

**Minutes of the 35th AWE Local Liaison Committee Meeting
Thursday 4 December 2003**

Present:

Malcolm Hutchinson	Executive Chairman, AWE	Chairman LLC
Bill Haight	Managing Director, AWE	
Alan Brandwood	Assurance Director, AWE	
Jonathan Brown	Director Infrastructure, AWE	
Alan Price	Corporate Communications, AWE	
Avril Burdett	Public Affairs Manager, AWE	Secretary LLC
Ros Baxter	West Berkshire Council	
Mike Broad	Tadley Town Council	
Malcolm Bryant	Wokingham Unitary Authority	
Bill Cane	Mortimer West End Parish Council	Community Liaison Rep.
Dennis Cowdery	Brimpton Parish Council	
Margaret Dadswell	Aldermaston Parish Council	
David Dymond	Reading Borough Council	
Geoff Eddy	Hampshire County Council	
Maurice Eden	Holybrook Parish Council	
Peter Hobbs	Sulhamstead Parish Council	
Michael Lochrie	Burghfield Parish Council	
Martin Maynard	Pangbourne Parish Council	
Jeff Moss	Swallowfield Parish Council	
Doug Mundy	Burghfield Parish Council	
Irene Neill	West Berkshire Council	
Tom Payne	Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council	
Murray Roberts	Padworth Parish Council	
John Southall	Purley-on-Thames Parish Council	
Alan Sumner	Wokefield Parish Council	
Graham Ward	Woolhampton Parish Council	
Tim Whitaker	Mapledurham Parish Council	
Penny Williams	Purley-on-Thames Parish Council	

Observers:

Darren Baker	Environment Agency
Chris Kemp	Nuclear Installations Inspectorate

Presenter:

Nick Wood	Food Standards Agency
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The Chairman welcomed Ros Baxter, Emergency Planning Officer and Cllr Penny Williams of Purley Parish Council as new members.

1. Apologies

Cllr Beard; Cllr Brown; Cllr Campbell; Cllr Charlesworth; Cllr Faulkner; Cllr Leeks; Cllr Longton; Mr Mazillius; Mr Parfitt; Mr Thomson; Cllr Waite

2. Actions from the last meeting

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

A new server and content management system has been developed and will go on line before Christmas. This will enable AWE to publish information much more quickly and easily on the web site. Changes to the content will be introduced in the coming months. An "on line" recruitment system will be incorporated shortly.

The revised format of the web site will meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, well in advance of it coming in to force in October 2004.

Action 31/3: Provide copies of AWE's traffic studies to neighbouring councils. Copies were made available.

Action 34/1: Members to feed back any comments on the meeting summary sheet to the Secretary. The Chairman thanked those who had replied. All had found the summary notes useful for briefing on the business of the LLC.

Action 34/2: Members to feed back comments on the glossary to Avril Burdett. Those who had replied felt that the glossary was helpful.

3. Minutes of the 34th Meeting

Jeff Moss was not listed as present.

4. Chairman's remarks – Malcolm Hutchinson, Executive Chairman

Presentation by Food Standards Agency

The Chairman welcomed Nick Wood of the Food Standards Agency. Copies of the FSA's summary report on monitoring results around the Aldermaston site had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. A presentation was given at agenda item 6.

Apprentice School Visit

Postponed until the meeting in March 2004.

Apprentice Prize giving

Malcolm Hutchinson, a graduate apprentice himself, had presented this year's graduating apprentices with their Deeds of Apprenticeship and awarded prizes to others for outstanding achievement at their annual prize giving on 27th November. He was pleased to see Bill Cane representing the LLC at the event.

Certification: ISO 9001:2000 and BS 7799 Certification

The Company was pleased to receive confirmation that AWE has achieved certification to both BS 7799 and ISO 9001:2000 recently.

BS 7799 is the Information Security Management accreditation. Lloyd's Register of Quality Assurance, AWE's Third Party Certification Body stated that achieving BS 7799 certification was truly world class performance, particularly as AWE is one of the largest and most complex companies that has achieved this anywhere in the world.

ISO 9001:2000 is the quality of Management Systems accreditation. During our audit for certification no non-conformances or Improvement Notes were raised against the new standard. There were also no new Improvement Notes raised against AWE's current certification (the 1994 standard) and 8 outstanding Improvement Notes from previous visits were closed out with only 2 remaining open.

ISO 14001 accreditation covers environmental processes. The second ISO 14001 surveillance visit of 2003, in September/October was also a success and no non-conformances or Improvement Notes were raised. Lloyd's commented that this was an unprecedented success in any surveillance audit of this size. The auditors reported that there was good evidence that the system is maturing and AWE is making good progress on closing out the existing improvement notes. The re-certification audit is planned for April next year.

Notices of Planned Development – Orion and Burghfield Infrastructure

The MoD has submitted a Notice of Planned Development (NoPD) for the building to house the proposed new Orion Laser. This is part of a feasibility study; no decision has been taken on whether it will be located at AWE Aldermaston. The planning application for Orion was expected to be heard on 17th December. Jonathan Brown gave more details (agenda item 7)

about this NoPD and a further one covering the upgrade of utility supplies to the Burghfield site.

Hampshire Hog Award

AWE has received another award in recognition of the support it gives to schools to assist them in teaching science and technology, this time in Hampshire.

The latest acknowledgement is from Hampshire County Council who have recently launched an award scheme to recognise the role that is played by school governors across the county. Governors are recognised for the excellent contribution they make to the life of their school but they in turn were also asked to nominate businesses that play a major part in helping them in their role.

Books for Schools

Each year AWE offers £200 to the first 50 of the 68 local schools on the Schools Liaison Scheme to apply. The money is provided to buy science or technology books and software. This year there were 56 applications, so the Schools Liaison Committee has presented all 56 schools with cheques.

Strategic Plan – mentioned in NII Report

The Company has published its latest Strategic Plan. This year AWE staff went out to many stakeholders, the NII and Environment Agency included, to see what they were expecting from AWE in the coming years. AWE now has a robust plan to take the Company forwards. Almost all AWE staff have attended briefings by Bill Haight and his deputy, Clive Marsh.

David Rendel's visit

Local MP David Rendel visited AWE on 1st October. In a very positive meeting he was briefed on AWE's progress in areas including recruitment, infrastructure and assurance.

Anthony Nolan Bone Marrow Day

A visit from representatives of the Anthony Nolan Bone Marrow Trust has been arranged for Monday 8th December. This will give staff the opportunity to volunteer to be put on the Bone Marrow Donor register. This opportunity was extended to the local community.

Award to North Hants Hospital

The Accident and Emergency department at the North Hampshire Hospital is to buy some additional two-way radios thanks to the safety performance of a team of AWE staff.

A quarterly prize of £500 is available on the Recognition of Assurance Performance Awards scheme to the team that demonstrates a particularly high commitment to raising the profile of health and safety in their work place. This quarter's award will purchase the new equipment for the North Hampshire Hospital. The two-way radios enable staff to remain in contact with each other around the wards. This increases the safety and security of both staff and patients.

Security Clearance

Members were reminded that it was essential that they complete and return their security clearance forms as soon as possible. Failure to do so would result in future meetings being held off site.

5. Health, Safety & Environmental Issues - Alan Brandwood, Assurance Director

Performance Overview to September 2003

Copies of the presentation slides were circulated at the meeting.

There was a discussion about AWE's performance on Lost Time Accidents, where the Company's internal target had not been met. The first two quarters showed a decline in

performance but an improvement had been achieved in the third quarter. Alan Brandwood said that there had been an increase in contractor injuries, AWE was addressing this by meeting directors of the companies involved and putting in plans for improvements. Only companies which met AWE's criteria for safety performance were employed. AWE also used sanctions to improve poor performance. The ultimate sanction was termination of the contract.

In answer to questions AWE undertook to give a presentation on radiation doses are measured.

Action: Presentation on Radiation and Dose Measurement at the next LLC meeting. Assurance Conference and Exhibition

The third annual AWE Assurance Conference was held on in October. The theme was Target Zero, challenging the idea that some accidents are 'inevitable'. The conference also encouraged staff to share their good practise at home.

The conference guest speaker was Bear Grylls, the youngest British climber to conquer Mount Everest. His presentation, "No latitude for error", provided a unique insight into some of the health and safety implications involved with such a monumental feat.

Variations to Discharge Authorisations

AWE has applied to the Environment Agency for minor variations to its existing RSA Authorisation. The consultation period on the EA Explanatory Document and Draft Variation has now formally ended. To date, AWE is not aware of any major issues arising from the consultation process.

The EA will now produce a Decision Document detailing their conclusions and it is anticipated that any new authorisation would come into effect in the Spring of 2004.

NuSAC Visit

In October, AWE hosted a visit from NuSAC, the Government's Nuclear Safety Advisory Committee. The Company received some very positive comments concerning "significant improvements" since April 2000 and members were impressed with AWE's progress on decommissioning and overall safety management. Laurence Williams, Head of NII, commented that safety was now being managed well.

HSE Strategic Plan for Nuclear Sector

The HSE Nuclear Safety Directorate's Strategic Plan 2003 – 2006 has now been finalised and was formally issued in October. Following a review of the Strategic Plan to confirm that AWE's programme aligns with the document, we do not believe that there is any significant need for change in emphasis of AWE programmes.

Any LLC members who provided comments on the draft Plan will receive a letter explaining how their views have been addressed, and a copy of the final document.

Annual Safety Review Meeting with Regulators

The meeting was held on 3 July 2003 and this was the first time all the regulators had attended the annual Regulatory Safety Review Meeting. The meeting was well supported by AWE plc, with all operational directors attending.

AWE's safety performance and plans were discussed, and NII indicated a number of topics that would be given particular regulatory attention in the coming year. They included: generic safety case improvements; design standards; analysis of the system for controlling movement of fissile material in facilities; the Integrated Criticality Programme; compliance with Licence Instruments issued on waste conditioning and disposal; future facilities at Burghfield; the disassembly of Trident warheads.

Nuclear Industries Association Seminar

In October AWE presented a paper at the NIA Conference on Safety Culture. The paper focused on what an organisation can do in practical terms to improve culture and performances whereas most others focused on strategy.

Behavioural Safety User Conference

In early November a number of staff from across the behavioural safety community at AWE attended the Behavioural Safety User Conference in Manchester. AWE gave a presentation on the Company's work which was well received. In addition, the Allan Poole Trophy (posthumously named after one of the first behavioural safety observers at AWE) was presented to Canadian Natural Resources, the winners of the Behavioural Safety Best Practice Awards for 2003.

The work done by AWE to review behavioural safety measures was seen as setting an example for others and BNFL Magnox have stated that they would like to benchmark their behavioural safety activities against those of AWE.

Nuclear Sector Plan

Early in the New Year it is anticipated that the EA will be publishing a document called the Nuclear Sector Plan (NSP) which has been developed in partnership with the Nuclear Industry, including representatives from AWE. The NSP is the first of a number of Industry Sector Plans; others include the Cement, Chemicals, Water and Waste, which the EA will be publishing over the next year or so. Each plan will have a number of objectives linking into the EA's vision and the overall government strategy for Sustainable Development. Each objective will be measured by a number of performance indicators and associated tasks and milestones, and all nuclear licensed sites will report on them annually to the EA.

One objective is associated with the reduction of radioactive discharges and there are a number of Performance Indicators similar to those already reported by AWE to the LLC. One of the milestones associated with this objective is the closure of the Pangbourne Pipeline scheduled for April 2005.

Each year the EA will then produce a Nuclear Sector Report (NSR). This will allow the EA and the public to make inter-industry comparisons. AWE already makes regular statutory reports to the EA, and last year started voluntarily reporting additional information. AWE has always released as much information about its environmental performance as security considerations will allow and is happy to be associated with this important development in open reporting across the whole of UK industry.

Environment Week 2004.

AWE's Environment Week 2004 has been proposed for 1-3rd June to coincide with World Environment Day (Saturday 5th June 2003).

6. Presentation by Food Standards Agency – Nick Wood

Nick Wood of the Food Standards Agency gave a presentation on the annual survey results from surveys carried out around the Aldermaston and Burghfield sites. A summary report had been circulated to members prior to the meeting.

Slides from the presentation are attached, more information can be found on the FSA web site: www.food.gov.uk.

John Southall asked whether the results matched those of the Southampton University Study. He was told that they did. Doug Mundy asked about problems with raw sewage in the Burghfield area. Nick Wood said he would speak to him about the issue outside the meeting.

A question was asked about the scope of the programme. Mr Wood said they had been looking for a variety of substances, but in particular, isotopes of plutonium, uranium and tritium. Tim Whitaker asked to see the results of fish sampling from the Thames. The information was available on the CD supplied with the full FSA report.

7. Infrastructure Issues – Jonathan Brown, Director Infrastructure

Notices of Planned Development (NoPDs)

Orion – AWE very much hopes that a new laser research facility will be built at Aldermaston on a site cleared of redundant buildings. This NoPD has been submitted as part of the feasibility study carried out by AWE for the MoD.

Burghfield Utilities Upgrade – Following a study of the infrastructure of AWE Burghfield, this NoPD covers the necessary upgrades to electricity supplies and heating. Current overhead electricity supplies will be upgraded to underground supplies with improved switching gear. The current boiler house, which burns heavy oil, will be decommissioned and replaced by localised gas heating systems. This will reduce the CO₂ emissions from the site by approximately 88%.

Fire certification issues

All buildings on both sites have to comply with the Fire Certification (Special Premises) Regulations 1976. A programme has been agreed with the HSE and NII to ensure compliance. All work is proceeding to plan using the HSE agreed inspection schedules. However, due to resignation, there is currently no HSE Inspector in post. AWE is therefore proceeding using schedules that are the basis of the HSE agreement.

Quinquennial Review

On Friday 12th December, NII published its Quinquennial Review of AWE. The Government White Paper 'Review of Radioactive Waste Management Policy: Final Conclusions' (Command 2919) published in 1995, requires the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to review the decommissioning strategies of all nuclear operators on a quinquennial (5 yearly) basis. HSE tasked HM Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII) to undertake the review on its behalf. NII is one of the specialist inspectorates of HSE. Consultation with the Environment Agency (EA) is a requirement during the review.

The reason for undertaking the review is to demonstrate that nuclear operators have robust procedures for developing and implementing plans to deal with decommissioning and clean up of facilities and sites at the end of their operational lives. This includes estimating and making adequate financial arrangements to cover the costs of undertaking the work.

The AWE sites were first issued with a nuclear site licence by the NII in 1997. This process of licensing the sites requires the NII to carry out a review of decommissioning strategy. It follows, therefore, that the first Quinquennial Review should be carried out in 2002.

NII correspondence re supports for pipework

The NII had received correspondence from a private individual regarding a change in specification to the construction materials used in an AWE facility. This matter has been investigated by NII with the assistance as necessary from AWE and it is understood that the matter had been closed out by NII.

AWE Travel Pattern Survey

This survey looked at the traffic flow to and from both AWE sites during the morning and evening rush hours. It particularly looked at the percentage of AWE related vehicles in the general traffic. This showed how and where staff could be encouraged to use other forms of transport. Copies of the study were made available at the meeting.

Sitex (A)

One of the NII licence conditions is that an agreed demonstration site emergency exercise is carried out each year on each site. The Aldermaston demonstration was conducted on the 2nd July.

This exercise was reported at the last meeting. It was agreed that a repeat of the exercise will take place. Staff have been working to address the areas in need of improvement. The Company will demonstrate the effectiveness of these improvements in February.

Sitex (B) 30th September

This was a complicated exercise covering new areas. The county fire service conducted a complex rescue operation from deep within a facility at the site. The exercise was successful, as the NII have said in their Quarterly Report but, a key feature of such exercises is to learn from them, and some important lessons were identified this time. These will form the cornerstone of AWE's Review Learn and Improve cycle.

Questions were asked about security procedures during such exercises. Members were assured that non-AWE fire and ambulance crews were escorted coming on to the sites.

A question was asked about what hospitals would do about casualties from any incident at AWE if it happened when hospitals were over stretched during the winter. Hospitals all have contingency plans to deal with major incidents at any time. Our local hospitals are also specially trained in dealing with casualties contaminated with radioactive material. Any actions they would need to take form part of their own emergency planning.

PASCALEA response update

PASCALEA is a Public consultation programme on the AWE environmental aims. One of the actions from the PASCALEA report was to produce public information leaflets on various topics.

10 year environmental management plan. The AWE Environmental Management Plan includes environmental projects as well as decommissioning and waste management. AWE has now received formal comments from the Environmental Agency on the Plan. The Agency has agreed to this plan as the basis for the next update of the plan due in March 2004.

Environmental Management Leaflet. An information leaflet is being produced covering a summary of legacy issues and the plans and progress AWE is making against them. The first leaflet entitled 'Environmental Stewardship' was issued in summer 2001 and a new leaflet is in the early stages of preparation and is scheduled for publication in mid 2004.

Another leaflet entitled 'How AWE is regulated' will be distributed to members early in 2004.

Pangbourne Pipeline replacement facility update

One of the AWE major investment schemes is the replacement of the Pangbourne Pipeline, which discharges waste water into the Thames at Pangbourne under limits authorised by the Environment Agency. This is being replaced by a Waste Treatment Plant on the Aldermaston site. Agreement from the NII for the Pre-Construction Safety Report for the Waste Treatment Plant has been received. Site works commenced in August 2003 (three months earlier than expected), good progress is being made, with 'below ground' works on the building foundations almost completed. Erection of building steelwork will commence in the next 4 weeks.

The volume of effluent collected at the Aldermaston site has continued to fall as a result of AWE's waste minimisation initiatives and early decommissioning work. The volume of effluent has fallen from about 4500 cubic metres in 2002 to 3000 cubic metres in 2003.

Ongoing work in these areas will ensure that this downward trend continues. In fact, PPL discharges have reduced to the extent that there had been no discharge during October.

Site Development update

AWE's Sites Development Plan demonstrates how the sites could be developed over the next 25 years to achieve contractual outputs. Work is progressing on demolition and site clearance in preparation for the next stages of site development. AWE had offered to give a presentation to the local planning authority on the overall Site Development Strategy so that individual NoPDS could be seen in context. This offer was extended to the LLC member councils.

Sludge

The cementation of legacy sludges held in the Waste Management facilities at AWE Aldermaston commenced in October 2003. The sludges are a by-product of AWE's waste treatment process and have been collected since sea dumping ceased in the 1980s.

To date, over 120 cemented waste drums have been produced. These will be disposed of to Drigg as Low Level Waste. In addition, three legacy sludge storage tanks have been emptied and removed for decommissioning. This involves cutting up the tanks. These have been replaced with three new, purpose-built tanks which will act as feed tanks to the cementation process.

8. Update of the LLC Terms of Reference

Members were asked to review the Terms of Reference for discussion at the next LLC meeting.

9. Any Other Business

Members voted to retain Bill Cane as the LLC Community Representative. The Chairman thanked Councillor Cane for his efforts.

Cllr Mundy asked a question about the rules governing the use of sirens and blue lights on convoy escort vehicles. The particular instance of this will be investigated and the findings reported back to Cllr Mundy.

10. Date of next meetings

Thursday 4th March 2004
 Thursday 3rd June 2004
 Thursday 2nd September 2004
 Thursday 2nd December 2004

Avril Burdett
 Secretary to the AWE Local Liaison Committee