

Minutes of the 51st AWE Local Liaison Committee Meeting

Thursday 13th December 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 Peter Beard	Reading Borough Council	
Cllr Mike Broad	Tadley Town Council	
Cllr Malcolm Bryant	Wokingham Borough Council	
Cllr Bill Cane	Mortimer West End Parish Council	LLC Liaison Officer
Cllr Jonathan Chishick	Tidmarsh with Sulham Parish Council	
Cllr Pennee Chopping	Ufton Nervet Parish Council	
Cllr Terry Faulkner	Tadley Town Council	
Cllr Patricia Garrett	Baughurst Parish 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	
Julie James	Hampshire Parish Council	
Cllr Kay Lacey	Pangbourne Parish Council	
Cllr David Leeks	Tadley Town Council	
Ian Lindsay	Wasing Parish	
Cllr George McGarvie	Pamber Heath Parish Council	
Cllr Irene Neill	West Berkshire Council	
Murray Roberts	Padworth Parish Council	
Cllr David Shirt	Aldermaston Parish Council	
John Southall	Purley-on-Thames Parish Council	
Cllr Tony Stanley	Silchester Parish Council	
Cllr Alan Sumner	Wokefield Parish Council	
Cllr David Wood	Theale Parish Council	

Regulators:

Martin Sayers	Nuclear Installations Inspectorate
Alan French	Nuclear Installations Inspectorate
Stuart Parr	Environment Agency

1. Introduction

Dr Cook welcomed new members Cllr Jonathan Chishick of Tidmarsh with Sulham Parish Council and Cllr George McGarvie of Pamber Heath Parish Council to the LLC.

2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Cllr Geoff Findlay; Mr Gul Khan; Cllr Royce Longton; Cllr Jeff Moss; Carolyn Murison; Tom Payne; Barry Richards; Cllr Clive Vare; Cllr Tim Whitaker; and Cllr Wendy Williamson

3. Actions from the last meeting

Action 50/1: Andrew Jupp to update the LLC on the findings of the 'Review/Learn & Improve' study of the flooding in July. *Covered in Dr Jupp's presentation at item 7.*

Action 50/2: Dave Murray to set up monitoring of traffic at the Soke Road/Chapel Corner junction. This monitoring had been carried out and AWE and West Berkshire Council were discussing what improvements could be made. Once all the road improvements around the Aldermaston site were complete, there should be less AWE traffic going along this route.

Action 50/3: Dave Murray to advise whether the Traffic Lights on the Falcon Gyrotory System will work in peak times or 24/7. The traffic lights will work 24/7, however they will be of the type which is sensitive to vehicle headlights and vehicle movement.

Cllr Leeks expressed his disappointment with this decision.

Action 50/4: Dr Jupp to feed back on whether AWE has investigated the use of geo-thermal energy. John Steele reported back on this issue in his presentation.

Action 50/5: John Steele to give a presentation on Site Development to West Berkshire Council. This will happen once a suitable date is agreed.

Action 50/6: Secretary to look at how the time taken to get into the LLC meetings can be shortened. Members reported a considerable improvement.

Action 50/7: Secretary to report to the LLC on how the findings of the Corporate Social Responsibility Survey have been used.

LLC Secretary Avril Burdett said that whilst there was no report which documented just how this valuable information was being used, it had influenced many aspects of the interface between AWE and the community.

Traffic was one of the biggest issues for the local community and the study had influenced Traffic and Travel improvements and led AWE into community partnerships on traffic issues.

Improvements had been made to the Schools Liaison scheme with a review of the number of schools on the scheme after which some schools had left the scheme and new ones joined. The scheme now supports 90 local schools, with 3 others expressing an interest. This now included three Special Needs Schools. AWE was arranging more challenges, giving more scientific lectures and organising a trip to the Science Museum for 50 Year 10 pupils and also looking at having an exhibition vehicle which could also be used as a mobile science laboratory.

In the near future, AWE will look at how it can forge partnerships and stronger links in the local communities, with charities, businesses and local groups, both at strategic and working levels. Improvements have already been made in communication with external stakeholders and work in this area will continue.

Later in the meeting, the LLC were told about AWE's Corporate Sustainability Plan which had also been influenced by feedback from the CSR survey and other sources which in turn has influenced how AWE will deliver its long term goals.

4. Minutes of the 50th Meeting

On page 5 of the minutes, the Secretary had quoted Cllr Dave Shirt as asking a question about geo-thermal heat sources, when Cllr David Leeks had asked that question, and Cllr. Peter Beard as offering the data from the second year of operation of the Green Park wind turbine, when it had been Cllr John Heggadon.

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

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

Making it Happen

During early November Don Cook, together with some of his Directors had held a series of 12 presentations to over 3,400 staff and contractors under the banner of 'Making it Happen'. He had talked to them about the major achievements of the last year and the important challenges of the coming year. From the feedback received, staff welcomed this face-to-face dialogue and Dr Cook said that it was good to be able to speak directly to so many staff, hear their views and share their achievements.

Apprentice Prize-giving

The 55th Annual Apprentice Prize-giving had been held in November. It recognised and rewarded students who had completed their AWE apprenticeships, and was attended by the apprentices and their families. An excellent team of apprentices, instructors, trainers and managers contribute to the success of the Apprentice Scheme, year-on-year.

The guest of honour was Chris Moon MBE, a former army officer, who had been severely injured in a landmine incident. He has overcome his disability, competed in countless gruelling physical challenges in the aid of charity, and gives speeches on motivation, leadership and the concept of limitation.

The Best Apprentice of the Year award was won by Jack Holdcroft, who was also awarded Advanced Apprentice of the Year for Berkshire in 2006 by the Learning and Skills Council. A new and poignant award was introduced at this year's ceremony – the David Bishop Memorial Award. David, who served as an AWE apprentice, died in a car accident earlier this year. His mother, Linda Bishop, presented the Memorial Award to Jason Clarke for his charitable contributions.

Celebrate @ AWE

A celebration party was held in October for over 600 employees and guests to celebrate this year's Gold, Silver and Bronze awards. Dr Simon Case, a scientist in Design Physics won the Individual Gold Award and £4000 for the completion of a world's first Technical Capability. The Team Gold Award went to a team made up of people from diverse areas and directorates for their work in the arena of Threat Reduction, they gave their prize of £6000 to charity.

Dr Brian Thomas – Edward Teller Award

Brian Thomas, an AWE Distinguished Scientist in Plasma Physics was awarded the prestigious Edward Teller Award for lifetime achievements by the American Nuclear Society. Previous winners include the inventor of laser fusion, John Nuckolls and Nicolay Basov of the Lebedev Institute in Moscow who worked on the invention of the laser. Both Dr Thomas and the scientific community at AWE are justifiably proud of this achievement.

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

Slides attached

Assurance Event Process

A three month 'verification by use' on the new process has just been completed and the feedback is now being analysed for improvement. The internal regulators have undertaken an independent review and their findings are being collated into the action plan for improvement.

KPI setting and SPIs

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Safety Performance Indicators (SPIs) for contract year 9 (CY9) are under development and were presented to the Board on December 10th. The SPIs are in response to the Baker Report recommendation 1. There is a significant challenge to deliver measures of the right type and number especially given that NII attach a great deal of importance to these and intend using them to inform their regulatory strategy.

A Health & Wellbeing Focus lunch was well attended with various external companies, such as dancing clubs and health clubs coming in to AWE to promote their activities. A 'Weight Away' clinic was launched at the event which had been very successful. A skin awareness focus lunch event held by Trident Medical Services in conjunction with Occupational Hygiene was well attended and feedback was very positive.

The AWE drug and alcohol testing procedure has been changed to enable an immediate result to be given for negative results. This will improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost of testing. Toolbox talks have been given to operatives and the first random drug & alcohol tests under the new scheme have been carried out.

IIF Workshops

The key objective of Target Zero continues to be one of developing and improving the health and safety culture within AWE and working towards an Incident and Injury Free workplace (IIF). Half day

workshops will continue until everyone at AWE has attended (100+ workshops now held with more than one-third of the AWE population attending).

Campaigns

October campaigns included 'skin awareness' following dermatitis concerns earlier in the year and musculo-skeletal disorders (MSDs) in line with the European Health and Safety Week. Both were well supported.

The Materials Handling Poster Campaign is the third of four Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) awareness campaigns being run during 2007. The posters were distributed across AWE with the aim of highlighting the requirements of PUWER and that support sheets on specific topics are available via the company Safety Management System. A Machine Tools Poster campaign has also been completed.

Decoy Pond

The ecosystem in Decoy Pond continues to be under scrutiny, with pH issues. Some detailed assessment of the types of algae present in the pond has shown some strains of blue-green algae. These can give rise to materials which are highly toxic to human beings but relatively insensitive for fish. Staff on site who might have a reason to visit Decoy Pond, including the angling fraternity, have been briefed.

Elevated Air Sample Results

During 2007, seven routine monitoring results recorded from a single location on the Aldermaston site have shown uranium levels in excess of the notification level of 1000 nBq/m³. The sampler is located close to building work being carried out on site. Also over the same period, four routine monitoring results recorded from Prospect Park, Reading have shown uranium levels in excess of the notification level. Monitoring results exceeding the notification level are investigated and, since August 2007, have been tracked through the AWE Abnormal Event reporting system.

Radiochemical analysis has shown that the uranium detected is **naturally occurring** and is not associated with the materials used in AWE's weapons programme. Additionally, the new, more efficient design of air sampler now in use has resulted in an increase in the amount of dust collected per cubic metre of air sampled. This has resulted in more dust and hence more uranium being collected per sample compared to that collected by the old samplers.

Annual Environment Review

After attending the annual environment review, the Environment Agency (EA) concluded that in spite of a recent warning letter, AWE is an exemplary nuclear operator with a good environmental track record. They emphasised that the current programme affords great opportunities to do even better and AWE will endeavour to capitalise on this opportunity.

International Standards

After a very detailed audit of AWE's management system Lloyds Register Quality Assurance have re-accredited AWE with the International Standard for Environmental Management Systems. This shows that management at AWE continues to be of a very high standard.

Sustainability Plan

Following on from some initial work done with 11 LLC members in October 2006 and some discussions with Directors within the Environment Agency, AWE is proud to announce that they will be making some long-term commitments to improve in four areas of sustainable development. These are Travel and Transport, Waste, Energy and the Built Environment. These are the areas that most of our key stakeholders and employees have identified as the ones most worth improving.

AWE was awarded a "Recognition for Excellence" at the recent UK Excellence Awards following the assessment in the summer. This was a prestigious and well attended event with over 600 attendees from across all industry sectors.

High level regulatory visits

Mike Weightman, Chief Inspector Nuclear Installations Inspectorate commented that visible improvements can be seen on site. An LC14 (Licence Condition 14) team inspection of licence compliance arrangements for safety cases was undertaken jointly with the Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator. Overall, NII and DNSR are encouraged by the progress that has been made by AWE in

addressing a number of LC14 issues. The inspection highlighted a number of areas where additional improvements should be sought by AWE, in particular to meet the expectations of SC.1 in HSE's Safety Assessment Principles for Nuclear Facilities. The NII are encouraged by AWE's commitment to these improvements in its LC14 arrangements. [Secretary's note: NII Licence Condition 14 (LC14) relates to Safety Documentation].

Operational Experience Community of Practice

This has been set up to provide communication channels for facilitating cross directorate learning. Three workshops have been held so far covering Legionella, vibration and pressure systems safety regulations. The objective of this community is to enhance assurance performance through the sharing of operational experience.

A discussion ensued on the AWE Drugs & Alcohol Screening process to which Heather Young said that only a handful of people had been referred for further testing. The system used by AWE offers support to those testing positive. If people were not willing to accept this support, then they had to part company with AWE. Don Cook added that there was no proscribed lower limit for positive results, nor was there a 'zero tolerance' policy. Any prescription medicines being lawfully used were taken into account but a positive result always triggered a medical review. So far there had been no false positive results. The bottom line was that AWE is a Nuclear Licensed site, uses explosives and is essentially an industrial complex, people need to be willing to work within the parameters that this imposes.

7. Infrastructure Report - Dr Andrew Jupp, Director Infrastructure

Action 50/1 To give feedback on extreme weather event. (See slides)

Dr Jupp outlined the effects of limited flooding which occurred on both the Aldermaston and Burghfield sites as a result of the extremely heavy rainfall on a single day on 20 July 2007.

Bill Cane asked whether AWE had reviewed the planning application for gravel extraction in Mortimer West End, from the perspective of possible changes in the water table. Dr Jupp said that AWE was constantly reviewing on and off site flood modelling taking these factors into consideration.

Cllr Dave Shirt asked that it was noted that the lake at Portland House was below its normal depth when the heavy rain occurred. This had helped to avoid more severe flooding in Aldermaston village had could have been much worse. This was merely a lucky coincidence. Cllr Shirt thanked AWE for offering to help Aldermaston Parish Council with drawing together an Emergency Plan, following the July floods. Julie James of Hampshire County Council Emergency Planning offered to provide a template for such a plan.

Exercise ALDEX 07

A tri-annual Level 2 Licence exercise (ALDEX 07) was held on the 16th November at various locations including Thames Valley Police Headquarters at Kidlington. The exercise was judged to be an "adequate" demonstration of the arrangements for public protection by the NII, which means that the NII conclude that there is an effective plan for public protection in place.

A Level 2 exercise is a requirement under NII Site Licensing and the Radiation Emergency Preparedness and Public Information Regulations (REPPPIR) and is designed to test the arrangements laid out in the AWE Off Site Plan produced by West Berks Council for the protection of the public in the event of a release of radiological material outside the site.

The exercise examines the interactions between the AWE Situations Co-ordination Centre, the Civil Police 'Gold' command centre, the control centres of other responding bodies identified in the Off Site Plan and tests the strategic decision making process at the police Gold centre. The joint media response to the exercise scenario of all responding bodies is also tested.

In addition to AWE, the following organisations were involved:

Thames Valley Police

Hampshire Police

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
Southern Counties Ambulance Service Trust
MoD

Local Authorities

West Berkshire Council
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
Hampshire County Council

Local NHS Trusts

Oxford
West Berkshire
Basingstoke
Hampshire
Health Protection Agency – Radiation Protection Division
Food Standards Agency
Environment Agency
HSE/Nuclear Installations Inspectorate
Government Office of the South East.

In addition to having representatives at Gold, the above-listed were also represented at the Media Centre.

Julie James of Hampshire County Council said that her organisation had also tested other aspects of their Emergency Plan, such as an evacuation and dealing with local residents unable to return to their homes. Dr Jupp thanked all those who had been involved for a very professional exercise and added that AWE's Emergency Plan would only work if it interfaced well with those of other organisations.

Level 1 Exercise Update

This is an annual exercise to meet NII Licence Condition 11 Emergency Arrangements. On the Aldermaston exercise, it was decided by AWE that part of the exercise, namely calling staff in from home during silent hours would be simulated. This part of the exercise was considered by NII to have not been adequately demonstrated and NII asked that this particular aspect should be actually demonstrated. AWE has since undertaken a test of this particular aspect and NII was content that it had been an adequate demonstration.

NII Inspector, Martin Sayers, was asked to define 'adequate' in relation to AWE's performance in these exercises. He explained that adequate meant that an acceptable standard has been demonstrated. Each exercise tested a number of different parts of the Emergency Plan with different inspectors observing different aspects. Following the exercise the various inspectors meet to discuss their findings and decide whether, if the incident had been real, would AWE have coped, if the answer is yes, then the demonstration is classed as 'adequate'. One aspect of this exercise was to call staff in from home during silent hours and the Inspectors asked AWE to demonstrate this capability. NII can ask for any or all aspects on an exercise to be repeated if they are not satisfied. He said that failure was a very serious matter and usually happens if a number of the separate aspects are not adequately demonstrated and the whole exercise would have to be repeated. If the licensee met the exercise requirements, it was deemed 'adequate; to get a 'good' was a real accolade and only given exceptionally when a demonstration was considered to have exceeded expectations.

During the coffee break there was a demonstration of dexterity issues within a glove box with an experienced Frogger, and a demonstration of finding an 'RA' source.

Decommissioning at AWE – Richard Hedley & Mark Hedges, Environmental Projects
Slides attached

Bill Cane asked whether tools used for decommissioning were scrapped. He was told that this was often necessary so it was part of the decommissioning plan to minimise the amount of waste generated in the decommissioning process. Ian Lindsay asked whether AWE used remote control. Richard Hedley said that AWE used it and that the industry in general, and especially the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority was sponsoring scientific development projects to find ever better solutions. The most difficult issue was to get a robotic manipulator into a facility without exposing it to radiation which would make it RA waste. Cllr Shirt asked whether AWE took decommissioning into consideration when designing new facilities. He was told that it was an important part of the process.

Action 51/1: Richard Hedley invited members to visit the North Ponds facility later in 2008. **LLC Secretary to arrange .**

Site Development Update – John Steele, Planning & Development Manager
Renewable energy

Wind power generation is currently not possible for unassociated technical reasons; Biomass – AWE is looking at replacing heavy fuel oil at AWE Burghfield with TallOil a zero carbon bi-product of the paper industry. If successful this alone would meet the 10% target. Low energy lighting makes up 16% of electricity use and motors 62%. Low energy solutions will be included in 'new builds'.

Lighting at AWE

A high proportion of the lighting on the Aldermaston site is old and inefficient. Replacing the lighting with modern high efficiency equivalents and introducing controllable versions will save energy, reduce carbon emissions and reduce running and maintenance costs. Return on investment is anticipated to be very good, with an estimated payback of less than 3 years. The best overall solution for Aldermaston will be a mixture of controlled and standard fittings, controlled fittings being used primarily in low utilisation areas. The library lighting has recently been replaced, resulting in considerable savings.

AWE will run a number of pilot projects to acquire actual operational data (i.e. energy consumption), before and after the installation of different types of replacement energy efficient lighting. Once this has been done, comparisons will be made and the best solution devised. It is proposed to implement a replacement programme across AWE sites for all enduring buildings. AWE maintenance contractors, EMCOR have agreed to put a lighting installation team in place to support the programme.

Major Projects planning applications process

The process that has been put in place for managing the planning applications with West Berkshire Council was reviewed recently using the office accommodation project 'Gemini' as a benchmark. This cleared planning with no adverse comments,. The process in place is also used to manage compliance with any planning conditions imposed by the council through the planning process, this was again reviewed with no adverse comments.

When asked about wind turbines, Mr Steele explained that with the latest technology it would be feasible to generate energy this way at AWE. However, with RA and explosives facilities in the vicinity, safety and technical considerations may rule this out. This made the use of geothermal energy more promising.

Cllr Leeks commented that many buildings looked old and tired from the surrounding roads and he looked forward to some of the improvements which AWE's development would bring. He also welcomed the planned improvements on the local highways.

Cllr Lacey asked whether the trees on the artist's impression of the HEFF facility were existing or additional trees. John Steele answered that some 40 trees were being felled, mostly Silver Birch trees; all oak trees were being treated as if they had Tree Preservation Orders on them and each tree felled would be replaced with three new ones. AWE was also developing a 'softer' look to the boundaries of the sites with tree and shrub planting.

Travel & Transport Update – Dave Murray, Manager Special Projects

Slides attached

Bill Cane raised his Council's concerns that with the development at Easter Park, as there was nothing in the planning to stop vehicles using Soke Road. He said that his Council had had to accept that with the no right turn exit from AWE, Soke Road was being used as an easy route south from AWE. Mr Steele said that once the roundabout was in place at the AWE Main Gate, staff would again be able to get to the A340 easily, however, AWE could not dictate to staff which route they should use. Engineered methods of slowing down the traffic along Soke Road could be considered.

Don Cook said that there would be times during construction at AWE when it will be inconvenient, but once the roundabouts are completed it will improve. Thames Valley Police are also keeping an eye on traffic flow. The discussion on traffic issues continued and comments were noted by Dave Murray.

8. Ask the Regulators

Cllr Bill Cane asked about a local television interview with the journalist Rob Edwards. He was concerned that the programme put the LLC in a bad light, and was disappointed that nobody from AWE or NII had commented or taken part in the programme.

Martin Sayers (NII) said that he believed that the programme was based on the recent article Rob Edwards had written in the New Scientist. This article used NII reports supplied in response to a request under the Freedom Of Information Act. Two such requests had been received in the period July to September 2007, and these are mentioned in the latest HSE report to the LLC.

Mr Sayers said that because of the unspecific nature of the questions, it had taken considerable effort to pull the information together which had impacted on the availability of staff for 'front line work'. In the case of Mr Edwards' question, NII had also provided a background interpretation of the information supplied to put it into context. NII has no control on how the information is used, but does prepare briefing information to the HSE press office in the event of additional media interest. Mr Sayers said that he was not aware of any approach to HSE by a local television network, or other media, to comment on the points being made. He reassured the LLC saying that although NII had to be careful on security grounds as to what was written in LLC reports, the reports were intended to give the LLC good information on the NII role based on actual inspectors' reports.

Mr Price said that AWE has issued a robust statement responding to the claims made in the New Scientist article.

Other LLC members thanked Cllr Cane for asking the question on their behalf.

9. Any Other Business

A gift was presented to the outgoing Secretary to the LLC. The Secretary thanked LLC members for the gift and for the challenges and support of the LLC over 51 meetings.

10. Dates of next meetings

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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