

Minutes of the 48th AWE Local Liaison Committee Meeting

Thursday 8th March 2007

Present:

Don Cook	Managing Director, AWE	Chairman LLC
Jonathan Brown	Director Infrastructure, AWE	
Dr Andrew Jupp	Director Assurance, AWE	
Avril Burdett	Public Affairs Manager, AWE	Secretary LLC
Cllr Peter Beard	Reading Borough Council	
Cllr Malcolm Bryant	Wokingham Borough Council	
Cllr Bill Cane	Mortimer West End Parish Council	LLC Liaison Officer
Cllr Margaret Dadswell	Aldermaston Parish Council	
Cllr Maureen Eden	Holybrook Parish Council	
Cllr Terry Faulkner	Tadley Town Council	
Cllr Valerie Frost	Tadley Town Council	
Cllr Patricia Garrett	Baughurst Parish Council	
Cllr John Heggadon	Shinfield Parish Council	
Cllr Peter Hobbs	Sulhamstead Parish Council	
Cllr Gul Khan	Reading Borough Council	
Cllr David Leeks	Tadley Town Council	
Cllr Royce Longton	West Berkshire Council	
Cllr Irene Neill	West Berkshire Council	
Cllr Jeff Moss	Swallowfield Parish Council	
Tom Payne	Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council	
Cllr Murray Roberts	Padworth Parish 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 Gerry Traynor	Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council	
Cllr Graham Ward	Woolhampton Parish Council	
Cllr Tim Whitaker	Mapledurham Parish Council	
Cllr David Wood	Theale Parish Council	

Observers:

Martin Sayers	Nuclear Installations Inspectorate
Stuart Parr	Environment Agency

1. Welcome

Dr Cook welcomed Councillor Gul Khan, representing Reading Borough Council, to his first meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Mike Broad; Cllr Dennis Cowdery; Alan Craft; Julie James; Cllr Kay Lacey; Ian Lindsay; Carolyn Murison; and Barry Richards.

3. Actions from previous Meetings

Action 43/3: Report on the stakeholder survey at a future meeting. *Maeve O'Keefe of the Environment Council presented the results to members at the meeting.*

Action 47/1 Jonathan Brown: To look at whether the AWE transport links could be used by the public. Currently we do not have a licence to run this type of service. AWE is holding talks with local transport providers (rail and bus) with a view to enhancing local services. If improvements can be made there is the possibility that such services could benefit the local community in the future.

Cllr Shirt said that from the AWE Development Funding there was a close alignment with local parish needs. He thanked Dave Murray for all his work on this and called it 'community liaison working in practise'.

Action 47/2: Jonathan Brown to look at the implications of reduced voltage lighting. Site Utilities are undertaking a trial to stabilise the site's voltage, with potential savings in both energy consumption and

cost. An additional benefit is that electrical equipment run on a lower voltage has a greater life expectancy.

New legislation in 2008 limits voltage to 230 volts +/- 10% and AWE Site Utilities are planning a pilot trial in one of the substations where the voltage is known to fluctuate

Once the monitoring data has been collected and analysed a more comprehensive survey will be undertaken. This will eventually provide AWE with a Voltage Stabilisation Proposal Document.

Action 48/1: Secretary to feedback this information to Cllr Broad who asked the question at the 37th meeting.

Action 47/3: Secretary to look at changing the AWE entries in local telephone directories: *Ongoing*

4. Minutes of the 47th Meeting

Cllr Bryant had been listed as representing Woking not Wokingham Council. The minutes were then accepted as a true record of the meeting.

5. Chairman's remarks – Dr Don Cook, Managing Director, AWE Plc.

Gemini

AWE has been granted full planning permission for twin office accommodation buildings to be built towards the western end of the Aldermaston site. Members were shown an architect's concept of the buildings. Gemini will house 1,400 people, 800 in one and 600 in the other, although they will appear the same externally. The area where they will be built was last year cleared of 13 buildings, former offices, laboratories and workshops. The buildings will be modern and mainly open-plan. Work is expected to start shortly.

In answer to questions, members were told that the buildings were planned to be completed one late in 2008 or and the other early in 2009, that surplus furniture would be re-used or re-cycled and that the buildings would be built to the 'BREEAM Excellent' standard.

Orion

A time-lapse sequence of the progress to date on Orion, AWE's new laser facility, was shown to members. Engineering solutions had to be found to ensure that the laser equipment is held rigid – (as a comparison, within the facility, it has to do the equivalent of hitting a 10p coin from 20 kilometres away). The superstructure on which the equipment sits cannot be affected by vibration – from traffic on the A340, the wind buffeting the building or ground vibration from trees through their roots. The solution involved 200 piles being sunk, with a further 100 sleeved piles. The sleeving separates the pile from the ground for the first 10 metres so that vibration from the surface is spread evenly across the whole building. The piling used augering rather than traditional percussive pile-driving.

Cllr Moss asked whether possible earth tremors had been taken into account. He was told that AWE had looked at earth tremors in the area over a long period and had designed the facility to withstand any reasonably foreseeable earth tremors.

AWE's chosen 'Charities of the Year'

AWE has a strong culture of support for the local community and at a national level. Staff have asked that, although AWE continues to support staff in their work for personally favoured charities, there is a company focus on specific charities. Therefore, this year, a team of AWE graduates are leading staff in raising a target of £4000 each for the local branch of Age Concern and the Down's Syndrome Association. Several company-wide fund-raising events, including a 'Fun Run' are being organised. AWE has already given £3,000 to Age Concern as a celebration of 3,000,000 hours without a lost time accident in the Research and Applied Sciences directorate.

Recruitment

AWE announced some time ago that approximately 1000 new staff would be recruited over a period of 3 years. Dr Cook had heard that there were some local concerns about pressure on the housing market in the coming years because of these recruitment activities. He told members that AWE had already identified a large percentage of these people and more than half of them were already working at AWE. Many of those expected to join would not need to relocate. Staff numbers currently stand at approximately 4300.

Litvinenko Inquiry

The national news reported that, in the early stages of the Litvinenko inquiry, the radioactive substance used to poison Mr Litvinenko was confirmed by tests carried out at AWE Aldermaston. AWE provides this service to civilian authorities on request. As the investigation progressed, AWE continued to provide technical support to agencies involved in the investigation by carrying out radiological analysis of samples.

Members asked about the impact of the Government debate on the future of Trident. Dr Cook said that the debate in the House of Commons on the future of the UK nuclear deterrent had provoked protestor action at AWE's Aldermaston site. He and members of his staff had been working with Thames Valley Police and the Local Authorities to minimise nuisance. Several measures had been put in place. A discussion followed on the problems created by the protests; members recognised the right to protest, but many local people with no links to AWE were being adversely affected.

Members said that they welcomed the suggestion from Thames Valley Police that a Public Meeting should be held to address the problems associated with protests at AWE.

6. Feedback on the Stakeholder Survey – Maeve O’Keefe, Environment Council

Slides attached

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

Slides attached showing performance against Company KPIs.

Health Promotion Activities

Several health promotion activities have taken place during the year including circulation of a ‘Health @ AWE’ booklet, ongoing healthy eating campaigns, Healthy Hearts campaign with approximately 13% of the workforce, including contractors attending an event. There was also an Alcohol Awareness campaign timed to provide advice in the run-up to Christmas and AWE’s Occupational Health provider has worked with Apprentices providing targeted health education on cancers in the young, as well as for other lifestyle issues.

Health Developments

The initial programme for March is Quit smoking, with promotional events and the launch of ‘Quit Smoking’ on site clinics for staff and contractors. AWE’s Occupational Health Provider is in the process of recruiting 2 additional Occupational Health Advisors to enhance the service they provide, and AWE is developing its strategy of health support to the construction areas. This has commenced with pre placement screening and will be further supported from July with an onsite medical facility.

Target Zero Campaign – “Think what if, not if only”.

Staff were encouraged to see a presentation by Ken Woodward who was severely injured in an industrial accident. He admitted that his decision to deviate from a standard safety procedure led to his injury. He encouraged staff to think STAR – Stop, Think, Act and Review. These presentations were linked to a Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (CoSHH) awareness campaign. The presentations had a powerful impact on 2500 staff and contractors who attended.

“Take Care kids” – Safety Board Games.

60 Safety Board Games were recently given to local Infant, Junior and Secondary schools in the AWE liaison scheme. They cover aspects of water safety, fire, electrical and road safety messages which support National Curriculum activities.

Assurance Recognition Awards

Six teams from across the company presented to the Assurance Awards Panel on 26th January. One winner and two joint seconds were selected with positive commendations to the remaining three for the quality and dedication they displayed to company values and Assurance behaviours. The winner was the Road Traffic Accident Awareness programme for the Apprentices. This presentation was given to the LLC at item 9 ‘One carefree Decision – One Devastating Impact’. The £500 prize was presented to Thames Valley Air Ambulance.

The second equal places went to the Environmental Project Group for the Pangbourne pipeline sparge pipe removal project. The project addressed the management of off-site resources, safety and potential environmental impacts. Section of pipeline under the Thames was safely removed using divers. The cheque for £250 was given to the North Hampshire Medical Fund. The other winner was contractors Eurest for new techniques for delivering and handling drinking water containers. The aim was to prevent manual handling injuries to its staff. The cheque for £250 was given to Macmillan Cancer Support.

Environmental Issues

AWE's new RSA 93 Authorisations have been issued and have been in force on both sites since 1st March 2007. They represent a public consultation on AWE's radioactive discharges for the next 10 years, including planned new facilities like the Orion Laser. There will be annual reviews with the site inspector.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

CSR means taking responsibility for the needs of present and future stakeholders through open and inclusive management of our environmental, social and economic impacts which has always been an important driver for AWE. Increasingly companies, their customers and investors are acknowledging the impact of their actions on people, communities and the environment.

AWE has for many years been committed to CSR and sees it as being vital to longer-term business success and good for the wider community in which we operate. AWE is building CSR awareness and behaviours and making sure they are included in personal objective setting; considering the costs and benefits of our activities and approach to all interested parties, and using this to prioritise existing and future strategy. We also have regular engagement with interested parties – Like the Local Liaison Committee. Copies of a presentation on AWE & CSR will be circulated to members and we welcome comments.

The Baker Report

A report has been published on the Texas City Refinery disaster of March 2005, which involved a hydrocarbon spill and explosion which killed 15 people and injured 170. The independent report made 10 recommendations for all BP US sites in the key areas of Corporate safety culture, process safety management systems, performance evaluation, corrective action & corporate oversight. It says "It should not be necessary for each generation to rediscover principles of process safety which the generation before discovered. We must learn from the experience of others rather than learn the hard way. We must pass on to the next generation a record of what we have learned and "BP mistakenly interpreted improving personal injury rates as an indicator of acceptable Process Safety performance". AWE staff have carried out a Review, Learn & Improve exercise on the Baker Report. They found that AWE compares well against the deficiencies identified. The rigorous Nuclear Licensing regime implemented by AWE and regulated by NII over the last 10 years, is a positive factor, particularly "Safety Case" methodology and "People" processes. However, some recommendations were identified based on learning and improving and improvements and developments have been actioned.

New Company KPIs CY8

The changes increase the emphasis on learning, we have discontinued some KPIs as they are of little long term benefit, giving increasing company emphasis on prevention, minimisation etc rather than on measurement. However, some of these KPIs are being measured at a local level within the company where they have more relevance.

Lost time Accidents (LTAs)

All the persons concerned are expected to make a full recovery. By the end of January the Assurance Directorate had achieved three years and one million hours without an LTA. Decommissioning staff have also hit a 3 year landmark and Transport Division 3.5 Years. Several directorates have reached the significant milestones of 2 million hours without a lost time accident. There has been a 68% decrease in LTA's over the last two contract years. The company-wide rate is a little over one lost time accident per one million hours worked. This may reflect an improvement in "Target Zero" driven culture.

OSHA Total Recordable Injury Rate

OSHA - Occupational Safety and Health Administration, this is a USA measure which AWE has adopted. The rate of injuries gives a weighted measure to assess how we are performing on reducing the injuries rate, it is currently 0.62. This year's target is zero – the rate at the end of CY6 was 0.86.

Injuries

The result is very encouraging given the extent of construction and other related activities on the site in the past year. Mandatory wearing of gloves has prevented many small hand injuries, cuts etc. Injury may still occur but suitable precautions can lessen the severity.

Non-attendance

Performance compares favourably to CBI non-attendance data which indicates an average loss of 3.8% of time or 8.5 days per employee for a company of our size (2005 Data). The Company procedures for management of attendance have recently been updated and re-issued to all line managers backed up by training. A company-wide stress awareness campaign is also being undertaken.

Individual Dose

AWE sets very challenging low dose limits – often less than 20% of the legal limit. ALARP principles are rigorously applied at AWE. Doses varying according to program. Although they have been falling in recent years, an increase in the decommissioning programme will inevitably mean an increase in doses.

Public Dose

Results confirm that there is no significant hazard to members of the public from radioactive discharges from AWE's sites.

Liquid Discharges

The rate of decay of radioactive atoms in any material is measured in Becquerels. One Becquerel is equivalent to one atom decaying every second - about the level of activity that you would expect to find in a gram of coffee. Targets for discharges are based on our Authorisation Limits granted by the Environment Agency under the Radioactive Substance Act, and planned programmes of work. Current performance meets the Company targets and is well below the authorisation limits. Liquid discharges have steadily declined since the 1950's, and markedly so since the closure of the Pangbourne pipeline and the introduction of waste minimisation measures.

Airborne Discharges

Alpha and Beta discharges generally show only background levels of radiation – these figures are therefore calculated from the volume of gas discharged. Tritium discharges are dominated by the decommissioning of AWE's old tritium facility. This KPI is set high to allow for contingency in the decommissioning of certain items within facilities where an element of uncertainty exists. (One Becquerel is equivalent to one atom decaying every second - about what you would expect to find in a gram of coffee).

Recycling

End of January results show office waste recycling at 33% and assets at 68%. Both targets remain on track to be met or exceeded this year.

8. Infrastructure Report – Jonathan Brown, Director Infrastructure

Slides attached

Travel & Transport

Slide #3 shows the number of car journeys saved by the use of AWE buses between sites. The peak in February showed 10,832 less car movements. Cllr Beard asked how staff had adjusted to using buses. Mr Brown said that after the initial brief period of adjustment, staff now preferred travelling this way, it was a chance to socialise with colleagues one rarely met, to read the (free) daily newspaper or do last minute preparation for meetings.

Slide #5 shows planned improvements to the external highway around AWE. These have been made possible by the Section 106 Development Funding from AWE and are stipulated as part of the development by West Berkshire Council.

Slide #7 Proposed speed limit reductions.

Cllr David Shirt asked whether the roadworks would require road closures. Jonathan Brown said he would find out and let members know.

Cllr Gerry Traynor asked what the effect of the 'no right turn' into AWE would be and whether this would lead to an increased use of fuel. Jonathan Brown said that it was a safety issue; there had been too many accidents, some serious ones around the AWE entrances. Cllr Garrett asked whether the proposed roundabouts would be capable of taking some of the large vehicles which regularly used the A340. Mr Brown assured her that they would and that the designs had West Berkshire Council approval.

Action 48/2: JB to ascertain whether road closures will be necessary during the roadworks around AWE entrances/exits.

Development and Demolition

The Gemini (formerly NOA) planning application is the first major planning application to be approved since Crown immunity was removed. The buildings will have identical footprints but one will house slightly more people. Both buildings will have open plan layouts which is a big change from older AWE buildings. Two new MTA buildings will also be built, each will accommodate 120 people.

A redundant laboratory on the southern edge of the Aldermaston site, which had been closed for some years has been demolished. Before any demolition work could start a search of historical records was made to find out exactly what the laboratory had been used for during its lifetime so that potential hazards could be understood. All the rubble has been crushed and will be re-used for car parks etc.

The building which once housed the Police Club and some neighbouring buildings are being demolished in phases and the area will be used for a new, centralised car parking area. The buildings were stripped down in stages so that even the steel could be reused.

Fire Fighter Training

In January seven AWE Fire-fighters attended Disaster City, in College Station, Texas, USA on a 3 week Urban Search and Rescue course. The Fire-fighters were taught to search and locate victims trapped in collapsed buildings, trenches and other locations prior to rescuing them using specialist technical equipment and techniques. Disaster City is a huge training facility that closely replicates the conditions that are found at the scene of earthquakes and other major disasters where buildings collapse. This was the first time that Fire-fighters from the UK had carried out these modules and it has attracted interest from other UK Fire Services.

AWE Steam Main

As part of the decentralisation of AWE Aldermaston site heating, a project is underway to deliver natural gas to the site, starting with the West End. This project is progressing well and has allowed for the decommissioning and removal of almost 1 km of redundant steam main from the West End of Site along the A340 boundary. This strategy is intended to deliver more environmentally efficient heating to the whole Aldermaston site.

Complaints procedure

This procedure is now well developed and all stakeholders have been involved individually. The complaints procedure will be available on the external internet, hopefully in April. At the moment the usual AWE phone number can be used to contact us and this is available 24/7, or you can use e-mail. Once the new website is launched there will be a different phone number which will be communicated to you.

9. 'One Carefree Decision, One Devastating Impact' John Ayres & Julie Muchamore

Slides attached

Cllr Bill Cane congratulated both John and Julie on an excellent project and presentation and said that they were a credit to AWE. In answer to questions they said that they had used photographs explicit enough to show the reality of road accidents but had stopped short of shocking the apprentices. They were now working on getting the message out to AWE Graduates in a similar way and looking at how they could spread the message to all AWE staff and contractors. This would include getting the message over in the AWE Induction Course. Members suggested that it would be a good thing to roll out to local secondary schools.

10. Food Standards Agency Report, Carl Blackburn, FSA

Slides attached

Action 48/4: Dr Jupp to find out what the natural background radiation level is in this area.

Secretary's note: *The dose to an average person living in this area is about 2.5mSv/year.*

11. Any Other Business

Cllr David Leeks, publicly thanked Fire Station Manager John Ayres for the help and support he and his team had given to the Tadley Christmas Event.

Cllr Tim Whitaker asked what the future of the Pangbourne Pipeline would be. Jonathan Brown told him that the team involved were re-visiting the BPEO (Best Practicable Environmental Option) Study. When the team have reported on their findings, Mr Brown said that he would share the findings with the LLC.

Action 48/3: JB to report to the LLC on the future of the Pangbourne Pipeline.

12. Dates of next meetings

Thursday 7th June 2007

Thursday 6th September 2007

Thursday 13th December 2007

13. Actions from this meeting:

Action 48/1: Secretary to feedback this information on voltage reduction to Cllr Broad who asked the question at the 47th meeting.

Action 48/2: JB to ascertain whether road closures will be necessary during the roadworks around AWE entrances/exits.

Action 48/3: JB to report to the LLC on the future of the Pangbourne Pipeline.

Action 48/4: Dr Jupp to find out what the natural background radiation level is in this area. See note above.

14. Lunch

Distribution:

LLC members

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