

ON THE LEVEL

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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE LLW REPOSITORY

Sharing experiences with Sellafield



LLWR has completed the importation of a mammoth 42,000 tonnes of aggregate material for its Repository Development Programme (RDP) – without a single stone chipping passing through nearby Drigg village by road. Deliveries were made by rail and the operation was judged such a success that Sellafield are studying it to see if they can learn from the process.

Lisa O'Neil, LLWR Project Engineer, said: "Members of the Sellafield rail infrastructure team reached out to us as they are looking to install some new rail infrastructure to support large upcoming projects, one of which is an opportunity for LLWR to take acceptable material for use in RDP. They want to look at our operations to see if they can take any learning from it. It's good to share what we are doing well."

Sellafield have been sent video, photos and even drone footage of the operation, which was managed by Graham Construction, utilising West Cumbrian groundwork sub-contractor Phillip Carruthers Ltd, who supplied local labour and plant.

The spoil material is being stockpiled on the LLWR site for ongoing use in construction of a haul road to the RDP workface.

The first phase of RDP will lead to the construction of an engineered cap over Vault 8 and adjacent trenches, and subject to regulatory agreement, clean spoil material

stored at Sellafield could be utilised in the Programme.

"The completion of deliveries is a really good milestone for us. It was crucial to the rest of our minor civils work-scope that we got these deliveries in, so we can complete enabling works, taking us to October 2021," Lisa added. "Using rail means we've kept 2,100 wagons off village roads – 4,200 trips in and out of our site. We are working closely with community representatives."

Only one delivery from Direct Rail Services (DRS) was possible before lockdown led to their suspension until mid-summer, when a limited return to work was possible, under social distancing guidelines.

Paul Burns, Works Manager for enabling works contractor Graham Construction, said of the delivery operation: "It was a real success.

"We did 10 weeks of offloading with no accidents, incidents or breakdowns."

Chris Connelly, Managing Director at DRS, said: "This project showcases the fantastic advantages of rail freight and demonstrates the benefits it brings to local communities and the environment.

"We were able to provide 29 services what would have taken over 2,000 lorries to achieve, and with far fewer CO₂ emissions. It's also exemplifies the collaboration taking place within the NDA group and with external partners."

New CEO from within LLWR ranks

The new Chief Executive when LLWR transitions to NDA subsidiary status in July 2021 will be appointed from within the organisation.

Current CEO Paul Pointon is one of three appointees from LLWR's Parent Body Organisation (PBO) who will leave the organisation following the transition.

"Paul Pointon has made a huge impact since taking up his appointment as CEO at LLWR and it is vital that we maintain continuity and stability for the business," said Corhyn Parr, NDA Director of Integrated Waste Management.

"For this reason, we have decided to follow the internal succession planning process to replace the CEO role for LLWR."

Rob Yetts, Director of Site, and David Rossiter, Director of Waste Services, are the other PBO members of LLWR's Executive team to return to their own organisations post-transition.

The Director of Site post is being advertised internally and externally while Craig Ashton will return to the Waste Services role, following a spell on secondment as Strategy Implementation Manager for Magnox, within the NDA Strategy team.

Second donation helps Gosforth join IT crowd

Friends of Gosforth School (FOGS) has received a further £3,000 donation from LLWR to help finance the purchase of 16 iPads for student use.

The group is in the final stage of a three-year plan, initially to purchase 60 iPads and the infrastructure required to allow them to function in and around the primary school.

LLWR donated £3,500 to the scheme in 2019 and the funding has helped the school ensure that disadvantaged youngsters with no access to personal computers at home receive equipment amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Teachers have also been able to send work via the school app to be completed at home, and also relay key messages

around COVID guidelines.

Rachel Jones, Chair of FOGS, said: "We are delighted to have been awarded £3,000 by LLWR this year, in our 3rd year and final phase of our IT Funding Project.

"This will allow us to purchase additional iPads for use by the pupils and teachers on a daily basis, giving access to a broader range of activities to engage the children and deliver positive learning and results.

"The kids have loved completing a wide variety of IT activities which have enhanced their learning of core curriculum subjects. The iPads have allowed the pupils to work in small groups or pairs to complete coding, make videos and explore other means of recording

their work and achievements."

The latest FOGS target is to fund 66 iPads, ensuring one per two pupils, plus one for each teacher, and 50 have so far been purchased, plus a Mac Mini, and the school wi-fi has been upgraded at a cost of £2,100.

"Increasing the number of iPads we have in school is particularly important to us this year, to help us use the equipment COVID-safely and reduce the number of children needing to share equipment," Rachel added.

FOGS is a charity comprising volunteer parents and community members, plus school representatives, launched to raise funds to enhance the learning experience of pupils.

Football club plays a blinder in community

LLWR Building Manager Bill Robson is spearheading a scheme to feed struggling families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bill is President of Whitehaven Amateurs, Copeland's largest football club with 44 teams, who have been raising funds to pay for food parcels and volunteers are even cooking meals at their County Ground base and ferrying them to the locality.



The initiative started during the school half-term in October 2020 with 140 meals produced during the week and has since continued. The effort is being made through the Well Whitehaven project, which is tackling health issues on the Mirehouse estate.

Donations have been made from outside the club and within, including a sizeable amount from the first-team squad. The town's supermarket giants Morrison's and Tesco are also donating food and a GoFundMe page has been set up.

Bill, *pictured with food parcels*, said: "This is us putting something back into the community. We do more than play football, we play a big part in the community. We are not judging people – if they are nominated as deserving cases we will get the food to them."



The five remaining magazines on site are being returned to their original state, for the first time since they were built in 1940 to host munitions for the war effort. The grassy coverings over the magazines are being removed to enable their eventual demolition. Clean material from the facilities will be re-used as in-fill for the Repository Development Programme.

Pictured above and below: Magazine 5, before and after grass removal.



Doubling down on protecting older Cumbrians over winter

We wasted no time in donating to Cumbria's Winter Warmth Appeal to help protect the lives of older people – and doubled the size of our contribution.

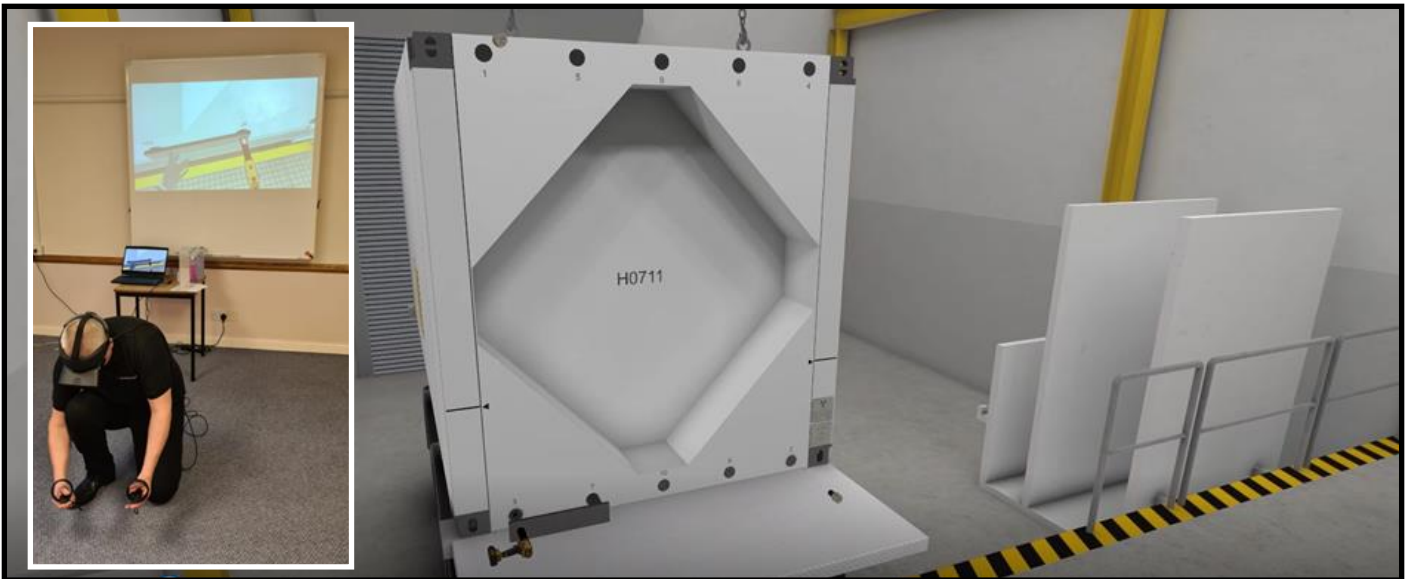
Donations made for four weeks after 16th November saw the amount match-funded by a group of generous supporters of the Appeal, so LLWR's £2,500 became £5,000 to assist organiser Cumbria Community Foundation reach its target of £150,000.

Cath Giel, Director, Communications & Stakeholder Relations at LLWR, said: "The COVID-19 pandemic has brought into even sharper focus the plight of vulnerable older people who are unable to leave their homes.

"This makes it more important than ever that the Winter Warmth Appeal receives widespread support, so no one in Cumbria struggles to heat their home this year, of all years.

"We are delighted to again get behind this wonderful initiative, and the fact that our donation has been match-funded by other backers of the Appeal makes it feel doubly worthwhile, and means more people are able to stay warm and feel secure through this difficult time of the year."

More than £200,000 was donated last year to the appeal, which helped 1,166 older people in the county keep warm.



Virtual reality (VR) snapshot of container receipt facility at Sellafield, as seen by operators using the VR headset, and, inset, LLWR personnel working with the VR tool.

Novel training puts operators in the picture

LLWR is adopting a novel state-of-the-art approach to training personnel at Sellafield and Magnox in all aspects of handling their refurbished TN Gemini container fleet - using virtual reality.

The three-strong fleet has returned to the UK following a two-year refurb in France and is set to play a key role in producing efficiency savings of around £160 million for the NDA group. But first operators must learn all aspects of container handling, and LLWR is opting for virtual reality training using headsets, rather than a 'paper-based' approach.

To add extra authenticity, they have even adapted the virtual scenarios to mirror conditions to be encountered at Sellafield and Magnox. Through their headsets Sellafield operators will see a replica of the container receipt facility on their site, bearing the same dimensions and equipment.

Similarly, Magnox operators will see an exact mock-up of their receipt facility at Harwell, as they train on all aspects of handling the containers.

Darren Holt, LLWR Project Manager, said: "Every issue that will be encountered on each site has been taken into consideration. It's an extremely impressive and effective method of delivering.

"It would have been very easy for us to just do the norm for training, through PowerPoint presentation and diagrams, but this is something new and interesting that engages people. To roll it out is very satisfying.

"There are three types of communication, visual, audio and kinaesthetic (touch), and VR caters for all three. Whilst being slightly more expensive, the benefits of its utilisation are significant, making the decision a no-brainer, and it could have a

wide range of applications on the LLWR site, from training a new person in site operations to handling a crane."

Darren first encountered the VR system at the World Nuclear Exhibition in Paris, a couple of years ago.

"Project team members trialed the product and the interactive experience blew our minds," added Darren.

An additional benefit is that the VR training reduces the need for in-person training, which is, of course, more difficult amid COVID-19 restrictions.

LLWR's Waste Management Services team will deliver VR training to Sellafield and Magnox operatives in the new year following the completion of Site Acceptance Testing. Once the training is complete, it will enable the transfer of around 700 concrete-lined Magnox drums of fissile waste to Sellafield over four-to-five-years.

Paul's Points ...



News that a vaccine for COVID-19 is being rolled out is fantastic for us all. Though where this virus is concerned, we've recognised from the outset that there is no room for complacency.

We recently had a reminder of the potency of the virus when, as a precautionary measure, we instituted a pause on one of our key programmes following a small increase in confirmed cases at the site. Work on the programme has now resumed and operations and construction activities continue.

Robust COVID-secure measures have worked well for us throughout the pandemic and we have confirmed to our workforce that those who have successfully worked from home will continue to do so for the remainder of the financial year and potentially beyond. We will, of course, continue to review our arrangements against the most up-to-date guidance, and adapt appropriately.

Meanwhile, waste shipments we are managing across the UK have reached the same level as 12 months ago, and the expectation is that they will continue to rise, as customers plan to complete backlogged work in a shortened period of time.

The ability to communicate remotely has never been more important, which is one of the reasons that we decided to make a second contribution in two years to the Friends of Gosforth School (FOGS) initiative to supply 66 iPads to pupils and staff.

During the pandemic, teachers have found the iPads invaluable, for a host of reasons, including to provide reassurance to parents that their youngsters are settling back into school following lockdown.

We target our funding toward our local community and with the school's catchment area ranging from Ravenglass in the south, Egremont in the north, Seascale in the west, out to Wasdale, this project ticked lots of boxes. Sixteen of the school's 117 pupils hail from Drigg & Carleton. We've been delighted to play our part.

In the last three months we have worked with the NDA to ensure the transition to subsidiary model is as smooth as possible and minimises impact on the business.

As we close out the calendar year I know that Christmas will be very different for many of us this year but I would like to wish everyone a peaceful and relaxing Christmas and hope for a brighter 2021.

Paul Pointon
Chief Executive Officer

Steady Progress as NDA Transition Nears

Plans for LLWR's transition to subsidiary status within the NDA group remain on track with only seven months remaining before the switch.

Corhyn Parr, NDA Director of Integrated Waste Management, updated the quarterly virtual meeting of the WCSSG LLWR Working Group on the move towards 12th July 2021, when LLWR transfers to subsidiary status within NDA, and she is pleased with progress.

A joint team from the PBO, SLC and NDA is working collectively, looking at a detailed transition plan, with Health & Safety and staff welfare their prime area of focus. "The team is working in a very positive manner," Coryhn said. "We're looking for as little change as possible during the transition period."

Due diligence – a large piece of work, in which NDA check that all required areas of work have been identified and are being addressed, ahead of the PBO's departure – has been completed by LLWR and is under review.

After transition, the LLWR Executive team will remain responsible for delivery of its Lifetime Plan, though it will be accountable to NDA not the PBO.

Scouts tap into our Community Fund

LLWR has funded a box trailer for the 1st Hensingham Scouts to transport camping and activity equipment. The Whitehaven-based Scouts, who have around 150 youth members aged six to 14, had applied to LLWR's Community Investment Fund, which supports projects/groups or events within a 15-mile radius of the Repository Site.

The additional transport will simplify the planning and running of camps for leaders, reducing overhead costs of organising events and cutting their carbon footprint by reducing trips to and from their equipment stores.

The trailer will also increase the opportunity to attend events outside West Cumbria where the distances involved make multiple journeys unfeasible.



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