

Minutes of the 42nd AWE Local Liaison Committee Meeting

Thursday 15th September 2005

Present:

Dr David Glue	Director Stockpile Management	Chairman LLC
Jonathan Brown	Director Infrastructure,	AWE
Dr Angela Jenkins	Director Assurance,	AWE
Alan Price	Head Corporate Communications	
Avril Burdett	Corporate Communications,	AWE
Lindsey Appleton	Corporate Communications,	AWE
Gareth Beard	Head of Environment,	AWE
Cllr Mike Broad	Tadley Town Council	
Angus Campbell	Wasing Parish Meeting	
Cllr Bill Cane	Mortimer West End PC	LLC Community Liaison Rep.
Cllr Dennis Cowdery	Brimpton PC	
Alan Craft	Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council	
Cllr David Dymond	Reading Borough Council	
Cllr Valerie Frost	Tadley Town Council	
Cllr Phil Gowen	West Berkshire Council	
Cllr John Heggadon	Shinfield Parish Council	
Cllr Peter Hobbs	Sulhampstead Parish Council	
Julie James	Hampshire County Council	
Cllr David Leeks	Tadley Town Council	
Cllr Royce Longton	West Berkshire Council	
Ben Matthews	Hampshire County Council	
Cllr Jeff Moss	Swallowfield PC	
Cllr Dr Murray Roberts	Padworth PC	
Cllr John Southall	Purley-on-Thames PC	
Mr Bill Taylor	Stratfield Mortimer PC	
Cllr Graham Ward	Woolhampton PC	
Cllr Tim Whitaker	Mapledurham PC	
Cllr David Wood	Theale Parish Council	

Observers:

Mike Jeal	Nuclear Installations Inspectorate
Steve Lewis	Nuclear Installations Inspectorate
Andy Curran	Nuclear Installations Inspectorate
Dr Craig Reiersen	Nuclear Installations Inspectorate
Elaine Ridsdale	Nuclear Installations Inspectorate

1. Introduction

Dr David Glue, Chairman of the meeting, introduced himself as a longstanding member of AWE, Director of Stockpile Management and Acting Managing Director.

2. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies from: Bill Haight, Managing Director, AWE; Roz Baxter; Cllr Peter Beard; Cllr Glyn Charlesworth; Cllr Margaret Dadswell; Cllr P Garrett; Cllr Gordon Lewis; Cllr Martin Maynard; Cllr Michael Lochrie; Cllr Doug Mundy; Cllr G Traynor; Cllr Roy Waite; Darren Baker, Environment Agency.

David Glue explained that AWE Plc Chairman Malcolm Hutchinson had retired. Bill Cane asked that the good wishes and thanks of LLC members be passed on to Mr Hutchinson.

The Chairman welcomed back John Southall to the LLC and welcomed new members John Heggadon, Julie James, Ben Matthews, Alan Craft and Clive Vare. He also thanked retiring member, Pennie Williams for her support and input to the LLC.

3. Actions from the last Meeting

Action 40/4: Secretary to arrange a presentation on Staff Issues. The Director responsible for HR issues had been taken ill and therefore the presentation was postponed until the September meeting. The presentation was given at item 9 on the agenda.

Action 41/1: Secretary to send copies of the corporate brochure 'Meeting the Challenge' to members. Copies were given out at the meeting, members not present will be sent copies with the minutes.

Action 41/2: Provide handouts of the Assurance Matters presentation at meetings: Copies were given.

Action 41/3: Members to notify Secretary if they prefer to receive minutes etc. electronically. Action complete.

Action 41/4: Members requested presentation on AWE's Energy Efficiency Strategy. Presentation given by Jonathan Brown at item 8 on the agenda.

4. Minutes of the last meeting

The Secretary apologised that Pennie Williams, who had been present at the 41st meeting, had not been listed in the minutes. With this change, the minutes were accepted as a true record.

5. Chairman's Remarks – Dr David Glue, Acting Managing Director.

Investment in AWE Bill Haight had written to members about the Government announcement that over £1 billion is to be invested at AWE over the next three years. Although not in the Ministerial Statement, the MoD has also confirmed to journalists that this will involve increasing the workforce by around 350 in each of the next three years. This investment will allow AWE to press ahead with the modernisation of the sites and the LLC will be kept informed of progress.

Cllr Murray Roberts asked whether there would also be a rise in the number of contractors at AWE in the future. Dr Glue responded by saying that the number of contractors was expected to rise to approximately 1,200 in total over the next 3 years.

Investors in Excellence

AWE achieved the British Quality Foundation Investors in Excellence Standard. This led to AWE winning the Blue Riband Award for Best Investor in Excellence and the Corporate Social Responsibility award. The CSR award presentation was given to members at item 10 on the agenda.

Visit of Richard Benyon MP

The recently elected local MP (for Newbury) Richard Benyon spent a day at AWE and was highly supportive. Mr Benyon praised AWE's work in his Maiden Speech in the House of Commons. Maria Miller, MP for Basingstoke visited the Einstein Exhibition and was also impressed by AWE's work.

Dr Angela Jenkins

Dr Angela Jenkins, Director of Assurance, will be leaving AWE at the end of November. Dr Jenkins has worked at AWE since August 2000 when she was appointed AWE ML's Independent Safety Executive. She joined the AWE plc Executive Board in January 2002 as Director of Continuous Improvement and was appointed Director of Assurance in April 2004. Selection of Angela's replacement will take place in due course, but there will be no change in either AWE's focus on, or commitment to, assurance at AWE.

Bill Cane, on behalf of LLC members, expressed appreciation of Dr Jenkins' work with the committee.

AWESome Science Campaign

The AWESome Science campaign is progressing well. A Chain Reaction Challenge for pupils from 4 local primary schools was a great success. A team of AWE graduates helped children in their schools to devise a contraption which transferred energy using tumbling marbles, dominoes and other ideas. The

four pieces of kit were then put together at the final event. Chain Reaction had the youngsters exploring the science behind the fun.

AWE Literature

The AWE corporate brochure 'Meeting the Challenge' was given to members, one of a suite of new or updated publications. The Community Magazine, Community-Link is being updated and re-launched as a magazine format under the title 'Connect'. Another publication Insight will sit between the technical Discovery magazine and the community magazine.

Action 42/1: Secretary to send copies of 'Insight' and 'Discovery' to members.

Sitex B

The annual level 2 exercise will take place at Burghfield in early October. Angela Jenkins has volunteered to act as a casualty in the exercise.

SET (Science Engineering & Technology) Awards

AWE's exceptional scientists and engineers have been honoured in our second annual SET awards. Malcolm Jones, who is responsible for top level safety procedures on weapons systems, won the John Challens medal. Malcolm also collected an MBE last year for his work associated with safety and leadership, in the international arena. A team of laser experts won the JC (Charlie) Martin award for a paper on new achievements with laser targets. Hugh James won the award for the best internal paper with his study on the performance of insensitive high explosives. Claire Marianos won the Discovery Award in recognition of innovation at an early stage in her career.

6. Health, Safety and Environmental Report – Dr Angela Jenkins, Director Assurance

Enforcement / Improvement Notices

As reported in the EA and NII quarterly reports, the regulators issued an enforcement notice and an improvement notice respectively to AWE following an incident in one of AWE's facilities. The incident occurred when a small storage container was opened in a building and a very small amount of tritium was released through the extract ventilation system. This was a low hazard facility and the activity was not routine. There was no harm to the operators. The amount of tritium released was a small fraction of the amount that the site is allowed to release annually, but this particular building did not have an authorisation to release tritium. AWE reported this to the regulators and very rapidly conducted a thorough investigation. The findings and recommendations of the Company investigation aligned with the actions required by the enforcement and improvement notices. AWE took very swift action and the EA have agreed that the enforcement action is complete. They will monitor AWE's progress with the programme of work that has been agreed as part of normal business. The NII have agreed with AWE's proposed action plan to close out the improvement notice. Dr Jenkins said that the Company is confident the actions will be completed, thereby closing out the improvement notice by December, as required.

It was also particularly disappointing that in a similar timeframe AWE also received an improvement notice from HSE FOD inspector on an unrelated issue. During a visit earlier this year the inspector had made an observation concerning some overhead cables and asked that action be taken to ensure that there was no possibility of vehicles hitting the cables. The Company had taken some action but the inspector was not satisfied with the rate of progress and issued an improvement notice. As a result the Company has accelerated the programme of work. Warning notices have been erected, cables removed and the Company is evaluating the use of automatic height detection system at site entrances. The work should be completed by the end of this September.

RSA Application

AWE Plc have been invited by the Environment Agency (EA) to review their authorisations for radioactive waste discharges and disposals against a formal set of criteria given in their recently published process and considerations document. Over the past few months AWE has been collating the information required to respond to the document and we anticipate formally submitting the response toward the end of October 2005. LLC members were invited to a workshop on the proposals.

Environment Exhibition

An Environment Exhibition was held at both sites in July. The theme taken was the "Urban Environment". A large number of displays were on offer including the wide range of very low impact operations the Company has on the environment and some of the controls and arrangements we have to manage these impacts. The environmental legislation which has direct application at AWE was outlined and the impact that we as individuals have at home was also highlighted. We are grateful to external bodies such as West Berkshire and Basingstoke and Deane Councils and some of our suppliers and contractors who also provided stands and material.

Target Zero

AWE currently has a good health and safety record. In order to continue to strive towards World Class we revised our health and safety KPI targets for 2005/2006 and made them extremely challenging. To achieve this we adopted a new approach - Target Zero. Target Zero - no injury, no ill health. It is a cross-company programme that has been developed to better focus our efforts on preventing incidents, injury and ill health. The intention is to ensure the desire for an incident and injury free workplace becomes the leading behaviour of our entire workforce.

Performance against Key Performance Indicators

Slides attached

Slide 1 - Injuries

This KPI covers all injuries from very minor paper cuts to more serious injuries. The number of injuries is falling and an improvement on last year but performance can still be improved.

Slide 2 - Injuries 2001 to 2005-09-19

The trend shows improvement over the period.

Slide 3 - Lost Time Accidents

This covers accidents resulting in more than 3 days absence from work. Quarter 1 is showing an improvement over 2004 figures.

Slide 4 – Lost time accident frequency rate

Please note: Target CY6 should read 0.10 not 0.25

There is an improvement on the results for 2004

Slide 5 – OSHA rate

This is a new KPI for AWE. The OSHA is a widely used method of recording injuries. Lost Time Accidents covers accidents with associated medical absence of more than 3 days, whereas OSHA covers from 1 day's absence and a number of specific types of injuries. The target is 0.8, a very challenging target which we are not yet meeting.

Slide 6 – Non attendance

This KPI monitors non-attendance through sickness or other reasons.

The current record is around 2.7 to 2.8% on a steadily improving trend. Work is ongoing with line managers to make improvements.

Slide 7 – Maximum Individual Dose

This measures the maximum dose of radioactivity to a single individual. The target is set as low as possible whilst taking into account the programme of work for the year. Current results are within target.

Slide 8 – Collective Dose

This is the total dose to all workers. For CY6 the workload is increasing but the target has stayed the same. The results are within the target.

Slide 9 – Public Dose Assessment

Results are low and well below recommendations.

Slide 10 – Security Index Rate

Calculated as a rate so that as the number of staff increases, the trend can be followed. The target is based on 2004 performance, but performance is not meeting the target. An awareness campaign is focussing on the main problem areas, for example, staff leaving cabinets open or not removing the hard drive from their computers when leaving work.

Slide 11 – Recycling

Good performance on asset waste, but not meeting the target on office waste.

Slide 12 – Liquid Discharges

Results are well below authorisations and Company Targets

Slide 13 – Airborne Discharges

Airborne discharges are very low and well within targets. The targets are set to reflect the planned programme of work.

Slide 14 – Summary

Cllr Roberts said that he understood that the recent incident had resulted in a tritium discharge which was below a level to cause concern, but, with the comprehensive safety assessments at AWE, what had gone wrong? Dr Jenkins explained that the root problem was that the building was a low hazard category one and staff involved had not been aware that the building no longer had an authorisation for the discharge of tritium.

As well as responding to the enforcement notice, there was a major review at AWE so that all possible issues are covered and all staff are being made aware of the correct processes to follow.

Dr Glue asked Mike Jeal of the NII to comment. He said that the regulators had concerns as the incident reflected a lower standard than was usual at AWE. Whereas this incident was in a low hazard facility, the regulators needed assurance that a similar incident could not happen in a higher hazard facility. They therefore worked with the EA to ask AWE to address the issue. The enforcement action was related more to what could have happened rather than what did happen.

Cllr Moss commented that he thought that this was the first enforcement action in over 5 years. He went on to ask what happened to the waste from decommissioning. Jonathan Brown told him that Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) was stabilised and put into drums and was stored on site until a national repository was available; Low Level Waste (LLW) was stabilised, compacted into drums and sent to Drigg. All other, non-radioactive waste was recycled where possible. This included the building rubble which was stored on site for re-use as hardcore in the new build programme. In addition, there was a policy of waste minimisation which was showing significant improvement.

7. Infrastructure Report – Jonathan Brown, Director Infrastructure

Planned Housing Development at Paices Hill

Newbury Weekly News carried an article on contamination fears setting back an application for Paices Hill housing development. There were objections raised for the development, but these related to concerns on the limited extent of characterisation supporting the proposal, rather than the actual characterisation results. There is no evidence of radioactive contamination affecting the area of land concerned in this planning application.

Sitex (A)

The Aldermaston annual site exercise had not been entirely satisfactory and some elements would be repeated in November. The main issues involved control of access to the incident area, casualty handling and the Health Physics monitoring.

Notice of Proposed Developments (NOPDs) for the Modular Temporary Accommodation (MTAs)

Notice of Proposed Development submissions for 4 Modular Temporary Accommodation (MTA) buildings, two for detailed planning and two for outline, were due to be presented to West Berkshire Planning Committee on the 21st September. The MTA buildings are identical to the one submitted for planning approval on 23rd February 2005.

Pangbourne Pipeline Land Characterisation

As part of the decommissioning the Pangbourne Pipeline an ecological survey has been completed along the length of the pipeline. The next stage was to carry out monitoring around all the valve pits and inspection pits. The sampling involves using a small drilling rig to bore down into the soil around the pit to take samples at various depths. This work at each pit should take approximately one day. The project started on 12th September and will take a total of 10 weeks to complete.

Landowners have been notified and West Berkshire Council has been consulted. The work may involve setting up traffic management systems where the work is beside the road, but we aim to keep the disruption to a minimum.

Cllr Hobbs asked that the school at Ufton Nervet be notified.

Action 42/2: Secretary to ensure that Ufton Nervet & Sulham School are notified of work on the Pangbourne Pipeline. *Action complete.*

Cllr Whitaker asked how many valve pits there were on the pipeline and what would happen to the sparge pipes. He was told that there were 44 pits along the pipeline and that the initial report had stated that the final section of the pipeline and the sparges should be removed. Before committing to this AWE was making sure that this was the best option.

Active Commissioning of Waste Treatment Plant

The Waste Treatment Plant (WTP), which has been built to deal with the waste which used to be discharged down the Pangbourne Pipeline, has now commenced proof of operation using active effluent. The plant has performed as expected, using “real” effluent that is below the design feed concentrations. The discharges are well within the authorised limits.

Demolition Update

Demolition of buildings has continued as planned over the period, but we have received two complaints about noise from weekend working and particularly on Sundays. One complaint was specific to demolition work and the other related to the construction of the Einstein Exhibition with noise being generated from vehicles “Reversing Alarms” and off-loading. AWE takes these complaints very seriously and is investigating to determine what can be done in the future to ensure that the Company continues to enjoy the support of its nearest neighbours. In particular, Jonathan Brown was looking at the impacts associated with weekend working.

Cllr Leeks asked about working at weekends on demolition and construction and whether this would continue. Jonathan Brown said that it would be normal for work to continue over weekends but the issue was how that work could be controlled as far as traffic and noise was concerned. The plan would address adverse impacts and their control, particularly on Sundays. Restrictions would be applied where necessary.

Cllr Cowdery referred to the noise complaints and thanked AWE for their handling of complaints from within his council area. Jonathan Brown assured him that a process would be put in place to deal with complaints received in ‘Silent hours’.

Action 42/3: Jonathan Brown to look at the issue of complaints from neighbours and establish a process at an appropriate level.

United Utilities Leakage Improvements

AWE has awarded a contract to United Utilities for management and operation of water systems (this was reported at a previous LLC meeting). The contract has a long term framework and is extended periodically on the basis of performance results. Over the first six months the results have been really excellent with water leakage reduced by over 1600 cubic metres per day (this equates to around 12% reduction in losses), which was better than expected. Further improvements are ongoing but this is a good start. Water quality has also been improved at the same time.

Grims Bank

Grims Bank is a scheduled Ancient Monument on the Aldermaston site. There is speculation about the defensive ditch and bank, nobody knows its exact purpose or age, but it is believed to have been built around the 5th century BC. Archaeologists from Oxford University have been working on the bank during

the summer. Samples which they took are being checked for any possible contamination before being released for carbon dating.

8. Presentation – AWE Energy Efficiency Strategy, Jonathan Brown, Director Infrastructure

In response to a previous request from an LLC member, Jonathan Brown gave a presentation on the AWE Energy Efficiency Strategy; the slides are attached.

Bill Cane thanked Jonathan Brown for a very interesting and informative presentation. He asked if the presentation slides were available to MPs as this set a very good example to industry. He was told that the LLC minutes were placed in the House of Commons & House of Lords libraries.

9. Presentation – HR Matters, David Maitland, Director Operational Services

Slides attached

In answer to a question from Cllr Moss concerning the interface with the Trade Unions, David Maitland explained that AWE operated a range of informal negotiations with employees and formal negotiations with the TUs on a wide range of issues. The boundaries on topics for negotiation were very clear and the Trade Unions were involved at a very early stage in decisions which encouraged good management.

Cllr Mike Broad recalled that there had been a time when there had been concern that senior managers were not paying sufficient visits to facilities. It was explained that there was now a programme to ensure that these visits took place. Each senior manager has to make a safety tour of a facility once per month, at least.

Cllr Leeks asked whether there was still an active drugs & alcohol policy, this was confirmed.

10. Presentation – AWESome Science – AWESome Responsibility, Avril Burdett, Public Affairs

Manager; Lindsey Appleton; Corporate Affairs Manager and Gareth Beard, Head of Environment
The presentation outlined AWE's interaction with the community in social, environmental and economic areas.

The LLC members gave a round of applause at the end of the presentation and recognised AWE's support in the community.

11. Any Other Business

Cllr Vare asked whether the Orion laser would also have links with Culham laboratories. He was told that there would be significant links with universities, and other organisations. The Orion laser is now in design phase, with full MoD approval.

In answer to questions about Blacknest, members were told that this was a country house about 2 kms from the Aldermaston site. This has the advantage of being an unclassified area, permitting free exchange with international scientists. There is a staff of approximately 12 at this centre for forensic seismology.

They were the first in the world to take the view that the Russian submarine Kursk, suffered two explosions caused by a faulty missile. They were able to determine the underwater explosion using hydrophonic seismometers. The explosions were confirmed when divers went to the Kursk.

Cllr Leeks asked whether the new facilities would have full access for disabled persons. Jonathan Brown confirmed this and added that the initial work to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act was complete.

Cllr Frost said that this was her first LLC meeting but that several years before she had worked at AWE. She said that she was impressed with openness of the meeting.

Cllr Vare expressed serious concerns about the further death on Paice's Hill and asked whether AWE could bring any pressure to bear on West Berkshire Council to make improvements. Jonathan Brown said that he had raised this issue several times and would like to see a maximum 40mph speed limit on

all the roads around AWE Aldermaston and was pushing hard to see those changes, almost on a monthly basis. He said he would welcome support from any of the LLC members.

Cllr Wood asked if AWE had set a target for renewable energy. Jonathan said he had not at present as it was early days, but he would consider it as things progressed.

12. Date of next meetings

Thursday 1st December 2005

Proposed dates for 2006:

16th March

8th June

14th September

30th November

13. Members visited the Einstein Exhibition, a celebration of AWE's Science & Technology.

Avril Burdett

Secretary to the AWE Local Liaison Committee