

Minutes of the 50th AWE Local Liaison Committee Meeting

Thursday 6th September 2007

Present:

Don Cook	Managing Director, AWE	Chairman LLC
Dr Andrew Jupp	Director Infrastructure, AWE	
Heather Young	Director Assurance, AWE	
Alan Price	Head Corporate Communications	
Avril Burdett	Public Affairs Manager, AWE	Secretary LLC
Cllr Phil Bassil	Brimpton Parish Council	
Cllr Malcolm Bryant	Wokingham Borough Council	
Cllr Bill Cane	Mortimer West End Parish Council	LLC Liaison Officer
Cllr Pennee Chopping	Ufton Nerve Parish Council	
Cllr Terry Faulkner	Tadley Town Council	
Geoff Findlay	West Berkshire Council	
Cllr Valerie Frost	Tadley Town Council	
Cllr Mick Hall	Burghfield Parish Council	
Cllr John Heggadon	Shinfield Parish Council	
Cllr Peter Hobbs	Sulhamstead Parish Council	
Cllr Dudley Ives	Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council	
Cllr David Leeks	Tadley Town Council	
Gul Khan	Reading Borough Council	
Cllr Royce Longton	West Berkshire Council	
Cllr Jeff Moss	Swallowfield Parish Council	
Cllr Irene Neill	West Berkshire Council	
Tom Payne	Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council	
Barry Richards	Hampshire County Council	
Cllr Tony Stanley	Silchester Parish Council	
Mr Bill Taylor	Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council	
Cllr Clive Vare	Aldermaston Parish Council	
Cllr Tim Whitaker	Mapledurham Parish Council	
Cllr David Wood	Theale Parish Council	

Regulators:

Charles Temple	Nuclear Installations Inspectorate
Stuart Parr	Environment Agency

Welcome

Dr Cook welcomed members to the 50th AWE Local Liaison Committee meeting. He said that at the first meeting in 1993, the opening remark made by the then Chief Executive Brian Richards was that he hoped that [the LLC] would be a major breakthrough in improving relations between AWE and the local community.

Dr Cook reported that during that time, with a partnership of AWE wanting to work in partnership and be more open about it's work and with some 150 LLC members actively pressing for more information, a point had been reached where the public is much better informed and some of the myths about AWE had been laid to rest. He hoped that this would continue for many years to come.

He thanked current and past LLC members for the work they had done, not only in regular meetings, but also in the workshops they had attended and surveys in which they had participated. These had helped AWE to shape and prioritise some of the environmental programmes and improve dialogue with, and involvement in the local community.

Dr Cook remarked that some members had seen AWE go through some major changes since AWE was first contractorised in 1993 and he hoped that many of them would be there to see AWE into what promised to be an exciting future.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Peter Beard; Cllr Mike Broad; Cllr Pat Garrett; Julie James; Cllr Kay Lacey; Ian Lindsay; Caroline Murison; Cllr Murray Roberts; Cllr David Shirt; John Southall and Cllr Alan Sumner.

2. Actions from the last meeting

Action 49/1: Avril Burdett to give Cllr David Leeks a list of the alerting procedures we have in place.

Action closed, for information, they are:

Local Schools

Businesses on Calleva Park

Businesses on Young's Industrial Estate

Other businesses on Paice's Hill

Aldermaston Parish Council

Tadley Town Council

Residences on Paice's Hill

Thames Valley & Hampshire Police

AWE staff.

Action 49/2: To give the LLC an update on the data collection for potential use of wind turbines.

Andrew Jupp to answer in his report.

Action 49/3: To ask Eurest for their policy on sourcing food.

Heather Young to answer in her report.

3. Minutes of the 49th Meeting

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

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

Dr Cook welcomed new members: Cllr Pennee Chopping of Ufton Nervet Parish Council, Cllr Dudley Ives of Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council; Cllr Geoff Findlay of West Berkshire Council and Cllr Tony Stanley of Silchester Parish Council.

AWE Summer Exhibition

The exhibition 'Recognise the Past, Realise the Future' had been an outstanding success. AWE had combined an exhibition for staff, showing what they had achieved at AWE over many years, and what the future held, with a re-union to recognise the anniversary of the Christmas Island 'Grapple Trials' in the 1950s. Dr Cook said that it had been interesting to meet so many of these veterans who were still in good health and had thoroughly enjoyed the exhibition and the opportunity to meet up with friends and colleagues. Family members of staff were invited to the exhibition over the weekend and a media day had been held.

Over 4,000 people attended during the week. A further 2,000 people also toured the exhibition during the Families Weekend and in addition AWE hosted 16 national and local journalists – including television and radio - at Aldermaston on the Media day. They were given presentations on the AWE science programme and site development plans, before viewing a demonstration 'shot' at the HELEN laser and finally visiting the Orion construction site. This resulted in extensive media coverage, which, on the whole was very positive. The visit was organised with the backing of the Defence Equipment and Support Minister.

Sale of BNFL Share in AWEML

At the last meeting, the forthcoming sale of BNFL had been discussed and the Secretary had written to members explaining the process. This is a Government process, not one being run from within AWE. Dr Cook commented that this subject would continue to be reported in the press, but that he wanted to stress that the other two partners, SERCO and Lockheed Martin would continue to make up two-thirds of AWEML, and were also considering buying the other one-third share, but whatever happened, safety and security at AWE would not be compromised by this change. The MoD retain a 'Golden Share' in AWE which can be used to take control of AWE if there were any sign of failure with AWEML or AWE Plc.

Microsoft UK Challenge Winners

For the last few years AWE has been entering AWE teams into the Microsoft UK Challenge, a series of eight major challenges of physical and mental ability. The teams have always done well, but this year they came first. They will now go on to World team Challenge in Nice in December. The UK Challenge raised over half a million pounds for the NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children).

Schools Liaison update

Dr Cook gave an update on the AWE Schools Liaison Programme which is under the management of Lindsey Appleton, AWE Corporate Affairs Manager. The membership is currently under review to ensure that the 80 schools and their corresponding AWE representatives are committed to the partnership.

On 4th July a team of AWE graduates ran the Chain Reaction Challenge at Tadley Community Centre. Children from four local primary schools took part in the competition designed to encourage interest in science and engineering at a young age. This event forms part of AWE's 'AWESome Science Campaign' - a celebration of AWE's science and engineering excellence and its exciting community initiatives with local schools.

Each school team is asked to design and build a chain reaction machine from everyday materials. The themed contraptions have to include a series of actions – balls rolling, pendulums swinging, dominoes toppling, strings unwinding – with each movement transferring energy to the next. All the machines must start and end with the pull of a string, allowing each to trigger the next, and so creating one long 'Chain Reaction'.

Silchester Primary School Reading, won the first prize of £300; Sherborne St. John Primary School Basingstoke, came second (£200), and Pangbourne Primary Reading, Cedars Primary Aldermaston and Silchester Primary's second team all received £100 as runners-up.

In partnership with AWE's Technical Outreach department, AWE is helping to resource a traditional Elizabethan Herb Garden at Ufton Court, near Ufton Nervet. The garden will be fully restored and made accessible for disabled people. This project also provides a number of volunteering opportunities for local groups. The project will be started in September with an official opening next summer when the garden has begun to grow. Each year, Ufton Court supports and promotes active learning for more than 4,000 children and young people by making available its history and the natural environment.

Children at Burghclere School near Newbury recently had the chance to see a glider at first hand. AWE was invited to Burghclere School to participate in the School's Science Week. AWE Engineer, Geoff Seaman, took along his glider to show them and gave talks on flight and air. The children also made their own paper aeroplanes and looked at the science behind hot air balloons.

Over 40 Year 10 pupils from 11 local schools put their engineering skills to the test in the Schools Engineering Challenge which aims to encourage young people to take an active interest in all aspects of engineering and design. The pupils designed, built and tested a projectile launcher using ordinary materials supplied on the day. The event encourages teamwork in material selection and planning – all vital aspects of a career in engineering or science. The finished gadgets included catapults and slingshots, which were assessed according to how far the missile (a squash ball) could be launched, its accuracy and force.

First prize went to Trinity School, Newbury, with a prize of £750 to spend on scientific or technical equipment for their school. Second was Park House School, Newbury, (£500) and third prize was won by St Bartholomew's School, also in Newbury (£200).

Tadley Community Primary School was presented with a brass plaque and a cheque for £200 for staff and pupil commitment towards Health and Safety over the past 3 years. The School spent the money on gazebos to aid sun protection for events such as sports day and fundraising activities. AWE's Company auditor has been assessing the School on Health and Safety as part of the Schools Liaison process and Tadley Community School were one of the few schools that completed all their actions in a timely manner at a cost of nearly £52,000.

In April AWE held an exhibition to show scheme members what AWE Schools Liaison Scheme has to offer and to show some of the loan equipment that is available to Schools. Over 40 Teachers and Schools Liaison Representatives attended.

AWE staff are currently developing a series of science lectures for Secondary Schools which will be offered to schools on the scheme.

NAG membership of LLC

Dr Cook had received a letter from the Secretary of the Nuclear Awareness Group asking for representation on the LLC. He said that he had given the matter careful consideration, referred to the LLC Terms of Reference and also had discussions with the Ministry of Defence. The Nuclear Awareness Group's request was turned down on the grounds that under current arrangements the LLC is a forum for Local Authority representatives and does not currently go beyond that, Dr Cook welcomed comments from LLC members.

Members discussed this issue at some length. In summary, they felt that any local person had the opportunity to raise their concerns with AWE through their local council, whatever those concerns were. To have any single issue group on the LLC would add nothing to the LLC and could compromise its value.

Management Changes

Following the changes announced at the last LLC meeting Dr Daryl Landeg had been appointed to the role of Director Research and Applied Sciences. Dr Landeg had presented to the LLC in previous meetings on the HELEN laser and the Orion project.

Dr Cook concluded by saying that in future meetings he would like to talk about Threat Reduction, an area of AWE's work about which very little has been said to date, and which he felt would interest LLC members.

5. Infrastructure Report - Dr Andrew Jupp, Director Infrastructure

Slides attached

Action 49/2 Feasibility of using Wind Turbines at AWE sites: Dr Jupp said that the initial work had been completed in April 2007. Potential sites for wind turbines have been identified at both main AWE Sites. AWE is currently awaiting quotes to complete reviews of these locations with the possibility of erecting a data mast to collect wind data at each location.

Action 49/3: Pangbourne Pipeline update: A programme is being developed for work to be undertaken this year. This will include removal of equipment from the pumphouse, removal of valves and sealing of valve pits. Discussions are still underway with the MOD on the proposed strategic option for the PPL.

The PPL protection work at the Ufton Nervet school was undertaken to enable the school to construct a car park for parents. The pipeline was excavated, sleeved and concreted in place to protect the pipe from construction work for the car park and will allow the pipeline to be removed if necessary with minimum disruption to the car park.

AWE will engage in stakeholder discussions with landowners and tenants before any decision is taken and supporting information would be made more widely available.

An update on AWE Sites Development was given outlining plans submitted to West Berkshire, some to be submitted in the near future and some expected to be submitted later.

Flooding

Dr Jupp said that an RLI (Review/Learn/Improve) had been carried out on the flooding and the LLC would be informed of the findings. Staff had volunteered to come in over the weekend to help with the clean-up, despite some of them being flooded at home. There had been no injuries, no radioactive release and no noxious chemicals released.

Action 50/1: Andrew to update the LLC on the findings.

Traffic and Travel

Some LLC Councillors believe the no right turn policy has resulted in an increase in traffic in the Soke Road / Pamber Heath Road area. Andrew promised to look into this and stated that the S106 improvements such as the new roundabouts should improve the situation. (These aren't due for completion until 08/09). There are concerns that Chapel Corner is becoming very busy with an increased risk of serious accidents.

Action 50/2: John Steele to set up monitoring of traffic at the Soke Road / Chapel Corner junction.

Councillor David Leeks is concerned that traffic lights due to be installed on the Falcon gyratory as part of the S106 improvements may actually show traffic down. He believes the gyratory work well currently. David also asked if the traffic lights would be working 24/7 or peak times only? **Action 50/3:** To advise whether the plan is for the traffic lights to work continuously or only in peak times.

A question was asked about the increase in lorry traffic that will come from Easter Park once it is operational as a warehousing and distribution centre. Had this traffic been taken into account in AWE travel plans? The answer was that the Easter Park development would have submitted it's own travel plans and although this may have been some years ago, increases in traffic can be predicted.

Energy Issues

Councillor Peter Beard of Reading Borough Council said that the performance data for the first year of operation of the Green Park wind turbine was now available and he would get a copy for AWE if required.

Councillor Shirt asked if AWE had considered geo-thermal heat sources?

Action 50/4: Dr Jupp to feed back on this in the December meeting.

Sites Development

John Steele gave a presentation on the development of the AWE sites. Dr Longton asked if he would give a presentation to West Berkshire Council.

Action: 50/5 John Steele to give a presentation to West Berkshire Council

6. Health, Safety & Environmental Report – Heather Young, D. Assurance

Target Zero

Now in its second year, the key objective continues to be one of developing and improving the health and safety culture within AWE and working towards an 'Incident and Injury Free' site. Personal Safety: focuses on an Incident and Injury Free (IIF) culture improvements with leadership workshops and training development. These sessions also incorporate the Stop, Think, Act, Review (STAR) process. Safety Process Improvements cover Safety Management Processes which are being improved to support the objectives of Target Zero. Supply Chain focuses on the continued implementation of the improved systems, such as the Drug & Alcohol and Pre-placement Fit for Duty medical programmes, Safety Observational Reports (SOR's) and Safe Plan of Action (SPA's) into framework agreements. Environment Campaign is an awareness campaign focusing on – 'Transform Your Environment' – 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle', and a 'Guide to Recycling at AWE' – explaining what can be recycled, how and where. The No Smoking Campaign is supporting those who wish to stop smoking. "Quit Clinics" are available and over 100 personnel have used these to give up smoking in the last 6 months. Wellbeing Campaign: 500 bicycles (100 to Burghfield and 400 to Aldermaston) have been delivered to enable personnel to participate further in the Travel and Transport Plan and improve the general health and wellbeing of staff.

AWE Catering

AWE is helping to support UK economies and UK growers and manufacturers. Eurest, AWE's provider of catering and vending services, is committed to a policy of sustainable purchasing and sourcing from in-country farmers and producers whenever possible. They source approximately 50% in the dairy, meat, poultry and vegetable sectors from UK producers, actively supporting British farmers and reducing 'food miles'.

Pollution Prevention Control Applications

AWE has submitted applications for combustion, non ferrous metals and carbonization. AWE, MoD and the EA also petitioned DEFRA to relax National Security Directions which withheld these applications from the public registers. The applications are available on the AWE website.

Decoy pond

In April the EA identified pH levels which were more alkaline than usual from the decoy pond discharge and notified AWE. An AWE assessment identified the most probable cause was the biological activity of algae in the pond. The EA have agreed with this assessment and are advising AWE on how best to manage the issue.

Uranium Levels in Prospect Park

During two periods the levels of natural uranium found at the AWE monitoring station at Prospect Park in Reading was found to be slightly elevated. The results were 3516 nBq/m³ against a threshold of 1000 nBq/m³ and 1728 nBq/m³. Isotopic analysis confirms natural uranium and the dust loading on the sample was several times that found on other samples taken in the same period which would explain the elevated result.

North Ponds Water management

AWE had suffered some flooding problems at both sites on and following 20th July. There has been some speculation that the North Ponds water management system did not cope with the storm on 20th July. This is a falsehood. Under normal operations all water falling within the Nuclear Storage and Processing Area is collected, sampled and analysed before sentencing to the Aldermaston Stream. A storm water bypass was installed a few years ago which allows AWE, during heavy storms, to bypass water from parts of site which are known to be incapable of picking up contamination, directly to the stream. This allows the capacity of the system to be dedicated to the parts of site where there is a small possibility of picking up contamination. On 19th July AWE notified the EA that the storm bypass would be likely to be called into service, which was the case. All water held in the tanks was analysed before discharge and the water in the bypass stream was analysed, all the levels of activity were within normal parameters and no levels of radioactivity above the WHO drinking water standards were discharged.

Annual Review of Safety

This was held in July 2007 with all regulators present. This is a reflection on activities and progress made over the last year and for both parties to highlight priorities for the coming year. The main areas for discussion were the good progress made on the development of the Nuclear Safety and Improvement Programme and delivery of key safety documents. Priority areas for next year will be delivery of the programme and successful completion of safety submissions such as periodic reviews of Safety for current facilities and safety cases for new build facilities.

7. Materials Ageing – Presentation by Graeme Nicholson

Slides attached

8. Ask the Regulators

An opportunity for LLC members to ask questions of the NII and EA representatives present.

9. Any Other Business

Members again complained of the length of time it took to get onto the AWE Aldermaston site for the LLC meeting. **Action 50/6:** Secretary will look at how this time can be shortened.

Cllr Clive Vare thanked AWE for the help they had given during the flooding which had brought real benefits to the village.

Cllr John Heggadon asked how the results of the survey on Corporate Social Responsibility had been used. **Action 50/7:** Secretary to report back to the LLC on how the results of the survey on Corporate Social Responsibility had been used.

Cllr David Leeks asked about the progress on the AWE Energy Strategy.

Action 50/8: Presentation at the next LLC meeting on the AWE Energy Strategy.

10. Dates of next meetings

Thursday 13th December 2007
Thursday 21st February 2008
Thursday 5th June 2008
Thursday 4th September 2008
Thursday 11th December 2008

The meeting ended with a buffet lunch

Avril Burdett
Secretary to the AWE LLC
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