

Minutes of the 62nd AWE Local Liaison Committee Meeting

Thursday 30 September 2010

Present:

Robin McGill	Chief Executive, AWE	Chairman LLC
Dr Andrew Jupp	Director Site, AWE	
Heather Young	Director Environment, Safety & Health, AWE	
Alan Price	Manager External Comms & Marketing, AWE	
Lindsey Appleton	Public Affairs Manager, AWE	Secretary LLC
Cllr Philip Bassil	Brimpton Parish Council	
Cllr Michael Bound	Basingstoke & Deane Council	
Cllr Mike Broad	Tadley Town Council	
Cllr Pat Garrett	Baughurst Parish Council	
Cllr Glenn Goodall	Reading Borough Council	
Cllr John Heggadon	Shinfield Parish Council	
Cllr Kay Lacey	Pangbourne Parish Council	
Mr Ian Lindsay	Wasing Parish Council	
Cllr Mollie Lock	Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council	
Cllr Royce Longton	West Berkshire Council	
Cllr George McGarvie	Pamber Parish Council	
Jeff Moss	Swallowfield Parish Council	
Cllr Irene Neill	West Berkshire Council	
Tom Payne	Basingstoke & Deane	
Cllr John Robertson	Mortimer West End Council	
Cllr David Shirt	Aldermaston Parish Council	
Cllr Chris Souden	Sulhamstead Parish Council	
Cllr Marilyn Tucker	Basingstoke & Deane	
Cllr Tim Whitaker	Mapledurham Parish Council	
Cllr Jenny Williams	Silchester Parish Council	
Cllr Richard Willis	Reading Borough Council	
Regulators:		
Andrew Pembroke	Environment Agency	
John Lindsay	Nuclear Installations Inspectorate	
Peter McIntyre	Fire Investigation Chairman	

Introduction

Mr McGill welcomed members to the 62nd meeting.

Apologies

Apologies had been received from Cllr Jonathan Chishick, Cllr Pennee Chopping, Cllr Geoff Findlay, Cllr Valerie Frost, Cllr David Leeks, Carolyn Murison, Cllr Graham Round, Cllr Clive Vare, Cllr David Wood, Christian Morgan-Jones, Head of Information & Communications AWE.

Actions from the last meeting

Action 61/1: An action on Dr Jupp to work alongside West Berkshire Council and the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII) regarding the emergency sheltering plan for AWE-this was covered later in the meeting.

Minutes of the 61st Meeting

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

Chairman's remarks – Mr Robin McGill, Chief Executive, AWE.

Fire damage

Mr McGill gave an update on the situation following the fire which occurred in a process building on 3 August.

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Immediately after the fire, all associated operations were suspended and an investigation, led by an independent chairman who is an external member of AWE's Nuclear Safety Committee, was launched.

Mr McGill stated that the findings of the investigation will first be reported to this AWE Local Liaison Committee and then shared with the public. A separate investigation is being carried out by the Hazardous Installations Directorate of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Cllr Shirt asked about a report in a national newspaper suggesting the fire had been much larger than had first been reported. Mr McGill said the fire had been relatively small and the report contained a number of inaccuracies.

Cllr McGarvie asked what the fire investigation's Terms of Reference (TOR) were. Mr McIntyre said the investigation team had been tasked to investigate the causes of the fire and to identify lessons which could be learned from the incident.

Cllr Bound asked whether there would be a review of AWE's fire brigade capability as a general review, learn and improve exercise. In response, Mr McGill said that AWE has an extremely capable and professional fire service but the Company constantly reviews all its procedures and processes and would continue to do so.

Cllr Willis asked whether AWE had considered participating in broadcast media interviews to rebut some of the claims being made about the fire. Mr McGill said a decision had been made not to participate while the investigation took place. However, he pointed out that the Company has been extremely open about the fire and had issued several press statements giving updates on the latest situation.

LLC members were then taken into the Aldermaston site's explosives area to inspect the building where the fire occurred.

Hydrus

In July, AWE submitted plans to West Berkshire Council for Hydrus, the replacement hydrodynamics research facility here at Aldermaston. The Council's planning committee considered the application on 29 August and planning consent was granted.

Blackthorn commissioned

Blackthorn, AWE's most powerful supercomputer to date, has now been commissioned. Blackthorn complements the two Willow supercomputers recently installed.

Orion

In July, AWE's replacement laser facility, Orion, took a significant step forward when a beamline of laser amplifiers was fired for the very first time. The pulsed power was fired by the control system into the amplifier flash lamps generating laser gain. The "twilight team" continued to successfully test a second beamline, paving the way for the project to deliver its two demonstration beamlines.

AASH delivery

The Annual Assessment of Stockpile Health (AASH) provides the Ministry of Defence with confirmation that the deployed Trident warhead stockpile continues to meet its agreed safety and performance characteristics. The most recent assessment, the 2010 AASH, was successfully delivered on 29 June.

MOD Commendation

Work led by the AWE's Arms Control Verification Research team (part of the National Nuclear Security Division) has won a Ministry of Defence (MOD) Chief Scientific Adviser Commendation Award. The award is for the important part AWE has played in a unique international collaboration with Norway on the science of verifying warhead dismantlement.

Coulport

UNCLASSIFIED

In response to a question, Mr McGill said that AWE – together with Lockheed Martin UK Strategic Systems and Marine Division Babcock International Group - is bidding for a significant role in elements of the management and operation of the Coulport site. This is currently being assessed by the MOD and a decision is expected early next year.

Environment, Health & Safety Report – Heather Young, Director Environment, Health & Safety Slides attached

Mrs Young's report is attached to the Minutes.

Infrastructure Report - Dr Andrew Jupp, Director Site Slides attached

Periodic Review of Safety

The AWE Aldermaston site periodic review of safety has been produced to demonstrate that the site operates safely and is good to continue for the next 10 years. This will now be considered by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate.

Emergency Arrangements Review

The Aldermaston site security exercise successfully took place in June. The Radiation (Emergency Preparedness & Public Information) – REPPPIR booklet was updated and re-issued in May 2010. The booklet is developed in partnership with West Berkshire Council and distributed to local residents around both the Aldermaston and Burghfield sites. Hazard information continues to be freely available online.

Sitex

The Burghfield site exercise is due to take place on 19 October and the Aldermaston exercise is scheduled for 10 November. These exercises are part of the emergency planning cycle with participants from multi-agencies.

Sulham Brook Weir Removal

Approval has now been obtained from the Environment Agency (EA) to remove a short section of the former Pangbourne Pipeline running under the Sulham Brook. A preferred contractor has been selected. Removal work is now underway.

Pangbourne Pipeline Decommissioning

The best practical environmental option (BPEO) for decommissioning the Pangbourne Pipeline has been reviewed by the EA and there are two options which both represent BPEO solutions- in situ disposal and removal. The next stage is the development of a plan in consultation with all stakeholders.

Ask the Regulators

Cllr McGarvie asked whether the Regulators were able to comment on the timescale for the completion of the HSE fire investigation. In response, Mr J. Lindsay said it would be difficult to give an estimate of completion dates.

Cllr Shirt sought assurance from the Regulators that mobile homes and caravans are suitable for short-term shelter in the event of an incident with radiological consequences. He asked whether the NII are planning to issue formal clarification to resolve any possible concerns from the local community. Mr J Lindsay took an action to respond outside the meeting. **Action 62/1:** Mr J Lindsay.

Any Other Business

Cllr Longton wished to record a vote of thanks to AWE for providing funding to support the "Greening Burghfield" campaign.

Cllr McGarvie wished also to thank AWE for their sponsorship of an event at a local school.

Cllr Broad asked whether any decisions had been made concerning the submarine dismantling project. Dr Jupp said that discussions remain on-going but the Committee would be kept informed as soon as any decisions are reached.

Date of next meeting

Thursday 16 December 2010.

Lindsey Appleton
Secretary to the AWE LLC