

Minutes of the 45th AWE Local Liaison Committee Meeting

Thursday 8th June 2006

Present:

Bill Haight	Executive Chairman, AWE	Chairman LLC
Jonathan Brown	Director Infrastructure, AWE	
Dr Andrew Jupp	Director Assurance, AWE	
Alan Price	Head Corporate Communications, AWE	
Avril Burdett	Public Affairs Manager, AWE	Secretary LLC
Gareth Beard	Head of Environment, AWE	
Cllr Mike Broad	Tadley Town Council	
Cllr Malcolm Bryant	Woking Unitary Authority	
Cllr Bill Cane	Mortimer West End Parish Council	
Alan Craft	Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council	
Cllr Margaret Dadswell	Aldermaston Parish Council	
Cllr Maureen Eden	Holybrook Parish Council	
Cllr Terry Faulkner	Tadley Town Council	
Cllr John Heggadon	Shinfield Parish Council	
Peter Hobbs	Sulhamstead Parish Council	
Cllr Claire Hutchings	Silchester Parish Council	
Cllr David Leeks	Tadley Town Council	
Ian Lindsay	Wasing Parish Meeting	
Cllr Royce Longton	West Berkshire Council	
Cllr Jeff Moss	Swallowfield Parish Council	
Cllr Irene Neill	West Berkshire Council	
Cllr David Shirt	Aldermaston Parish Council	
Cllr John Southall	Purley-on-Thames Parish Council	
Cllr Alan Sumner	Wokefield Parish Council	
Mr Bill Taylor	Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council	
Cllr Tim Whitaker	Mapledurham Parish Council	
Cllr David Wood	Theale Parish Council	

Observers:

Martin Sayers	Nuclear Installations Inspectorate
Darren Baker	Environment Agency

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies from: Cllr Peter Beard; Cllr Dennis Cowdery, Cllr Pat Garrett, Julie James, Cllr Michael Lochrie, Martin Maynard, Carolyn Murison, Tom Payne, Barry Richards, Cllr Murray Roberts and Cllr Graham Ward.

The Chairman thanked Doug Mundy, one of the longest-standing LLC members who has now left Burghfield Parish Council and former Councillor David Dymond, representative of Reading Borough Council who has also left the LLC for their support on the LLC. He welcomed Cllr Claire Hutchings as the new representative from Silchester Parish Council and Cllr Maureen Eden as the new representative of Holybrook Parish Council.

2. Actions from previous Meetings Action 42/3: Jonathan Brown to look at the issue of complaints from neighbours and establish a process at an appropriate level. Ongoing, Avril Burdett is the current contact, through the switchboard on 01189 814111.

Action 43/2: members asked for a visit to the newly refurbished Apprentice Academy in 2006 – *This visit will take place at our next meeting in September.*

Action 43/3: Report on the stakeholder survey at a future meeting. *Secretary to arrange.*

Action 44/1: Jonathan Brown to give presentation on Sites Development. Jonathan has contacted you to arrange a half-day workshop to look at various aspects of site development.

Action: 44/2: Jonathan Brown to update members on the future of the Pangbourne Pipeline. A presentation was given at item 10 on the agenda.

3. Minutes of the 44th Meeting

The minutes were accepted.

4. Chairman's remarks – Bill Haight, Executive Chairman AWE plc

Graduates' trip to Sri Lanka

A team of six graduates recently took part in the 'Habitat for Humanity' Sri Lanka Challenge helping in a house building project for those left homeless by the 2004 tsunami. They spent a week in Sri Lanka in mid-April as part of a SERCO initiative to support the international charity dedicated to eliminating sub-standard poverty housing worldwide.

The team raised almost £3,500. This money was donated to the charity to help pay for building materials and equipment. This initiative forms part of a wider graduate project to raise money for local, national and international charities.

Sale of the British Nuclear Group [BNG]

The Government have announced their decision to allow the sale of BNG to go ahead. They are now in the process of identifying bidders. The bidders will be selected from large, financially stable companies with relevant expertise who will improve the performance of BNG. The sale should be completed by September 2007. As far as the third partner for AWEML is concerned, there is nothing further to report.

Corporate Communications Team wins awards

AWE's Corporate Communications team has received a series of accolades from external organisations. AWE's external stakeholder magazine 'Insight' was named as 'Best New Publication' and the Company was presented with Awards of Excellence for the house newspaper AWE today and the Schools Newsletter from Communicators in Business.

In the annual Serco Chairman's Recognition Awards, Corporate Communications team members Lindsey Appleton and Avril Burdett were recognised for their achievement in communicating AWE's Corporate Social Responsibility programme. With the award came a cheque for £500 which they donated to the Shaw Trust in Tadley.

ROSPA GOLD

AWE has been awarded its first Gold Medal by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) for achieving five consecutive Gold Awards for good performance in occupational health and safety.

The RoSPA Awards scheme celebrated its golden jubilee this year, making it one of the longest running and most highly respected occupational award programmes.

SET Awards

The winners of the 2005 AWE Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) Awards have been announced. These awards honour the achievements of exceptional scientists and engineers and highlight the highest levels of achievement that help to make the company a world leader in research, development and production.

The standard of ALL the nominations was very high, reflecting their valued contribution to the work of AWE.

5. Health, Safety & Environmental Report – Dr Andrew Jupp, Director Assurance

(Presentation slides attached)

The Assurance report covers all Health, Safety, Environmental, Quality and Security issues within the company.

Discharge Authorisations - AWE's application under the Radioactive Substances Act is now going through a 12-week public consultation stage. This also includes the preparation of an Integrated Waste Strategy document. AWE is reducing many of its discharge limits and has eliminated discharges via the Pangbourne Pipeline.

All **Improvement Notices** served by the Health and Safety Executive, and the Enforcement Notice served by the Environment Agency, have now been closed out. AWE took the opportunity to review the agreements, learn the lessons needed, and ensure continued improvements in the future.

The company is working towards the transition of **explosives licenses** from regulation by the MoD (Defence Ordnance Safety Group) to regulation by the HSE Hazardous Installations Directorate. The regulations were introduced in April 2005, and there is a three year transitional period.

At the end of January, the Department of Transport carried out an **audit of the safe packaging and transport of nuclear waste on the public highways**. All operators such as universities and hospitals are subject to these audits. The audit team was complimentary about AWE's arrangements and some recommendations have been closed out whilst others are being progressed.

A recent **Lloyds Register surveillance audit** confirmed that AWE's quality assurance systems and implementation are up to standard and that the company has made good progress with improvement plans.

AWE has recently hosted a **visit by Dr Mike Weightman, Chief of the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate**. He met with Managing Director Don Cook, staff and Trades Union representatives.

Two successful campaigns have been run this year – targeting the correct selection and use of PPE, and a slips, trips and falls campaign and there has been a reduction in falls since this campaign was launched. In the last month AWE has hosted a series of seminars for staff and contractors by World Champion weight-lifter Precious Mackenzie. The key message is that a healthy back is part of having a healthy lifestyle, together with adopting the correct posture, communications – including asking for help, and finally the correct techniques for lifting.

Performance Data – presentation slides attached.

6. The State of the Environment – Gareth Beard, Head of Environment

Cllr John Heggadon asked about the level of water consumption. He was informed that AWE was comparable to an industrial site. Previously two pumps were running on the boreholes around the clock. This had now been reduced to one pump running for 17 hours each day, with considerably less being taken from the Thames Water supply. As AWE has few wet processes, water consumption is mainly for hygiene and personal consumption. We have suspended vehicle washing and new facilities have press taps which cannot be accidentally left running. Cllr Royce Longton pointed out that using bottled water at meetings had an environmental downside and asked whether new buildings were designed for maximising solar gain. He was told that this had already happened with a major refurbishment on the Burghfield site, and that AWE was also looking into geothermal energy.

Cllr David Shirt talked about the recent television programme about Aldermaston Village and the two new wildlife sanctuaries which are being created from gravel pits. Anyone wishing to visit the gravel pits by the Butt Inn should contact the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) on 01628 829574 and for Paice's Wood, the Pang and Kennet Valley Countryside Project on 01189 305336.

Ian Lindsay raised concerns that the new bye-laws for the Aldermaston site might transfer protestors onto neighbouring land. Jonathan Brown said he would take up this issue with Mr

Lindsay outside the meeting. Mr Lindsay also asked if AWE was looking at biomass as an energy source as several local farmers were looking at growing biomass crops. Jonathan Brown said that he would put his staff in contact with Mr Lindsay.

Cllr David Wood asked how AWE would meet carbon emission targets. Jonathan Brown said that AWE was already reducing its carbon footprint by closing the main boilerhouse and installing discreet heating systems. A 60% reduction should be achievable as a result of future site development and AWE's environmental strategies.

Cllr Claire Hutchings asked whether AWE felt that local people should be more involved in AWE's business. Jonathan Brown explained that the LLC was only one of the interfaces with the local and wider community, that AWE's regulators involved the public in decisions about AWE and AWE carried out workshops and stakeholder surveys such as PASCALEA consultation exercise to gauge public opinion.

Cllr Tim Whitaker asked if AWE was looking at heat transfer as an energy-efficient method of heating facilities. Jonathan Brown said that he was looking at the possibility of a ring main for heat transfer, especially in the context of harvesting the heat output from computer facilities.

7. Infrastructure Report – Jonathan Brown, Director Infrastructure

Public Consultation on AWE (A) bye-laws

The 35 day public consultation period for Aldermaston and Blacknest bye-laws finished on 1 May. After consideration of the comments and objections, the bye-laws, with any agreed amendments, will be forwarded to the Secretary of State for Defence for approval, for implementation later in 2006.

Further signs and boundary markers will be installed during the summer of 2006 to ensure the areas covered by Bye-laws and the restrictions are clear to the public. The Bye-laws can be found on the MOD's website (Defence Estates). www.defence-estate.mod.gov.uk/byelaws/Internet/Intro.html.

Traffic & Travel Update

In co-operation with local planning authorities, Thames Valley Police, and in particular, Aldermaston Parish Council and David Shirt, the West Berkshire Council Speed Limit Review Committee has endorsed the suggested speed limit reductions on highways around AWE Aldermaston as follows:

- Calleva Business Park to the Falcon gyratory down to 40 mph
- Falcon gyratory to Valentine Wood roundabout down to 50 mph
- Red Lane to Tadley Rugby Club down to 50 mph

These proposals will need to continue through due process, which includes formal planning consent and a consultation period and are expected to be operational towards the end of 2006. Further requirements to reduce speed limits and improve safety measures are under investigation.

In addition:

- Burnham Gate is now open for construction traffic.
- The main car park is only available for visitors from 1 June 2006.
- Park and Ride schemes are now operating successfully and have been extended, with 250 people a day using the service.
- Staff are being discouraged from using the lay-by outside the Church entrance at Portland House. Security staff have been deployed to remind people not to park there. (It should be remembered that this is a public highway and staff can only be persuaded).
- The Company Travel Plan will be published in support of AWE's Corporate Social Responsibility strategy. In addition, there will also be a separate suite of documents on the

Code of Construction Practice, Logistics (vehicle movements to the site) and an Energy Strategy. These documents will be published by the end of September.

- AWE's new Waste Treatment plant was completed on time and to budget and was handed over to the user group on 1 March 2006. It is now operating successfully

Wind Power Generation

A study has suggested that wind generation might be viable at the Aldermaston site and potentially viable at Burghfield. Such a project could result in significant savings in AWE's carbon dioxide emissions.

A Consultancy group has been tasked to develop the business case following discussions with the statutory stakeholders. Future updates will be given on this project.

The old Falcon bus shelter has been demolished due to safety concerns. A replacement bus shelter has been ordered.

- Planning submission for the New Office Accommodation is due in July / August
- Three Modular Temporary Accommodation buildings have been completed and two more (MTA's) are reserve matters for planning submission in July / August

8. Environmental Projects – Laura Peacock, Manager Environmental & Development Project Group

The presentation covered contaminated land characterisation and remediation, stack upgrade programme, Pangbourne Pipeline remediation and surveys for ecology, heritage and noise. The Phase 1 characterisation at Aldermaston in 2003 looked at areas of high risk. Phase 2, completed in 2005, investigated the rest of the site - no further areas of significant contamination were identified. A similar principle was used in three phases on the Burghfield site. Results of Phases one and two were combined in the final phase. The final report expected in late 2007.

The successful process for removing solvents from the ground was explained. It has so far removed about three 3100 kilograms in eight months.

The upgrades to the stack sampling systems, running for five years so far, was also explained. 17 new systems have been installed.

Noise surveys have been carried out at Aldermaston and Burghfield to give a baseline to enable future comparisons to be made.

Baseline Ecology studies have also been made covering bats, birds, reptiles and flora. In addition, an archaeological dig was carried out on Aldermaston's ancient monument, Grims Bank.

Ian Lindsay appreciated AWE carrying out the noise survey and asked if there was a similar project to look at light pollution. Jonathan Brown explained that when any lights were being replaced, new, up-to-date units will be used, but financially, it was not possible to justify replacing all units at the moment.

9. The Pangbourne Pipeline - Laura Peacock, Manager Environmental & Development Project Group

This presentation was given in response to LLC action 44/2.

The pipeline carried liquid effluent from AWE to the Thames over a period of more than 50 years and was closed in March 2005. Options for the best way of dealing with the pipeline were reported in 2001 and that was now being reviewed to ensure the findings are still appropriate. This led to further characterisation studies being undertaken. Land around all the pits has been or will be sampled. Four sections of pipe were removed and replaced with new pipe. To check contamination levels at different points, an ecology study was carried out along the entire length. Feasibility studies have been produced for filling the pipeline with a solid matrix; mechanical

removal techniques for sections; treatment techniques for removed sections; the most appropriate technique for each section and demolition of the pump house. Studies are under way for cleaning in situ and the removal of the discharge sparge pipes. Following this a detailed proposal will be drawn up.

Mounted (unused) sections of the pipeline were presented to Pangbourne Parish Council and Purley-on-Thames Parish Council.

Bill Cane asked what would happen to any pipeline removed and whether a decision to remove sections would be based on new evidence of a danger to the public from the pipeline. Jonathan Brown explained that there was no evidence from the surveys that there was a danger to the public, in fact data confirmed that there was none, but after more than 50 years in the ground the danger of failure was greater and, whatever the level of contamination within the pipe, it had carried radioactive waste and therefore would itself be classified as radioactive waste. In some farmland areas, where the pipeline was not deep underground, there was a risk that in the future the pipeline would end up nearer the surface due to ploughing and soil erosion.

In answer to further questions members were told that the pipeline was made of bitumen-coated mild steel and that none of the pipeline was above ground, but the pump house and the access pits were. Questions were asked about specific sites, such as the proposed car park for Sulhamstead School and areas where there might be residential development in the future. Jonathan Brown explained that the pipeline ran under roads, railways and canals, where it was sleeved. Under fields, private properties and roadside verges it was not sleeved but there were way-leaves to protect AWE access to the pipeline and all these matters were being taken into consideration during this phase of the project.

10. Hydrodynamics – Mark Pollington, Head of Hydrodynamics

Slides attached

Bill Cane asked about the difference between molten metal and solid metal acting as a fluid, as Mr Pollington had described. Mark Pollington explained that this was the area which was so interesting, understanding precisely when a metal is molten or not molten and this had wide implications in industry as there was a lot of good new science. Cllr Whitaker asked if, in doing these experiments, AWE was adhering to the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and he was assured that AWE was adhering to the treaty. Cllr Whitaker asked if others were adhering to the treaty. He was told that the five member states that had signed up to the treaty were adhering to it but others were not. Members asked if this meant that AWE was working at a disadvantage, Mark Pollington said that it had made AWE re-think the way we underwrite nuclear performance. He said that AWE had all technologies in place, such as computing and experimental capabilities, which enabled AWE to give the assurance that we can underwrite the safety and performance of the Trident warheads. In answer to further questions he said that nations developing nuclear weapons now were way behind AWE as they did not have the technologies, tools and techniques. He added that because of the ban on nuclear tests, the spread of nuclear weapons would be prevented. Bill Haight said that AWE would not return to testing, it was not necessary, instead AWE used a system of extrapolating data from small experiments. This method was environmentally sound, whereas underground testing was not. The current methods mean that we can test components many times.

Mr Pollington was asked if emergency plans for these facilities covered any eventuality, and he gave assurance that they did and that those plans were exercised and refined. He was also asked about electricity consumption and explained that capacitors were charged up, which meant that more power than was in the national grid could be discharged in 1: 20,000,000th of a second.

Cllr Bill Taylor asked about how the experimental area was cleaned up afterwards. Mark Pollington said that this was one advantage of the planned new facility, it was larger, easier to clean and would give better data.

11. Any Other Business

Cllr Bill Cane raised the question of AWE's entry in the local telephone directories. **Secretary's note:** The AWE plc entry is in the Reading Business Pages under AWE plc, and in Reading Yellow Pages it is listed under 'Government Offices'. It is not listed in the Newbury or Basingstoke Directories, but the directory enquiries lines tried did find the number.

Some members had read the initial reports on the Buncefield oil depot fire and the London bombings and asked if the lessons learned had been incorporated into the AWE emergency plans. In particular, whether communications had improved between the emergency services from different forces and owing to the ban on mobile phones on the AWE sites. Members were told that AWE had reviewed its own emergency plans at the time of these incidents and again on the release of the reports. Issues such as the lack of foam at Buncefield had resulted in the Local Authorities looking at potential needs for foam in the area and ensuring that they have sufficient stocks. The Local Authority Emergency response with respect to AWE is regularly exercised and shows that the plans would work, and each exercise identifies opportunities to improve.

Avril Burdett pointed out that the REPIIR (Radiation Emergency Preparedness and Public Information Regulations) Public Information booklet was to be updated and re-issued. Members agreed to look at the current booklet and feed back their views. Members suggested that local Estate Agents and Letting Agents should be given a stock of leaflets for new residents.

Cllr David Shirt asked why AWE had not given a formal rebuttal to a letter in the Newbury Weekly News where Wendy McLeod Gifford had stated that levels of contamination from AWE were between 10 and 50 times the level of fallout from atomic testing. He asked whether it was AWE policy not to respond. Alan Price said that generally we liked to respond, but it had to be in the next edition of the newspaper. Sometimes responding just opened up a lengthy debate, the data from the Southampton University Study was publicly available and showed that emissions from AWE were extremely small and had negligible impact on the environment and human health.

Gareth Beard explained that our environmental monitoring systems, those of the Environment Agency, the Food Standards Agency and the Southampton University Study gave an holistic picture of AWE's environmental impact. He said that activists tend to look for one result within thousands which they can use to discredit AWE. The Local Authority had commissioned the Southampton University Study independently. He said that if members had concerns he was happy to go through the data with them.

Cllr Bill Taylor asked whether AWE could put together a leaflet reviewing the environmental data every three months and put it on the AWE website. Gareth Beard will look at this.

Action 45/1: Gareth Beard to look at the feasibility of putting together a quarterly environmental report.

12. Dates of next meetings

Thursday 14th September 2006

Thursday 30th November 2006

13. Lunch

14. Visit to the AWE Environment Exhibition

15. Actions from this meeting:

Distribution:

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