purification of liquids. The agreement with Pre Mac enabled the Company to use the Calixarenes designed to 'capture' Uranium in water purification machines. AWE was also working with the Company to investigate the use of other Calixarenes targeting other heavy metals.

These two developments had a multi-million pound commercial potential. They were examples of how AWE was able to develop commercial opportunities in partnership with the Ministry of Defence in areas of science and technology related to core business.

The value of AWE's commercial work was increasing and the Chairman said that he hoped to continue that trend. He stressed that it was not AWE's intention to undertake commercial work simply to generate new income streams. However, in working in areas of science and technology related to core business, the Company was able to exercise key skills and facilities that would enable AWE to support the nuclear deterrent. It gave AWE staff exciting new projects to work on and AWE would also get a share of the licence revenue. He said that this work was a credit to all AWE's scientific, technical and commercial staff who had been involved in the process.

Astronaut Brian Duffy

At the last meeting members had heard about the anticipated visit of Shuttle Commander Brian Duffy. AWE had sponsored the visit which had been set up with Lockheed Martin, one of AWE's parent companies. The visit had been a huge success; during his three days with AWE he had spoken at the Assurance Conference and addressed several hundred staff. In addition, at 10 venues he had spoken to 21 different local schools and over 4000 pupils. His talks had been enthusiastically welcomed by all, it had been a unique experience to have an opportunity to meet and hear a space commander.

Cllr David Leeks (Tadley) thanked AWE for the opportunity for his children and the children of the Hurst School (where he is a Governor) to hear Brian Duffy speak. He had had excellent feed-back on the talk.

Annual Site Exercises

Both sites had held successful Level 1 exercises earlier in the year. Bill Haight said that Emergency Response staff had been particularly pleased with the level of co-operation from the Berkshire Emergency Services. Their participation had helped staff to rehearse their roles in more realistic circumstances, whilst the off-site teams had gained first hand training and experience of AWE's unique sites. More detail at item 6.

Celebrating success – Community Awards

As part of AWE's reward and recognition scheme a system had been set up whereby teams or individuals could be given an award of £500 for sustained or improving standards of safety. However, so that there was no temptation for this to lead to non-reporting of safety-related events or concerns, the award was given to a charity of the winner's choice. The first awards had been made at the Assurance Conference and seeAbility, Saxon Wood School for disabled children in Basingstoke, Cancer Prevention Research Trust and the Cystic Fibrosis Trust had benefited. This award system looked to be very successful and would continue.

MP Briefings

Bill Haight said that he would be inviting all local MPs to visit AWE for an update on the Company's operations and performance. The Company's aim was to be as open and engaging as possible. The first invitation had gone to Martin Salter who unfortunately was unable to visit until the New Year. The Chairman said that ultimately all local MPs would be invited.

Annual Report

The 2001 Annual Report had been delayed due to resourcing problems in the Communications Group which, as a result had focused its attention on forward-looking information. The proofs were now with the printers, and the Report would be published before the end of 2002. The Report would also be reproduced on the AWE website and copies would be sent to members before the end of 2002.

Lecture at the Royal Society

AWE's Chief Scientist and Deputy Managing Director, Clive Marsh had been invited by MoD's Chief Scientific Adviser, Sir Keith O'nions to give a lecture on the science program at the Royal Society. The lecture was based on the article which appeared in the "Nature" magazine earlier in 2002. Dr Marsh showed how AWE had prepared for some years to sustain weapons in a no-test era and how the Company had developed new technologies and skills. AWE had also put together a very comprehensive exhibition to illustrate the themes of 'Certification', which covered computational physics, nuclear effects studies, supercomputing and hydrodynamics; 'Life Performance Evaluation' which covered materials and explosives science and Enabling Science and Technology' which had covered a wide range of AWE capabilities including model based engineering and assurance, remote sensing non-destructive evaluation, visualisation and precision engineering. The exhibition had been manned by some of AWE's younger scientists and engineers. The whole event had been extremely well received by academics and Ministry of Defence Staff alike and in particular by Sir Keith O'nions.

Hurricane re-union

Around 60 veterans of the first British nuclear weapons test, Hurricane had attended a reception and reunion at AWE on October 3rd to mark the 50th Anniversary. They had enjoyed lectures on the history of the UK nuclear weapons program by AWE Historian, Kate Pyne and on AWE today and in the future by Clive Marsh, Chief Scientist.

Road Safety

Bill Haight said that the company continued to have concerns about road safety around the sites and members of the public had also expressed their concern. There had been 2 more serious accidents on roads around AWE Aldermaston since the previous meeting. One had been attended by AWE staff. AWE had been in discussion with West Berkshire Council in an attempt to speed up the process of implementing traffic calming measures. Bill Haight said that he hoped that the speed limit reduction could be achieved in the near future. More at Item 6.

Mike Broad thanked the Chairman for his invitation to the AWE Family Fun Day and complimented him on a very enjoyable and successful event.

4. Health, Safety & Environmental Issues: Alan Brandwood, Assurance Director

Firemen's Strike

Alan Brandwood informed members that during the planned firemen's strikes AWE was taking extra precautions. There would be four fully-manned tenders available and a fifth if necessary. AWE firemen were not members of the British Firemen's Union and so would not be striking. If there were to be a large fire at either site, then all tenders would attend the fire and operations would be shut down on the other site. He said that the Company was well prepared and covered, probably better than any other industrial site.

Assurance Conference

The second AWE Assurance Conference had been very successful. Brian Duffy had spoken about safety in space, which like AWE's work was very scientific and technological. Richard Noble, holder of the land speed record in the eighties and who also led the team that broke the sound barrier on land talked about Safety at the cutting edge: using the right people and having good teamwork. He had remarked that the strongest competition had come from the United States which had the most people and MacLaren who had the most money.

Bill Cane said that it had been an excellent conference. He had been particularly impressed by speaker Ian Whittingham, a scaffolder who had fallen through a roof and broken his back. He had spoken about what it had meant to him and his family and had brought home the message of what Safety meant to everyone. His words that his accident had not killed him but had ended his life had been particularly poignant.

Alan Brandwood said that these presentations would be shown to all the staff at AWE. Aspects of the conference had been relayed to other conference rooms on site via a video link.

Visit of NII inspector

Lawrence Williams, Head of NII had visited AWE to look at operations in one of the Company's major facilities. It had been a very positive visit, with no new concerns raised. There had been a reminder to AWE to deliver what it had promised the NII.

Best Practice

AWE was getting more requests from other companies to share their approach to assurance. Recently BNFL and British Airways had shown an interest in AWE's processes.

KPIs

In 2002 there had been 13 KPIs with 18 targets. KPIs 12 and 13 had been new in 2002 and therefore could not be compared with previous performance. Of the other 16, ten had shown improvement and four were stable. The remaining two, covering lost time accidents and sickness absence had shown a drop in performance. Lost time accidents were defined as those accidents resulting in three days or more absence from work following the accident. The total number of injuries was at the same rate, as was the level of severity.

Trident Medical, contractors providing medical care on site, had interviewed all those concerned. Some cases were re-injury or an exacerbation of previous injury, there was a lesson

to be learnt there. The Company had to make sure that in such cases managers were aware of existing injuries or conditions and did not allocate tasks to those people which might exacerbate their injuries or medical problems.

Review, Learn and Improve

AWE's Review Learn and Improve teams were reviewing what managers were doing and feeding back to Directors and Senior Managers good, bad and improving practice.

Bill Haight said that it was important to recognise and take very seriously the lessons to be learned from the statistics. The types of incidents occurring were the same as those at home, slips, trips, lifting injuries. He said that most of the injuries were not down to using hazardous material or equipment and AWE needed to understand the nature and circumstances of injuries in order to improve the situation.

Alan Brandwood reiterated that several injuries had been caused during manual handling, such as cuts to hands, and slips, trips and falls often being the cause. A strong message was being sent to all staff and as a reminder all members of staff were being given a pair of safety gloves to use at home.

Climate survey

Climate surveys are an HSE tool which gauge staff perceptions of Health and Safety. The results of AWE's recent climate survey had now been collated. These results were being fed to Managers and Directors and they had shown common themes. Results showed that the work force believed safety systems were good and appropriate but that some health and safety procedures and instructions were difficult to follow. As described at the last meeting, that aspect of AWE processes was already being addressed.

Celebration of success

Line managers have been given £25 gift vouchers to award on the spot for good work. This also included reward for reporting near misses as an encouragement to do so.

Quarterly Report format

There had been an LLC workshop addressing how members wished to receive information. One of the outcomes had been a simpler format to the AWE Quarterly Assurance Report. Since that time three or four reports had been issued and Alan Brandwood felt it would be a good time to again a review and improve the report. He asked that any members interested in being part of the review should contact Bill Cane.

Action 31/1: members interested in taking part in a review of the format of the quarterly report to contact Bill Cane.

John Priest, on behalf of Tony Ferguson again raised the question of dropping warning letters as a Key Performance Indicator. Alan Brandwood said that the KPIs were up for annual review as part of the process for setting the targets for the coming year. He said he had noted Tony Ferguson's comments at the last three meetings and they would be taken into consideration. Bill Haight added that all Warning Letters were reported. AWE's performance indicators were all numerical so numbers at zero or low numbers were not useful as a tool to measure performance. The Company was measuring the aspects which could lead to being given warning letters in the existing and proposed KPIs. Alan Brandwood added that there had been three so-called warning letters in 2002 and AWE had reported them all to the LLC and they were documented in the Quarterly Reports.

John Priest also said that it would be useful to know in advance what the coming year's KPIs would be. Alan Brandwood said that as soon as the performance indicators had been agreed by the Executive LLC, members would be informed. Alan said that the KPIs for 2002 had not been agreed until mid-January as the AWE Executive had asked for changes and this had delayed

the process. He said that if any member had views on the key performance indicators would they please contact him directly.

John Priest asked if there were any changes for the coming year. Alan Brandwood answered that he would probably keep the current 13 and he would propose target reductions of between 10 and 50 per cent based on improvement programmes and work programmes. There was also one new Indicator under consideration in order to measure behavioural safety, and it was possible that other new ones would be considered.

Action 31/2: members to write to Alan Brandwood with any comments on AWE's key performance indicators.

Murray Roberts expressed his disappointment that NII needed to comment on AWE's tardiness in making improvements. Alan said that he had already recruited somebody to join AWE and lead the drive on quality assurance and integrated management systems. He said that he felt AWE had been held back by not having that capability.

John Mazillius said that once again there were seven incidents in the report where it seemed there was a problem with people not following the systems laid down. He asked when staff would begin to take notice. Alan Brandwood replied that there were seven key themes from abnormal event reports; one was Safe Systems of Work. In sending Review, Learn and Improve staff into each area the Company would find out what was and was not working well and share good practice. If people did not follow procedures they either didn't know in which case they would be retrained or they didn't follow by choice, and therefore would be disciplined. Bill Haight added that among five thousand individuals there were different issues, some of these would be improved by ongoing work to improve the flow of information. Alan Brandwood said that Frank Winter had closed down operations in one area and re-trained all the staff. Some staff were being trained specifically to observe and work was ongoing with union backing to change behaviour. He said there would be disciplinary action against staff and contractors. In one instance a contractor had been removed from site and Directors from his company had been brought in to discuss the implications and the way forward.

Members said that the KPI on senior manager visits set a bad example at only 69 per cent compliance. Alan said that the trend was right as there had been improvement over the last quarter. He was also suggesting a change to the measurement of this indicator, by setting a target of five visits per manager per quarter. This meant that visits had to be spaced out throughout the year and the target could not be met by managers just making 20 visits during December. He said that this was the first time in AWE's history that facility visits had been measured, he felt that this brought high visibility to an area where the Executive was not happy with performance.

John Mazillius asked for more detail on visits to AWE by HSE's Factory, Explosives and Fire Inspectors. Chris Kemp (NII) said that part of his job was to lead the team formed by all HSE inspectors who visited AWE, but the quarterly report had always been confined to nuclear matters. However, he would extend the next report to include these other visits, to see whether members found that useful.

Bill Cane asked about some abnormal events being put down to Radiological Protection Equipment (RPE) failures. He asked whether this was due to poor design. Alan Brandwood said that the Review Learn and Improve process had resulted in discussions with manufacturers over such things as more robust couplings and improvements had been made. There had also been initiatives to make people aware of how they might damage their protective equipment. There was a Personal Protective Equipment Group on site who reviewed RPE in order to find the best. One result of this had been the introduction of launderable coveralls which had a higher integrity, reduced waste and gave better protection.

John Priest asked for more detail on the NII's decision to lift the embargo on organisational change at AWE. Alan explained that licence condition 36, which had been introduced two-to-three years previously had required a baseline document laying down the numbers and locations of safety personnel. During the time that the baseline document had been put together no reduction in safety staff had been allowed without full NII approval. That embargo had now been lifted and AWE could make changes as long they were fully justified in accordance with the arrangements under LC 36. With only one weapon to manufacture and support there was less work and there were cases where there was justification for a commensurate reduction in the number of safety personnel.

Chris Kemp of NII said that the baseline document was a requirement of all nuclear licensed sites. This had been a learning phase and contained justification for safety staff. It highlighted vulnerability where safety depended upon one person. By mid-2002 AWE had reached a point of equilibrium, the process now was that NII was informed of safety staff changes, and made random checks.

5. An Independent review of Safety Management at AWE, Annual Report 2002
Steve Gibbs Independent Director, Safety & Andy Lewis Independent Safety Executive.
The presentation slides are attached.

Murray Roberts said that he appreciated the overview of AWE's performance and asked if, as had happened last year, an unclassified version could be provided for LLC members. He was told that the full report was classified and a second unclassified version entailed double the work which seemed unnecessary when there was so little new to report since the previous year. Mr Gibbs said that he would keep in mind the request for an unclassified version, but that the programme for the future would be more of a rolling programme than an annual event.

6. Infrastructure Issues: Frank Winter, Director Infrastructure

Action 27/4 – Locate the tritium source at North Ponds. There was an outstanding action to inform the LLC on the situation regarding AWE locating the source of tritium in the area around the North Ponds Complex. Jonathan Brown said that there had been a very good LLC workshop covering tritium issues. One recommendation from the LLC had been to look again at locating the source of tritium in the North Ponds area. AWE was now looking at reprofiling the site tip, which would provide more information on the geology of the area and give further indication of whether the Tritium source could practically be located. The work would commence as soon as possible, pending the requirement for a licence from DEFRA covering possible reptiles in the area. Jonathan said that once that work had been carried out AWE would report back and update the Tritium Strategy.

Housekeeping Week

As part of the initiatives to reduce the number of buildings and assets, improve safety and tidy the sites, AWE had held a well-publicised 'Site Tidy' campaign during October. The success of the campaign had been extraordinary; 10 tonnes of waste paper were recycled in the first 2 weeks, four forty-foot vehicles loaded with furniture and equipment were sent to AWE's disposal contractor. In one week, a month's worth of routinely recycled materials were collected. 111 tonnes of scrap metal were disposed of, the equivalent weight of around 150 average-sized family cars! Needless to say, Frank Winter planned to repeat the exercise in the future.

Estate Services Contract

At the previous meeting members had been told how the Company had brought estate services under one contract with Haden. The contract had covered services such as catering, cleaning, landscaping, transport and waste management. Recently car hire and travel had been added. It was proposed to add accommodation moves, Reception services, reprographics services and switchboard operation.

This contract had been running for almost 12 months and had proved very successful, the Company had just won a prestigious award with Haden Building Management, the National Premises & Facilities Management Award. This was external recognition by a national body and was usually won by long-established partnerships.

Asset Services Contract

Asset services at AWE was now going to be run along the same lines as the Estate Services contract. This contract had recently been awarded to Emcor Facilities Services with a 5-year contract starting 1 January 2003.

The Contract covered all currently sub-contracted maintenance previously covered by around 190 sub-contracts. A Contract Management Team supported by specialists would manage the Contract to ensure delivery. Built into the contract were Key Performance Indicators linked to payment, several of which were on safety issues and would drive management and behavioural improvements. There would be a single point of contact and consistent service. Emcor were already on site for a lead-in period.

Site Consolidation

A survey of the number of buildings at AWE and the number actually needed had been carried out and as a result a consolidation plan for AWE had been developed. In October 23 buildings had been closed making 88 in total so far in 2002. A further 28 temporary buildings would be removed or demolished by December 2002. Frank Winter added that members may already have noticed buildings at the west end of the Aldermaston site had been removed. He explained that old buildings contained asbestos and high-cost, low efficiency services and it made more sense to redevelop the site to reduce the costs of maintaining such buildings.

Site Development

The Site Development Plan continued to be refined and some changes would be visible from outside the site during the winter with landscaping enhancements to soften site boundary being implemented. AWE had completed discussions on the Site Development with the Local Planning Authority.

The redevelopment phase included a proposal to transfer Main Gate to the west end of site so the current Main Gate would become a goods and services entrance. The Falcon Gate would be closed to vehicle traffic and become a pedestrian and cycle entrance. The A340 contractors gate would re-open temporarily. This would improve on-site parking and search facilities and so improve the traffic flow locally during increased security alerts.

Graeme Hammond and Frank Winter had given a presentation on the Site Development Plan to the Annual meeting of the Nuclear Awareness Group, this had been reported in the local press.

Speed Limit Reduction

AWE had hosted a very positive meeting with members of bordering councils and had recommended to West Berkshire Council that the present 60mph limit be reduced to 40mph on several stretches of road around the site. AWE had written confirmation that West Berkshire Council were willing to fund the speed limit consultation. The speed limit review had commenced but there was no date given for completion. AWE was also discussing other proposed improvements at site entrances and Frank Winter said that he would keep members informed. He said that there was a level of frustration over this issue and AWE felt that urgent action was required. AWE had funded the consultation process and a report was expected in the very near future, there was to be a further meeting with West Berkshire Council the following week.

Frank Winter said that there was a good dialogue with West Berkshire Council who were supportive of AWE's aims to improve safety. It was the process to achieve change which was slow. Local council representatives added their support to improved safety on bordering roads and reminded AWE that the process of turning wishes into action was bureaucratic and slow. The local councils also asked for copies of the reports.

Action 31/3: Provide copies of the traffic studies to neighbouring councils.

John Priest (West Berkshire) added that West Berkshire was working closely with AWE on this problem, and formed part of an ongoing dialogue with AWE. There was a willingness to support AWE's aims and it was a question of how soon improvements could be made.

Cllr Broad pointed out that at the Tadley public meeting for the PASCALEA project the main concern had been related to traffic problems associated with AWE.

Cllr Southall asked how the reduced speed limits would be policed and Cllr Leeks suggested flashing signs which warned motorists that they were travelling at speeds above the limit. Frank Winter said that AWE and West Berkshire would look constructively at how the speed limits could be effectively enforced.

Cllr Mundy (Burghfield) asked if warning signs could be placed at the entrance to the Burghfield site as more lorries were using that route due to a weak bridge on an adjacent road.

Action 31/4: Look at the requirement for signs at the Burghfield entrance.

Grims Bank Renovation

AWE had an ancient monument on the Aldermaston site known as Grims Bank. It was a well preserved ditch and bank structure dating back to at least Roman times and possibly several hundred years earlier. Over the years it had become rather overgrown but AWE was working with English Heritage to maintain it. Already foliage had been cut back to expose more of the Bank. A tree survey had been carried out by a landscaping contractor and some trees would be cut back to stumps. This would improve wildlife habit and would not degrade the monument as taking out the roots would. Some trees would be protected for future growth.

Annual Site Exercises

Site Exercises were part of the NII requirement for nuclear licensed sites. The scenario at Aldermaston on 8 July had involved a plane crash and provided a stretching test of capability. The exercise was successful with some valuable learning points, which was one of the main purposes of such exercises. There was extensive participation from the county fire brigades with 14 county fire appliances and 70 fire fighters on site.

The scenario of the Burghfield Sitex on 1 October had involved the crash of a survey helicopter. New command and control arrangements had been tested and worked effectively, and participants included Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and Ambulance Trust. For the first time, the Royal Berkshire Hospital had been involved, it had been a successful and useful exercise with a great degree of interaction with the emergency services. NII confirmed that they were confident that had it been for real, AWE would have coped.

Security Fence Lighting

The perimeter fence security lights had recently been upgraded. This has reduced the amount of light pollution due to the use of modern, down-facing lamps and switchgear.

Telephone Alerting System Progress

The system had been installed and some on-site testing had been carried out. The messages had been recorded and delivered to the call centre. The system at the off-site call centre had been installed and tested. The databases had been constructed and delivered for installation on the system. Operational tests would follow with training and initiation protocols being developed.

Members could expect to be asked to help test the system in mid December. The Secretary would write to members who had volunteered, giving details.

Paice's Hill Tip

Both AWE and West Berkshire Council had continuing problems with fly-tipping at the Paice's Hill recycling centre. Rubbish was blowing onto the Aldermaston site and had also blown into the A340 causing a hazard to motorists. The matter had been raised again with West Berkshire Council and AWE had been assured that the council was working towards a solution to the problem. John Priest confirmed that this was the case. AWE had offered its support. Cllr Leeks put forward some suggestions to alleviate the problem and warned that with threatened rises in landfill tax the problem could get worse.

PASCALEA – Environmental options assessment update

Jonathan Brown explained that AWE had commissioned an independent environmental consultation which was being carried out by NNC using specialist support from the University of Lancaster. Bill Cane was Chairman of the Steering Group and John Mazillius was a member, Jonathan Brown was the only representative of AWE on the Steering Group. The final report would be published before Christmas 2002 and once AWE had reviewed the report they would respond to the findings. That response would be made available to members and copies. The AWE response was expected to be published by the end of March 2003.

Members expressed concern that the attendance at public meetings had been low. Jonathan Brown agreed but said that the experts at Lancaster University had expected a low attendance, they had said that the bulk of the information would come from the Focus Groups.

7. Any other business

Cllr Bryant asked whether the demolition of buildings would lead to the perimeter fences being brought in and land being sold off by the MoD for housing. Frank Winter said that this was not part of the plan, although the inner fence might be brought in, the plan was for the outer fence to stay in its current position. In the long term that was an issue for MoD, as the owners of the land to decide. The image of AWE would become less austere over the coming years with the removal of the steam main, and trees planted to screen some buildings close to the fence line.

Cllr Leeks asked if AWE had considered using some of the space created as a wind farm, AWE had not but the idea would be put forward. Cllr Leeks then expressed his concern over the lack of disabled access to the meeting room. He was assured that the new buildings would be more accessible and that over the coming years as buildings were refurbished, disabled access would be improved.

Bill Cane raised the question of anti-nuclear protesters gaining access to AWE sites. He said that this raised concerns on how easy it might be for terrorists to gain access to the sites. Bill Haight said that AWE had security in depth and the MoD Police reaction to known activists was different to their reaction to unknown persons including potential terrorists. He said that he understood the concern and that security was under constant review which meant that a rolling programme of enhancements was in place. Although AWE plc did not manage the MOD Police contract, they had set KPIs under a service level agreement. Bill Haight also said that AWE now had a full time Legal Counsel on the staff and one of his roles was to deal effectively with those who illegally entered AWE's sites. Ron Meredith compared AWE's stance with the same situation at Greenham Common during its time as an American base. The policy then had been not to prosecute as it gave protesters a voice in court.

Peter Taylor pointed out that AWE's detailed data on discharges was not on the AWE website. The Secretary said that it was available on the EA's website and Cllr Taylor asked for a link between the two sites.

Action 31/5: Install a link on the AWE web site to take users to AWE's discharge information on the Environment Agency's web site.

Cllr Whitaker asked for details of the recent survey of the Pangbourne Pipeline outfall. Jonathan Brown said that Royal Navy divers had recently checked the sparges on the riverbed where the pipeline discharged. The build up of silt had only affected two nozzles and that would be cleared during 2003. The equipment was all in good order. They had taken samples of the silt both upstream and downstream of the discharge point, the results of those samples showed radioactivity at normal/background levels. The divers had also taken deep samples and the results from those samples would be published as part of the Environment Agency's monitoring program.

Cllr Whitaker then asked whether the terrorist threats of dirty bombs and suicide bombers posed an environmental threat around the AWE sites. Alan Brandwood said that the MoD Police were trained to respond to such threats and re-iterated that their response to known activists was very different to that to a terrorist threat.

Cllr Southall asked whether a visit to Burghfield would be possible.

Action 31/6: Secretary to explore the possibility of a visit to AWE Burghfield.

In response to a question on the overflight of a hot air balloon, Bill Haight said that the CAA investigation had agreed that there had been a breach of the restricted zone around the Burghfield site but that there had been extenuating circumstances. He said that he was not satisfied with that view and would continue to pursue this with the CAA. Cllr Leeks added his support to the Chairman's actions. Whilst the incident happening on 11 September had caused initial concern, it had proved to be purely coincidental.

8. Date of next meetings

Thursday 6th March

Thursday 4th September

Thursday 5th June

Thursday 4th December