

# ON THE LEVEL

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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE LLW REPOSITORY

## THE END OF AN ERA AT LLWR ... and the start of a bright, new future ...

Chief Executive Paul Pointon has assured that LLWR will be ready to take its place as an NDA subsidiary on 12<sup>th</sup> July.

With less than a month to go before ending its highly successful 13-year association with its Parent Body Organisation (PBO), Paul believes LLWR is well-placed to thrive as a subsidiary and take advantage of the opportunities that will arise.

“This is a high-performing company and the move will enable it to maximise its potential and develop new opportunities,” he said.

But Paul will not be part of LLWR’s future as he is one of three PBO appointees on the LLWR Executive who will leave the organisation – Dave Rossiter, Director Waste Management Services and Rob Yetts, Site Director are also returning to their parent companies. Paul will be handing over to Martin Walkingshaw, who will lead the company through to the formation of a new waste division in 2022.

“Martin will bring broad experience and a new perspective to the job, which will help when the new waste division is formed. I wish him every success.”

Whilst LLWR enjoyed another year of business success in 2020/21, meeting 47 of its 50 internal targets, Paul, understandably, does not look back fondly on the year of COVID-19.

“2020 was a challenging year in many ways, he continued. “COVID was a complete and utter curve ball. We had to ensure we looked after the workforce, including the supply chain, met our targets and satisfied shareholders whilst also starting the process of transition to an NDA subsidiary.”

Paul would have liked to further develop LLWR’s Transformation Programme, launched a couple of years ago to



*Paul Pointon, right, and his successor, Martin Walkingshaw, attending a pre-COVID LLWR Working Group meeting*

drive business improvements across the company, and is pleased that this work will continue following his departure.

Paul, a Chartered Civil Engineer, was a member of the original PBO bid team and started his journey with

LLWR as the Head of Project Delivery in 2008.

The construction of the highly engineered Vault 9 under his stewardship, defying challenging weather conditions, in little over two years, to end a national capacity crisis, is one of his proudest achievements at LLWR. But there are many others in which he played a role, whether as Head of Site, Deputy Managing Director or latterly as CEO.

The improvement in stakeholder relations since the PBO took over LLWR in 2008 is another achievement Paul is proud of. Continuing the process which began under LLW Repository Ltd.’s first Managing Director Dick Raaz.

“He was a fantastic boss who was very clear about what he wanted and gave you the room to do your job,” Paul said. “He taught me how to work with stakeholders and he was brilliant at it. He did what he said he would do, honoured commitments, and that instilled trust in people.”

Paul, who will move to a senior executive role with his company Amentum, is not planning a big send off from LLWR next month, preferring to focus on completing his duties.

I will miss a lot of people, colleagues and friends, but I’m ready for a fresh challenge and my new role will give me that.”

Paul’s final reflection on LLWR’s evolution since 2008 carries weight.

“The intention was to make us the best operator in the NDA estate and we got there,” he said.

Looking back with pride on 13 years of achievement, 2008-2021

# Repository memories: the early years

We asked long-serving personnel about their early recollections of site ...

"I joined the company as a Quality Manager seconded from BNFL, having spent the previous nine years at Sellafield and before that at BAE Systems. My initial thought as I entered Site for the first time was: what on earth am I doing here? It seemed more like a nature reserve than a nuclear site.

"However like many before and after me the site grew on me so much that I remained when given the option after the running of Site was taken over by the PBO in 2008.

"There were only around 80 working on the site at the time which meant you were on first name terms with virtually the whole workforce. It's been a pleasure to work with so many great characters over the years."

Mike Coward, (Joined 2005)

I always remember my first day with LLWR. I turned up at the main gate on site only to be told I was in the wrong place and should have been at Greengarth. Not the best start!

The Repository was often referred to as Drigg Dump in those days, but that ethos changed after the PBO took over in 2008 under Managing Director, Dick Raaz. He chose to live in Drigg village to be part of the community.

From his attic bedroom, Dick could keep a watchful eye on the Site, he totally had his finger on the pulse.

During 2009 we had the busiest time, building Vault 9 against the disastrous floods was not the easiest of jobs but, Paul Pointon pulled the programme through.

Being on board for 12 years has taught me a great deal. The commitment and drive the PBO have is remarkable. It's been a pleasure to work under such excellent CEOs and Lead Team members.

Personally, it will be a sad day on the 12<sup>th</sup> July, losing our last few PBO members, however having the knowledge embedded in LLWR the transition to NDA subsidiary status should be exciting and thought-provoking.

Donna Glasson (Joined 2009)

*"My first experience of LLWR was being seconded from NDA for six months to assist in the production of Lifetime Plan 2008. "Vault 9 storage was one of the main projects of the Lifetime Plan, the first major capital project to be delivered by the PBO under the M&O Contract. The project had just entered into the Execution Phase at the start of my secondment.*

*"I remember being in awe of that final LLWR Lifetime Plan submission and all the exciting projects contained within it. "On my return to the NDA I missed everything about LLWR, the buzz, the people, the culture, the exciting future. Luckily two years later an opportunity arose in the LLWR Project Controls team and I ended up being the successful candidate. That was January 2011 and I've been here ever since.*

*"On my return construction of Vault 9 was complete, and that baseline that I was so in awe of..... 13 years later I manage the whole thing!"*

Nicola Harrison (Joined 2011)



LLWR's workforce has more than trebled in size since this photo was taken in 2008

*I joined LLWR as an Assistant Accountant, having never before worked in the Nuclear Industry, and I have to say that my first six months, at least, were a blur of acronyms! With the support of colleagues, some of whom I still have close contact with, I soon settled into the LLWR family, and that's exactly how it felt, a family.*

*My first year or so was supporting the separation of LLWR from Sellafield, in preparation for the M&O contract award and the Parent Body Organisation (PBO) taking ownership of LLWR. Any initial doubts about changes the PBO would introduce were soon quashed when we*

*finally met the team, and understood their vision, and I'm honoured to have been able to support bringing that vision to life.*

*I have many personal highlights from those early days, but I'm especially proud to have been involved in Lifetime Plan development, being part of the business team supporting the Vault 9 build, introducing a new cost management system (which we still use today), and the general growth of the business. The main highlight though, has to be the fantastic people I've interacted with over the years ... a true joy!*

Sarah Moore (Joined 2006)

When first based on site I was one of around 15 people working there, and we had only one office. It was a very quiet place to be. Before 2000 we had no streetlights or women's change rooms - the one woman based on site had to use the ladies toilets. In the early days we had no radios and were dependent on Sellafield for our emergency arrangements – something close to my heart. The entire perimeter of site was covered with trees in the early days. We lost tens of thousands of trees in the huge storm of January 2005. It took months to clean up the mess.

Michael Banks (Joined 1997)

# Looking back with pride on 13 years of achievement, 2008-2021

## PLUTONIUM CONTAMINATED MATERIALS PROGRAMME



The completion of the PCM Decommissioning and Demolition Programme in March 2021 ranks as one of the proudest achievements for LLWR and its PBO.

A collaborative approach adopted by LLWR, PBO and contract partner NSG Environmental paid dividends on a programme to decontaminate and decommission five bunkers on the Repository site that initially was planned to take 10 years but was completed in just over six, shaving around £20 million off the initial £100 million cost estimate.

And most importantly, with safety paramount, as always, not a single Lost Time Accident was suffered by the Programme. The clean structure of the concrete bunkers, or magazines as they are known, will be demolished in line with the requirements of the Repository Development Programme, to be used as in-fill material beneath the final cap over the vaults and trenches.



*Top: Personnel working in air-fed suits bag PCM in a Magazine Retrieval Facility (MRF), the blue buildings built on to the front of the magazines, as shown above in 2008, constructed in the 1990s, for containment of the contaminated material. Above right, Magazine 3's MRF is demolished and below, the magazines today, free from contamination and ready for demolition.*



# Looking back with pride on 13 years of achievement, 2008-2021



## COMMUNITY RELATIONS

*Top left, take a seat at Crab Fair in 2013, courtesy of LLWR, and above, we sponsor on-person cameras at Seascale Primary School, to protect crossing personnel and pupils from speedy drivers.*



*Left, Managing Director Dennis Thompson shows guests around Pelham House during an Open Day in 2014 and below, Paul Pointon and fellow Lead Team member Nigel Lister get into the community spirit with LLWR's scarecrows to mark Harvest Festival in 2016.*

*Bottom left, two of our team of apprentices, Ashleigh Wilcock and Jade Murphy, who were drafted in to paint homeless hostel Calderwood House, in Egremont, in 2019, and bottom right, a site visit for local residents during our 60th birthday celebration, in the same year.*

It has been recognised by successive leaders of LLWR since 2008 that it must earn its 'social licence to operate' within its community.

This intangible licence has been earned over time by LLWR proving that its word is its bond, and by being at the heart of its community.

That may be illustrated by LLWR pledging to bring the vast majority of construction materials for major projects to site by rail, to avoid local roads, or by keeping the community informed in advance of key developments.

It's also displayed by supporting worthy initiatives, in cash or in kind, devoting time as well as money to assist.

In short, it's about being a good neighbour and considerate to all.



# Looking back with pride on 13 years of achievement, 2008-2021

## SECURITY ENHANCEMENTS PROGRAMME

*Right, work continues on our new security fence in 2016 and below, the new Site Emergency Control Centre (SECC).*

*The COVID-19 pandemic led to the postponement of its official opening in 2020.*



The construction phase of the £35 million Security Enhancements Programme (SEP) was completed in December 2019, one week ahead of the schedule set six years earlier with the regulator and within the original cost range.

As part of the programme a robust new security fence was erected around the site perimeter and the reception area re-designed to allow vehicle searches and visitor management before entry to the secure area of the site.

The new weldmesh steel fence was topped with razor barb and coloured green to best fit in with its environment. A patrol track was also laid adjacent to the new fence.

A Site Emergency Control Centre (SECC) includes a state-of-the-art Control Room and facilities to house the security guardforce, whilst additional security improvements were also implemented at LLWR's Pelham House site.



## TYPE B FISSILE PACKAGING PROGRAMME



*Left, Dave Rossiter, LLWR Lead Team member, takes a close look at a new Novpak, at manufacturer Bendalls Engineering in Carlisle, in 2017, and above, a Gemini arrives back in the UK in 2020 after its refurbishment in France.*

LLWR's Type B Fissile Packaging Programme is to the fore in supporting the NDA group's waste transport programme and its mission to ensure the safe and cost-effective transport of waste.

When the industry's former Type B fleet was retired in 2013, due to quality issues originating from manufacture in the 1990s, the focus switched to the manufacture of a new fleet, which was due to be in service for at least eight years.

Four years later, the first active shipment of waste to Sellafield from the Magnox Harwell site in Oxfordshire was completed under the multi-million pound programme.

Shipments then resumed of legacy plutonium contaminated material (PCM) from the Repository site to Sellafield for safe storage, following a four-year break.

In total, six pairs of high-specification stainless steel Novapak packages have been manufactured under the programme by Cumbrian firm Bendalls Engineering.

Following a three-year refurbishment in France, LLWR's three-strong TN Gemini fleet, is expected to be in service by the end of 2021 to transfer around 700 concrete-lined drums of radioactive waste from Magnox sites for storage at Sellafield.

# Looking back with pride on 13 years of achievement, 2008-2021

## REPOSITORY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

RDP is certainly a programme with a long-term future – with more than a century of work ahead of it. Enabling works are underway with phase one's major civils contract due to start in 2023. This will involve placing a final, engineered cap over Vault 8 and the adjacent section of the trenches. The current consent, granted in 2016, enables the construction of two new vaults and an extension to the current Vault 9, plus the phased construction of a final engineered cap over each full vault and the adjacent section of the trench cap.

*Below: aggregate material arrives on site by rail in 2020 for use in construction of the haul road to the work face. Above right: a stockpile area is cleared, ready for in-fill material for the final cap, and right, acoustic barriers were installed in 2020 to reduce noise to local residents of RDP construction work.*



*Above, Vault 8 filling rapidly in 2004. Below, Vault 9 construction in 2009. When the Vault was officially opened a year later, right, it was authorised for storage only. The granting of the Permit in 2015 enabled permanent disposal.*



## ESC AND PERMIT

When the Environment Agency failed to accept the 2002 Environmental Safety Case (ESC), long before LLWR became a stand-alone company, future disposals at the Repository were put in jeopardy.

LLWR was subsequently allowed only to dispose of low level waste in Vault 8 stacked up to the equivalent of four half height ISO containers and the subsequent Vault 9 was authorised for storage only. When LLWR submitted its ESC in 2011, looking in minute details at environmental safety today and up to thousands of years in the future, there was no margin for error.

On 1<sup>st</sup> November 2015, a revised permit became effective, achieving a key objective for NDA. The foundation for LLWR's bright future was in place.



# Looking back with pride on 13 years of achievement, 2008-2021

## NWP AND WASTE SERVICES

LLWR's National Waste Programme (NWP) leads the implementation of changes in management practices and culture needed to deliver the UK Strategy for the management of solid LLW, on behalf of the NDA.

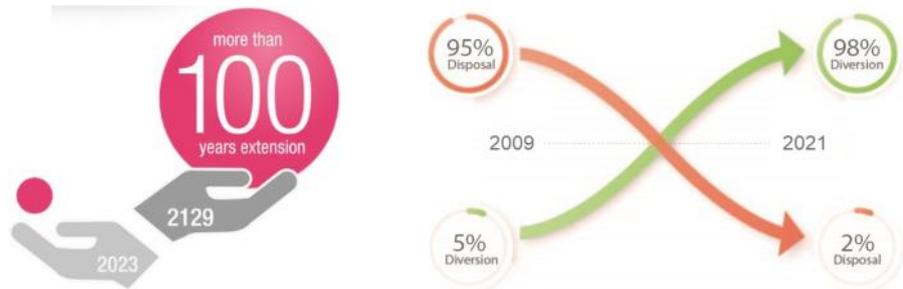
The Strategy has three guiding themes: application of the Waste Hierarchy; best use of existing LLW management assets; the need for new fit-for-purpose waste management routes.

Access to an enhanced and varied array of waste management routes is facilitated by LLWR's Waste Management Services on behalf of waste producers.

The results are clear: a huge increase in the volume of waste diverted from disposal at the Repository, preserving valuable capacity for future generations and ending the concern that a second repository may be required at a cost in excess of £2 billion.



*Under LLWR's landmark Berkeley Boilers project, 2012/13, 15 redundant 300 tonne steel boilers, each 22m long, were transported four miles through Berkeley town centre and on to the coast for shipping to Sweden. Around 95% of the steel was recycled for reuse.*



*Above: NSG continue to deliver for the PCM Programme in 2015, and left, LLWR and Graham Construction win a Green Apple award in London, in 2018. The awards promote environmental best practice.*

## TEAMWORK

Teamwork has been key to LLWR's success over the past decade or more.

The PBO led the way from the outset, fostering a collaborative partnership approach with contractors first implemented on the PCM Decommissioning Programme in 2013.

Much of the programme's massive success was attributed to this 'one team' approach, and the lessons learned went on to

be formalised in 2015 in LLWR's Engineering, Design and Construction Framework.

This four-year agreement utilised a single contractor, Graham Construction, to deliver the majority of new infrastructure projects on site and the unified team went on to garner awards for its environmental and stakeholder initiatives.

A similar model was implemented on the Type B Fissile Packaging Programme and with the model now tried and tested, it is likely to be utilised again moving forward.

*... and finally*

I'm delighted that the NDA has selected me to take over from Paul Pinton as Chief Executive of LLW Repository Ltd next month when the Company moves into a new era as an NDA subsidiary.



I joined the business at the end of 2006 after a very enjoyable 25 years at Sellafield, and the opportunity to work with a new Parent Body Organisation was a major factor in my move. LLWR's achievements under PBO ownership have surpassed everyone's expectations and I will always be grateful to the UKNWM team for their hard work and the faith they showed in me and the LLWR workforce over the years.

I know that I speak for all of us at LLWR when I say that Paul and his colleagues, Dave Rossiter and Rob Yetts, will be greatly missed. They have set high standards in so many areas of our business, building on the work of our previous Managing Directors; Dick Raaz and Dennis Thompson.

But our Company's success has never been down to individuals; Our results come from the skill, dedication, and commitment of an exceptional workforce that will continue to thrive under the NDA's ownership, post-July. We will also be welcoming two talented new recruits to the Executive team; Mike Pigott, our new Site Director and my fellow Seascale resident, Dr Craig Ashton, our Waste Management Services Director, who returns to us following a very successful secondment to the NDA.

LLWR has spearheaded a transformation in low level waste management since I joined it all those years ago, and more change is on the way during this year and the next.

We have the transition to NDA subsidiary in July; Under this arrangement (and the 'One NDA' approach), LLWR is released to pursue new opportunities, identify and transfer good practice and take advantage of group-wide support and solutions.

Next up, we will be preparing our business for the formation of the NDA's new Waste Division in 2022, which will bring LLWR and Radioactive Waste Management Ltd (RWM) closer together, sharing our expertise, enabling us to jointly grow capability and deliver even greater value to the UK taxpayer.

The Waste Division offers the potential for greater growth than LLWR could generate alone, creating further opportunities for waste diversion and opening new waste routes, building on the pioneering work of LLWR. It will create strategic and operational benefits in terms of planning and preparation, treatment and packaging, storage and disposal, creating a focal point for UK waste management. It will also provide new opportunities for the LLWR workforce to expand their skills and capabilities to support other programmes across the NDA Group.

I hope you share my excitement at what the future can bring for LLWR and West Cumbria as we continue to deal with our nuclear legacy, keeping safety, security and environmental performance at the heart of our business. An ambitious change programme will always prompt questions and as with my predecessors, my door is always open to members of our local community who have pressing questions or concerns and are looking for answers.

**Martin Walkingshaw**  
**Designate Chief Executive Officer**

## Site characterisation work moves into new phase



Ground has been broken on the third of 16 boreholes designed to provide additional data on the geology and hydrogeology of the Repository to inform NDA decisions over future options for the site.

Boreholes will reach a depth of 120m into the underlying sandstone and the work is expected to continue until October. The LLWR study is part of wider exploratory work being conducted by NDA into near-surface disposal (NSD) options as a possible alternative for some of the less hazardous solid higher activity wastes currently intended for disposal in a Geological Disposal Facility.

This type of waste could potentially be safely and permanently disposed of in near-surface facilities, comparable to those surface facilities already in place at the LLWR site, or at slightly increased depths, up to a few tens of metres. This type of waste is safely disposed in this way in other countries.

LLWR's study is expected to conclude in 2023, when it will be submitted to NDA for consideration.

No decision has yet been made on whether to proceed with NSD and a decision to go ahead would require an update to current Government policy, which would be subject to a comprehensive consultation process.

It would also be subject to the relevant planning, permitting and other licensing processes – all of which include stakeholder engagement.

### Low Level Waste

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