

Journey to Success 2008 – 2021

3. Stakeholder/Community Relations

Community relations were at a low ebb when the Parent Body Organisation (PBO) took over LLWR in 2008. The PBO were determined to improve relationships based on their experience of similar projects in the USA.

The process began with Managing Director Dick Raaz choosing to live in Drigg village and becoming a regular at local social events, whilst Cath Giel was appointed the company's first Head of Stakeholder Relations in recognition of the importance placed on positive community relationships and the requirement to build a sustainable reputation as a 'good neighbour' by deed and actions.

The Vault 9 construction project was a huge undertaking with the potential to undermine the good work that was beginning to take shape in the community. But LLWR were determined to avoid such pitfalls.

Planning consent stated that LLWR 'minimise use of road transport' without specifying a figure, and whilst it was more expensive to transport construction materials by rail than road, contractors were directed during the tender stage to minimise road transport in general, with special attention given to nearby Drigg village. A commitment to stakeholders had been embedded into formal contracts.

Construction of Vault 9 was completed in 2010. The project had required timed deliveries of over 154,000 tonnes of aggregates and other building materials, more than 95% of which was brought to the site by 144 rail shipments, removing more than 7,000 HGV movements through Drigg Village. The lessons learned from community engagement during the Vault 9 construction project have since been adopted many times over the following years.

LLWR utilises its full array of communication tools to engage stakeholders on key projects and community developments, including its website, social media, newsletters, and monthly meetings between



Stakeholders gather for the Repository's 60th anniversary celebrations in 2019

community representatives and senior company personnel, including the CEO.

In a spirit of openness, the first ever Community Open day/site tour was hosted in 2009 and has since become a regular occurrence.



David Moore, Chairman, West Cumbria Site(s) Stakeholder Group (2010)

"During the past two years we have witnessed a step change in attitude and culture - a willingness to engage at all levels and an eagerness to integrate with community life. Impact on the local community is always a key consideration of operational practices and we know changes have been made to reduce negative impact on village life - this is borne out by the increased effort to divert the transportation of LLW and Vault 9 construction material to rail instead of bringing it in by road. This is only one example, I could name many more".

The successful delivery of Vault 9 increased community confidence, so much so, that when the planning application for the Repository Development Programme was submitted in 2015 the community were supportive - a complete turnaround from the situation experienced with previous applications, further cementing LLWR's Social Licence to Operate.

Follow our journey over the next 12 weeks at www.gov.uk/llwr