



Minutes of the 101st AWE Local Liaison Committee Meeting
Wednesday 17th March 2021
AWE, Online Meeting

Present:

Haydn Clulow	Chair
Cllr Dominic Boeck	West Berkshire Council
Cllr Michael Bound	Basingstoke & Dean
Cllr Graham Bridgman	West Berkshire Council
Cllr Avril Burdett	Tadley Town Council
Cllr Jonathan Chishick	Tidmarsh with Sulham Parish Council
Cllr Sophie Crawford	Aldermaston Parish Council
Cllr Susie Ferguson	Pangbourne Parish Council
Cllr Debbie Fisher	Wokefield Parish Council
Cllr Roger Gardiner	Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
Amy Gower	West Berkshire Council
Cllr Clive Littlewood	Holybrook Parish Council
Cllr David Livingstone	Silchester Parish Council
Cllr Mollie Lock	Stratfield Mortimer Parish
Cllr Royce Longton	West Berkshire
Cllr George McGarvie	Pamber Parish Council
Cllr Susan Mullan	Tadley Town Council
Cllr David Shirt	Aldermaston Parish Council
Cllr Ayo Sokale	Reading Borough Council
Cllr Nicholas Thurlow	Mortimer West End
Rhian Adams	AWE
Nick Bolton	AWE
Suzanne Chenery	AWE
Scott Davies-Hearn	AWE
Anna Finney	AWE
Simon Hardaker	AWE
Mark Hedges	AWE
Val Hincks	AWE
Cleo Howie	AWE
Philippa Kent	AWE
Julie Lane	AWE
Scott Lippett	AWE
Michele Maidment	AWE
Sam Seffron	AWE
John Steele	AWE
Martin Wells	AWE

Regulators:

Gary Cook	Office for Nuclear Regulation
Rob Green	Environment Agency

Guest Presenter:

Michelle Smith

CEO, Education Business Partnership

Apologies

Apologies had been received from Councillors:

Philip Bassil, Mark Binns, John Chapman, Penee Chopping, Stuart Coker, Graham Hetherington, Max Joseph, Malcolm Large, David Leeks, Helen Manghani, Ian Montgomery, Barry Patman, Carolyn Richardson, Tim Whitaker

Actions from previous meetings

- **100/01:** Regarding the Aldermaston slide, point two about the Reading Road/Red Lane corner site development. You mentioned needing planning permission and access being an issue and, in that context, mentioned that Welshman Lane was a site of importance already to WBC. Please could you elaborate on that comment? (Sophie Crawford)

A: An email was sent to Sophie stating that historically the Welshman Lane / Reading Road staggered crossroad junction was of concern to WBC Highways in terms of potential capacity and accidents. These matters would therefore need to be addressed in detail within any planning application for proposed development in the south east corner of AWE Aldermaston. We will of course inform the outcome of such studies at a future LLC meeting. (John Steele)

- **100/02:** Discuss with Richard Moore the opportunity to present a talk at the Aldermaston Local History Group. (Garry George)

A: This has been discussed with Richard Moore, but no arrangements have been put in place as yet.

- **100/03:** Dave Shirt requested that an agenda item be added to the next meeting in relation to the role of the LLC. (Dave Shirt)

A: This topic has been included in this meeting as requested. (Suzanne Chenery)

Approval of the 100th Meeting minutes

Chairman's update

Introduction

Haydn Clulow welcomed members to the 101st meeting.

Membership Changes

AWE welcome a new member to the LLC, Susie Ferguson, who is Parish Councillor for Pangbourne. Nick Corp has now left Wasing Parish Council and as yet there has been no news of his replacement.

LLC Communications

Thanks was given to those who took time to respond to the questionnaires that were sent out last year. LLC members were asked what they thought about the format and content of the LLC meetings

as well as more general questions about how AWE can improve communications with the LLC and more widely with local residents.

Prosecution

Details from the sentencing hearing were sent directly to all LLC members on the day of the hearing (December 7). AWE plc has been fined £660,000 following a guilty plea to a charge brought by the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) under Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. This was in relation to an incident at AWE's Aldermaston site in June 2019, comprising a flash-over of electricity when a contractor's tool made contact with a live conductor. No one was harmed as a result of the incident.

This was a conventional health and safety matter which posed no nuclear risk to workers or members of the public.

AWE take their health and safety responsibilities extremely seriously and have co-operated fully with the ONR throughout the course of the investigation. AWE remain committed to achieving the highest standards in safety performance, and continue to work collaboratively with regulators, contractors and partners to achieve this.

Detailed Emergency Planning Zones remain unchanged

In March 2020, West Berkshire District Council determined the new Detailed Emergency Planning Zones for both sites, with the Burghfield zone significantly larger than it had been under the old REPPIR 2001 regulations. A number of property developers and landowners (the Claimants), challenged the Council's determination of the extended DEPZ at Burghfield which includes land at Grazeley, south of Reading, earmarked for 15,000 new homes.

The judicial review case was heard in the High Court in December 2020 and the judgement was released on Friday 12 February 2021. The Claimants lost the case. The judge decided West Berkshire District Council had determined the DEPZ around Burghfield lawfully and the new DEPZ remains as determined in March 2020. It was necessary for AWE to take an active role in the case as it is the operator of AWE Burghfield and the author of the technical report provided to West Berkshire District Council which the Council relied on to determine the DEPZ.

Transition from GOCO to ALB

At the last meeting there was an update on the announcement by Secretary State for Defence that AWE would be returning to the public sector as an Arms-Length-Body on 1 July 2021.

A lot has happened since November, including two events for DG Nuc Vanessa Nicholls and Alison Atkinson to speak to staff in DNO (Defence Nuclear Organisation) and AWE via Teams live events about this change. It's a really busy time for AWE; working on two warhead programmes: the existing Trident warhead and preparing for the initial phases of a replacement warhead. The closest possible collaboration is needed to achieve this and we believe this model will support that.

A lot has been achieved already with employees being reassured that pay, pensions and things like the 9-day fortnight are to remain in place and the existing pay agreement for those covered by collective bargaining will be honoured.

A new Chairman, John Manzoni, has been selected to take up post in July. Other Non-Executive Directors are being appointed in the next few months.

As the community relations programme was set up following the contractorization agreement, AWE remain committed to retaining close links with the local community both through the LLC and via our other community channels. AWE will continue to inspire the next generation of scientists, engineers and technology specialists and know that MoD share these aspirations.

New partnership with Surrey University

AWE is entering into a partnership with the University of Surrey, which is launching a new Centre of Excellence in Materials Ageing, Performance and Life Prediction.

The University's long-standing expertise in materials, science and engineering and its strengths in advanced characterisation of materials in demanding environments, underpin the partnership.

This new partnership which became official in December is one of a number of centres of excellence, focusing on different technical areas, which have been created. The others being Cranfield University with Dstl and Defence Equipment & Support, the Universities of Oxford, Warwick, Manchester and University College London.

Awards Success

At the last meeting it was announced that AWE had been named as one of the Top 100 employers by RateMyApprenticeship – a review-based platform to help those seeking apprenticeships.

Since the last meeting AWE's Skills Academy has also been named as Macro Employer of the Year winner for the South East region at this year's National Apprenticeship Awards.

The National Apprenticeship Awards highlight business and individual success in apprenticeships and celebrate the very best employers, apprentices and apprenticeship champions across the country.

During 2020 the Institute of Physics also presented AWE with the Apprenticeship Employer Award in recognition of its commitment and contribution to scientific and engineering apprenticeship schemes.

The IOP has also recognised AWE scientist, Kirk Duroe at an individual level for being an exceptional early career physicist. Kirk, who joined AWE's graduate programme in 2011, won the Clifford Paterson medal and prize in December.

The medal was in recognition of Kirk's expert technical advice to the government. Kirk was viewed as an outstanding contributor to UK nuclear threat reduction scientific research and development, with his work directly supporting the UK Home Office.

Supporting our local community

AWE have continued to support a number of organisations with financial and practical support.

The AWE charity fund made a £5,000 donation to the New Beginnings charity for homeless people based in Reading last month. The charity has converted a vacant pub to provide services to people in need.

Other donations were made to the South-Central Ambulance Charity to enable them to buy new lifting gear and kit bags for their First Responders.

AWE also supported an outdoor classroom at South View School, in Basingstoke. The free-standing shelter will be used by the children to engage in STEM and environmental projects - whatever the weather.

Helping schools carry on learning

A new programme of remote schools' outreach activities has been developed in conjunction with AWE's partner schools and local educational charities. More technology is now being utilised and a range of activities has already been delivered– including one-to-one mentoring, curriculum-linked experiments and careers chats – via the Microsoft Teams platform.

AWE graduates, along with A-level students from Queen Mary's College (QMC) in Basingstoke, have filmed a range of science and engineering activities for inclusion in remote learning programmes.

STEM STAR Awards

AWE have also launched a new sixth form STEM award scheme with partner college QMC. The competition will enable students to showcase their STEM skills. The prize-winning STEM stars will be selected from students who have completed a STEM research/ development project which involves carrying out experiments or producing something in an area of interest, such as computer programming, robotics or biofuels.

Business Resilience Group (AWE's Response to Covid-19)

Martin Wells
Group Leader, Site Services

Cleo Howie
Wellbeing Manager

Throughout COVID-19 AWE has remained committed to safely delivering its core mission, whilst still implementing a robust approach to managing its response to the pandemic to protect its people.

A dedicated Business Resilience Group (BRG) was set up in January 2020 and is still in place today ensuring the safety of the people, the sites and the community. They engage with ONR, West Berks Council and PHE in developing AWE's response.

Daily operational calls supported by a cross-functional group from across AWE ensure BRG maintain complete visibility and control of all operations across each site.

Regular reviews of the safety measures that have been put in place are undertaken and adjustments are made as required.

In order to support employees, AWE put in place additional 'paid leave' for parents/carers and all clinically extremely vulnerable people.

To aid the wellbeing of all staff, AWE sent out wellbeing and hygiene packs to employees home addresses and access to digital health services for employees and their families was also provided and a monthly wellbeing calendar of activities, classes and webinars was also issued.

AWE has had to change its approach on recruiting new members of staff, graduates and apprentices. Both job searches and interviews are now all online without the need for travel or face to face meetings. When someone joins AWE there is now a short onsite induction and a comprehensive online induction and all future careers hiring programmes are now fully virtual.

Questions arising

Q: Graham Bridgman: In relation to LFT testing, you will know that the extension of LFT testing to large scale employers was introduced last January so it was available to employers with more than 250 employees. What surprised us at West Berkshire Gold was that we had a need to do LFT testing on the Burghfield CSA site for quite a number of AWE employees. We were aware that AWE had their own testing on site so want to know why AWE needed to use ours?

A: Martin Wells: *The onsite capability was in place before that demand was placed upon testing stations. That wasn't done by choice on that day, it was an immediate reaction to a contractor on one of our construction sites having multiple cases and they felt that the appropriate thing to do was to urgently get everyone tested and it wasn't necessarily the right response to that challenge but it's been something we have been addressing since. AWE was*

in contact with your emergency response lead and the providers of the testing stations to find out what impact AWE were having and the support was fantastic. It was not a decision that was made by AWE but by a group of contractors that were working on our site at that time.

Q: Dominic Boeck: When the Covid restrictions are lifted do you anticipate a more hybrid way of working ie blend between what existed prior to Covid and what exists during Covid?

A: Martin Wells: *That's something that the team along with the Exec have been working on for a number of months now. AWE is driven largely by the government guidance and the new arrangements are as a response to that, but it's given the team a huge opportunity to rethink how AWE operates as a business with regards to working from home and flexibility.*

Environment, Safety and Health Update

Nick Bolton
ESH Service Delivery Lead (SET)

Nick gave an overview of performance in personal and process safety during the period advising members that the OSHA TRI (Occupational Safety and Health Administration; Total Recordable Incidents) Injury rate for the 12 months to the end of January 2021 was 0.177 per 200,000 hours worked. The TRI Rate is the best ever achieved.

A total of 13 Recordable Injury Events have occurred in the 12 months to the end of January 2021.

Since the last LLC meeting, two Process Safety events have been raised that also required INF1 to be submitted to the regulator. The first relates to a solvent leak into a bund and the second related to material being left in a foyer over the weekend. Both events have been investigated and preventive actions instigated. Process Safety training for supervisors continues to be delivered, increasing Process Safety knowledge across the organisation.

Bowtie analysis is being used to better understand the protective layers and their vulnerabilities and is helping operational staff have a clearer understanding of the hazards associated with the plant and processes.

Questions arising

Q: Dave Shirt: Have there been any community complaints during this period, and can we make this a standard agenda item?

A: Mark Hedges: *This will be covered later in the meeting in the Site Update section.*

Q: George McGarvie: Noting that there is a high proportion of employees working from home. Am I right in thinking this will impact the figures due to less people on site?

A: Nick Bolton: *Yes, there is an impact on our injured performance whilst working at home. It is a positive impact however.*

Ask the Regulators

Rob Green
Environment Agency

Questions arising from the EA Report

The EA report was circulated prior to the meeting and no questions arose.

Gary Cook Lead Site Inspector
Office for Nuclear Regulation

The ONR report was circulated prior to the meeting and covers the period from October to the end of January.

Regarding Covid arrangements and our onsite presence, we cover conventional health and safety on site as well as nuclear safety and during our recent inspections we have taken the opportunity to look at the Covid arrangements actually onsite. All our inspectors report that all arrangements from social distancing and sanitizing etc are really very good and more robust than you would see in the wider community. We are continuing to observe those measures. We are ramping up our site presence and when restrictions are lifted then we should be back to some form of normality from June onwards with the addition of using TEAMS more for meetings rather than people having to travel.

The ONR sent an enforcement letter to AWE regarding asbestos management in October 2020. The progress on that has been good to date. The improvement notices regarding Licence Conditions 36 have been extended to December 2021 so that AWE can provide further evidence for closure of those notices.

Questions arising from the ONR Report

Q: Michael Bound: One of our parishioners is concerned about private aircraft flying from Brimpton and doing aerobatic manoeuvres in the area and is concerned about it happening over AWE.

A: Gary Cook: *AWE has a no-fly zone below a certain level on both sites. If any aircraft incur on that area, then AWE raise an event to the INF1 group. We have not had any events raised in the last 12 months. We do have very tight protocols with regards to safety and risk to our facilities.*

Site Update

Mark Hedges
Director of Site Operations

Mark gave an overview of protestor activity with regular monthly 'Women's Peace Camp' continuing on second weekend of each month. Between 2-6 protesters have recently been in attendance. There is no known planned protestor activity on the horizon at this time.

Regarding community concerns, there were 6 noise related documented concerns from the period October 2020 to February 2021. All concerns were investigated and found not to be coming from AWE Sites. As a number of these noise concerns have been logged after the event, AWE request that any concerns be reported immediately so a 'live' investigation can take place.

Estate Development Update

John Steele
Head of Estate, Development & Planning

AWE responded on behalf of the MoD to the emerging West Berkshire Local Plan. AWE is seeking a more positive supporting policy and following on from that comes the possibility for West Berkshire to have a Local Development Order to provide WBC with a framework for assessing future development needs.

A planning application for a material handling store was submitted on 3rd March 2021. It's within the nuclear storage area at AWE Aldermaston which is behind security lines. The reference number for this application is 21/00528/COMIND. There have been no objections to date. It has already been constructed and AWE are seeking permission to complete the work with cladding around the building itself.

The multi-material facility at Burghfield has been on the planning register since December and has had no objections and with thanks to Burghfield Parish Council there was a no objection raised in the consultation process.

The A91 Demolition is one of the last remaining structures which is going through demolition now and it is being filmed which hopefully will be shown at the next LLC meeting.

Action 101/1: Dave Shirt: During the recent closure by Thames Water of Church Road, Aldermaston there was a sign erected regarding In-Muster at AWE Boiler House Gate. Please could you explain what this meant. **(Mark Hedges)**

Q: Avril Burdett: Tadley is still not being consulted on these planning applications. Please can this be rectified?

A: John Steele: *Tadley should have been consulted so I have no idea why they haven't been. It could be because of the boundary, as Tadley is classed as Hampshire and Aldermaston is in West Berkshire. I shall write to the planning office to ensure that Tadley Town Council is consulted.*

Action 101/2: Write to the planning office to ensure that Tadley Town Council is consulted in future planning applications **(John Steele)**

Q: Graham Bridgman: Could you cc myself and Avril on the correspondence with WBC Planning re AWE B/SUDS etc (relatively new Exec Dir who may be interested).?

A: John Steele: Yes.

Action 101/3: cc Graham Bridgman and Avril on the correspondence with WBC Planning re AWE B/SUDS etc (**John Steele**)

Q: George McGarvie: Over the last year John has been really helpful with road safety. We would like to make use of a Speed Identification Device [SID] to assist with controlling speeds through our villages. I understand AWE has provided a number of these to local parishes.

A: John Steele: *I would recommend that we should continue to provide additional SIDs to parishes which meet the selection criteria.*

A: Haydn Clulow: *I agree and can endorse that recommendation. Please submit the necessary paperwork via John.*

School / Student Engagement 2020/2021

Michelle Smith
CEO, Education Business Partnership

Michelle Smith, from Education Business Partnership West Berkshire, one of AWE's education partners for over 10 years, presented an insight into some of the remote learning packages that AWE has been working with them to support STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) in schools during the pandemic.

EBP do two main things which are arranging around 1500 work experience placements for students across lots of different sectors but the involvement that EBP has with AWE is where we work with schools and colleges to deliver different programme initiatives to help prepare students for the world of work.

We had to adapt a new way of interacting with students due to Covid so for World Environment Day we sent 100 Primary Schools across West Berkshire and Basingstoke parent packs, activities and a Bug Hotel competition and for Ada Lovelace day we sent resource packs and worksheets.

For the academic year, EBP have created a delivery model for a Primary Science programme and Spotlight on Science (secondary schools) with virtual voluntary input from AWE being available.

LLC Communications

Simon Hardaker
Head of Corporate Communications

Simon provided the LLC with a brief history of when the committee was formed and why, stating that since that time, the business has changed, technology and communication channels have evolved, and it seems timely to revisit and update the communications guidelines.

The key functions of the LLC are mainly to provide an effective means of liaison between AWE and representatives of the local community, in the vicinity of AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield. The LLC is responsible for keeping the local community informed about past, present and future operations of AWE, subject to the demands of security and to be a forum for discussions on matters of interest to and/or raised by the local community.

The LLC also ensures that AWE management is aware of local opinion and also provides an additional forum to respond to questions and issues concerning AWE and to scrutinise AWE emergency and environmental plans.

Last year all LLC members received questionnaires seeking their feedback. AWE wanted to find out what was important to themselves and their parishioners.

Every LLC member was consulted and around 45% responded. Since moving the meetings to online meetings, less than half the membership have been in attendance compared to meetings held on site when the attendance was between 60-70%.

From the feedback that was received, 77% of the respondents were happy with length and content of the online meetings and members taking less time off work to attend was seen as a positive by many.

92% stated that the communications sent out between meetings were well received and that the updates had been timely and useful.

By contrast, one member declined to attend because the meeting was online and attendance figures for July & November in 2020 were around 45% compared to 60/70% in 2019.

In response to the feedback received, AWE has taken action and training sessions on TEAMS has been provided for members, agenda timings have been reviewed and extended to incorporate more time for Q&A's, we are including both positive and negative information in our meetings, ONR and EA reports are emailed for the Council's to print off for their parishioners, Community Concerns and Future of Education are now agenda items. Some of the members felt that the survey answer options were too short, so the answers have now been extended to reflect this.

A joint LLC and AWE working group is being set up to review and update communications guidelines.

Any members who wish to be involved are to contact Suzanne Chenery via the dedicated LLC email address LLC@awe.co.uk. There will be two workshops in place the first being held w/c April 19th and the second being held w/c May 10 and these workshops will take approximately 3.5 hours across both workshops.

Q: Dave Shirt: I want to bring to your attention the way AWE responds to bad publicity. It's very good at providing details of good publicity but seems to avoid the bad. Due to the importance of the role of the LLC on local liaison if we are going to have some bad news, I think it's important for LLC members to be briefed so that we can feedback to our parishioners.

A: Simon Hardaker: We accept that there are occasions when there is news that is less good for us. An example being the recent prosecution, I do believe we have been open with that. We do however accept that there have been other incidents which you haven't been made aware of and we can probably do better.

Q: Roger Gardiner: Regarding the government announcement on nuclear warheads, the local press will obviously have some alarmist headlines, we do need to have a briefing on our response fairly early before the public start to panic.

A: Simon Hardaker: The announcement was made yesterday so we are still responding to that. Leaving aside the politics and the policy which is left to the MoD to decide on. As far as AWE are concerned, there are little changes to our site, however if there are changes to our site, we will inform you as quickly as we can. If you can provide an indication on what the parishioners would like to know about then we can ensure that these topics will be covered.

AOB

Action 101/4 Avril Burdett: We've had a spate of antisocial behaviour and I want to know what extend the MoD police are involved in the local community. Could we please have that as an item at a future meeting? (Philippa Kent)

Roger Gardiner: This will be my last meeting and I wanted to thank you and the committee for an interesting few years.

Q: George McGarvie: With 2000 people working from home, are accidents that happen whilst working from home reported?

A: Nick Bolton: *Our expectation would be that anyone working from home who suffered any ill effects whether injury or muscular skeletal from DSE, then they would raise that through our reporting system.*

Proposed 2021 Meeting Dates

7th July

10th November (tbc)

Close