



ON THE LEVEL

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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE LLW REPOSITORY

COMMUNITY WILL ALWAYS BE KEY TO US

We will stay at the heart of West Cumbria after transition in to Nuclear Waste Services

Martin Walkingshaw has pledged that local residents will notice little difference when LLWR transitions into Nuclear Waste Services in six weeks' time.

LLWR will join up with Radioactive Waste Management (RWM) to form the new organisation on 31 January 2022, but Martin said it would retain the close relationship with its local communities that LLWR has enjoyed over recent years.

"You will see a different logo and corporate colours, but we will still be the Low Level Waste Repository Site, with the same management team, led by me," said the LLWR Chief Executive, pictured, who will become Chief Operating Officer of Nuclear Waste Services.

"We will also still be holding our regular meetings with local parish councils and keep the same dialogue with our stakeholders. I will continue to attend Sites Stakeholder and Risk and Hazard Reduction Working Groups. All that work will continue, and, on occasion, Corhyn Parr, Chief Executive of Nuclear Waste Services, will join me.

"I'm not going anywhere, I'll still be based in West Cumbria and I will still be on the end of the phone for anyone who wishes to speak to me about anything.

"LLWR employees Nigel Lister and Richard Cummings will take up roles on



the executive team at Nuclear Waste Services, leading functions across the organisation. My job will grow, with new responsibilities added to my current ones.

"I will be a member of the new management board and be a Director of RWM, in addition to LLWR. But the focus will still be very much on continuing the work we do now, safely and securely.

"Being a subsidiary of the NDA and part of Nuclear Waste Services, however, will give us more influence within NDA Corporate Centre and more potential to expand the range of waste services we provide. Working with RWM will see us both benefit from the sharing of knowledge and expertise."

3m *safe hours*

More than three million hours have now been worked across the business since LLWR last experienced a lost time injury of more than seven days.

That was in February 2018, and whilst hitting the landmark figure under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) is being noted by LLWR, it is a warning that nothing can be taken for granted when it comes to safety performance.

Nigel Lister, Executive Director – Safety, Security, Health, Environment & Quality, said: "This is a fantastic achievement, this level of safety performance would be excellent at any time but is particularly impressive given the high level of construction work on site and the challenges posed by COVID.

"A huge well done and thank you to everyone for your continued efforts and vigilance in keeping LLWR a safe place to work."

The organisation's relentless safety drive includes a series of ongoing initiatives and commitments, including Hazard and Observation Cards, which encourage the workforce to report to management any actions they consider unsafe, and there is continuous encouragement to nominate staff and contractors for Positive Safety Recognitions.

These actions are communicated monthly across the business, as is the 'Safe Behaviour of the Month', which in December has focused on winter driving tips.

Allan Stephenson, Safety Manager, said: "The three million hours are a product of the collective high standards shown by LLWR staff and contractors and I am happy to be part of that success."



2018



2021

All change: the above photos taken three years apart highlight some of the changes to the site brought about by RDP, with a new haul road under construction and stockpile areas for cap infill material. The Grout Plant is circled on both images to lend some perspective to the physical changes.

RDP is changing the face of site

Completion of enabling works that will lead into the construction phase of LLWR's Repository Development Programme (RDP) is set for summer 2022.

The works - to install the infrastructure required to support the capping of Vault 8 and the adjacent section of the trench cap on the site - have overcome some significant hurdles to get to this stage.

COVID-19, for instance, prompted a 16-week pause in construction activity – contractor GRAHAM Construction had mobilised in March 2020, one week ahead of the first national lockdown.

And the site's history as a Royal Ordnance Factory (ROF) led to chemical, radiological and physical challenges, causing more delays.

But the RDP team has worked around the issues, with extensive support from across the organisation. Multiple work faces were opened to allow work to continue whilst the legacy ROF challenges were resolved and mitigation measures were introduced, with social distancing, to combat the effects of the pandemic.

Tony Buchanan, Programme Manager, said: "The patience of the construction team has been amazing, at times it felt as though every possible obstacle was put in our way, however the willingness to report any findings and minimise any delays by redeploying teams to another work face has been exemplary."

Meanwhile, the detailed design phase of the cap over Vault 8 and the trenches is due to be completed over the next few weeks. LLWR has received the detailed cap design from design partner AECOM and is now conducting design and constructability reviews. Independent assurance activities will ensure the Programme is moving ahead with the right solution.

Preliminary design is being developed into construction-ready drawings that can be shared with the supply chain involved in constructing the final cap. Construction methodology, the

volumes of material required to form the cap, logistics around how it is delivered and then managed on site, are all being worked out. One of the initial tasks of the enabling works was to install acoustic barriers – three-metre high timber fencing panels – on the eastern edge of the site, to shield neighbours from noise and visual impacts arising from construction activity.

Tree clearance was completed, a wheel wash installed to clean vehicles, preventing mud leaving the site, and work completed on two material stockpiles, with a further two planned, to support the importation and storage of a significant amount of material required to form a final cap.

A plant crossing, across the main access road into site, has also been completed, and settlement lagoons are under construction, to support drainage requirements of the main engineering works. A bridge to cross Drigg Stream, along the chosen route, has been fabricated and delivered to site and its installation is a key activity planned for the New Year.

To support the transfer of imported material from the rail sidings a haul road is under construction. A route had been chosen to segregate operational vehicles and pedestrians from construction works. Below is a bird's eye view of progress on the haul road, with Vault 9 to the right.



GETTING TO ROOT OF OFF-SITE FLOODING ISSUE

LLWR is tackling a long-standing drainage issue on the south eastern edge of the Repository to mitigate the threat of flooding on site and in neighbouring fields.

Camera surveys have been carried out to discover the extent of the problem in a 194-metre underground pipe that runs parallel to the site's security fence, starting around 15 metres from Drigg Railway Station.

Silt residues and willow roots that had been contributing to blockages have been cleared as far as possible, a new manhole installed, vegetation removed from around several other manholes and a concrete apron constructed at the pipe outfall. The pipeline dates to the site's wartime role as a Royal Ordnance Factory and will be replaced entirely in Spring 2022, with further work planned for the south west section of site to mitigate potential flooding concerns for the site and our neighbours.

Simon Martin, LLWR's Head of Infrastructure, said: "The work on our site drainage systems is a clear demonstration of the collaborative approach that has proven so successful at LLWR.

"A team made up from Task Delivery, Site Operations, Engineering and our FM and Estates partner, Mitie, have worked diligently to better understand and improve our



Roots that had been blocking the pipeline and contributing to flooding

drainage systems. This work is directly affecting some of our closest site stakeholders whose land has been impacted by repeated flooding and once again goes to show the importance of our social licence to operate."

End of an era as our Cath bids farewell to LLWR



Cheers: Cath's heading for France

Cath Giel, who has guided LLWR's much-improved relations with its local communities over the past 16 years, is to retire at Christmas.

Cath has headed stakeholder relations since 2005, when she worked, among other things, on the then Drigg Depot's separation from the Sellafield site, which led to the formation of LLW Repository Ltd.

"The organisation has quadrupled in size since I joined and has gone from one focused on disposing of containers in its vaults to today, when most of its work is based around sending waste down treatment routes," she said. "But it has maintained its family feel and opened up to the local community. When I first joined, the community were largely unaware of what happened 'behind the fence', so we introduced Community Open Days, established a Community Investment Policy, and became more accessible enabling people to become more knowledgeable about what we do.

"I would not work for an organisation that I did not feel did the right thing, but I've been able to stay true to my values and belief system working for LLWR. The day after my final day in work, I'm heading to France for Christmas and New Year. It will be a three-week holiday – the first time I've had one of those!"

"I've loved working at LLWR and will miss many aspects of the job and most certainly the people. I wish you all well and can't wait to have the luxury of time on my hands!"

Chief Executive Martin Walkingshaw, who has worked closely with Cath, currently Director of Communications and Stakeholder Relations, will be sad to see her go.

"Cath has led our communications, rebuilding relations with our local community and building a fantastic comms and stakeholder team from scratch. The entire organisation wishes her a long and happy retirement."

Technology commonly used in the oil and gas industry has been adapted for use in the nuclear industry for Magnox Harwell – and it's resulting in millions of pounds in savings for the taxpayer.

A treatment process involving use of ultra high-pressure water jetting to clean sections of pipework contaminated with low levels of radioactive scale, has been provided by LLWR through its Metallic Waste Treatment Service and Augean's Port Clarence Facility.

LLWR's Carly Sutton, said: "By adapting a proven technology and applying it to the treatment of this pipework, the amount of waste that would otherwise need to be consigned to the LLW Repository has been drastically reduced and only small volumes of secondary waste will need processing for onward treatment and disposal. The clean pipe sections are suitable for recycling back into the metal market providing multi-million pound savings to the UK taxpayer."

And finally...

It's only a matter of weeks now – 31 January 2022 to be exact – before LLWR transitions into Nuclear Waste Services along with our friends at RWM and the NDA's Integrated Waste Management Programme.



All the hard work put in by the workforce is paying off and we are on track for a new era in radioactive waste management, with many more opportunities for us to grow the business, create development opportunities and enable our people to progress throughout their careers.

That said, while much changes, much also remains the same, and our commitment to open and responsive community relations is undimmed, as I've highlighted on Page 1.

Dr Richard Cummings and Nigel Lister have been members of our Leadership Team for over a decade and I am delighted to confirm that they will both join me as members of the Nuclear Waste Services executive. Their vast experience will ensure our Environmental, Safety, Security, Quality and Technical functions continue to deliver at the high standards they have set.

My role will expand as Chief Operating Officer of the new organisation. I will retain accountability for the LLWR site and our waste services and take extra responsibilities as a member of the Nuclear Waste Services management board and director of both LLWR and RWM, I'll work with Richard, Nigel and the rest of the new Executive, shaping the future of waste management.

As a result of these changes I've replenished and strengthened the LLWR Lead Team, in recognition of its crucial role as we form the 'business lines' (operations and services), that will be at the core of Nuclear Waste Services.

Madonna Hall will join as Head of Quality, Paul Sutton as Head of Engineering and Dr Amy Huntington, Environmental Safety Case Manager. Each brings a depth of knowledge and expertise that will ensure we are able to prioritise and deliver our key programmes of work.

Samantha McKenzie has agreed to take up the role of Acting Head of Communications and Stakeholder Relations, to continue Cath's great work.

Safety will remain paramount of course, so our outstanding safety performance, as highlighted on Page 1, is great to see.

COVID-19 remains a concern. Additional measures have been reintroduced in the workforce in line with updated government guidance, and our control measures are under constant review.

Finally, may I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Stay safe, enjoy the holidays.

Martin Walkingshaw
Chief Executive Officer

Practical learning will STEM from our donation

A pioneering club that teaches the joys of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects to young people aged four to 13 has received a £2,000 boost from LLWR.

Millom STEM Club launched 12 years ago and in addition to running workshops from its Devonshire Road base takes its message into county schools, including Seascale and Waberthwaite Primary Schools.

The emphasis is on making the practical workshops fun, using consumables that need to be replaced after each session. There's also room hire and other associated costs to running the workshops.

The club does not charge for its services, so LLWR's funding is particularly welcome.

"I'm chuffed to bits when kids email me to ask for a reference as they have a job interview coming up," said George Burch, a former Marine Engineer, who also has decades of experience in the nuclear industry and heads a team of five at the club.

"If we can get them interested in the sciences and show them it can be fun, as well as having a more serious side, we will have achieved everything we were aiming for."



A hair-raising experiment from Millom STEM Club

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