

# ON THE LEVEL

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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE LLW REPOSITORY

## Our largest ever donation supports county youth programme

We are making our largest ever contribution to a worthy cause, donating £150,000 over three years to support young people across Cumbria through a major expansion of qualified youth work provision.

The Better Tomorrows programme is aiming to invest at least £900,000 over its three-year lifespan during which it is expected at least 130 people will access training to become accredited in youth work, with thousands benefitting from the additional support they will provide.

In addition, a fund will be created alongside the training programme, offering grants of up to £25,000 to community organisations providing new youth work opportunities.

Cumbria currently has no provision for youth work training and towns such as Millom and Keswick are without a youth club.

Cath Giel, LLWR's Director of Communications and Stakeholder Relations, said: "This targeted initiative to support young people across Cumbria is well-timed to meet a pressing need, given the impact of COVID-19 on our communities.

"Better Tomorrows' will address the lack of provision of trained youth workers

across the county, equipping a new generation to reach out and support our young people, building a sustainable model that will continue to deliver long after this programme has ended.

"We are delighted that this scheme enables individuals to achieve accredited qualifications that enables them to continue their professional development but also ensures that our young people are equipped with the skills, confidence and resilience to maximise their full potential".

The programme is designed to provide a minimum of 10,000 hours of additional youth work provision across the county with at least 10 unemployed adults gaining a post.

At least half of the trained youth workers are expected to be volunteers.

Better Tomorrows is spearheaded by David Beeby, High Sheriff of Cumbria, in partnership with Cumbria Community Foundation, Cumbria Youth Alliance and Francis C Scott Charitable Trust.



*Martin Walkingshaw, LLWR CEO, and Cath Giel, Director of Communications & Stakeholder Relations attending the launch of the Better Tomorrows Programme.*

## Security programme boost for Repository site

Our £35 million Security Enhancements Programme has moved closer to completion following positive news around the Site Emergency Control Centre (SECC).

The LLWR Guard Force has moved into the SECC, on the Repository site, whilst the cutting edge facility's security systems are also now operational. The Site Emergency Arrangements team are also fully utilising the facility for their training and exercises.

"A huge amount of work has been completed by the Security Enhancements Programme team over the last few years," said

Programme Sponsor Nigel Lister, LLWR's Executive Director of Safety, Security, Health, Environment & Quality. "There is still work to do as the programme nears completion. But well done to everyone involved in achieving a significant milestone. I have had the opportunity to show a number of our Regulators and key stakeholders around the new facility and without exception they have all been very impressed."

Carl Smith, Programme Manager, said: "It has been a very demanding project, where a lot of resilience has been shown by all to overcome some significant challenges."

# Gradual return for office based teams

LLWR has started to increase capacity within its offices in line with government advice, following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions.

Martin Walkingshaw, CEO of LLWR, said: "Government advice changed in July to say we no longer needed to work from home. There is an expectation that businesses will make a gradual return to the office over the coming months, which is what we are now doing.

"We have revised our risk assessment, retaining some precautions, including social distancing and additional hygiene arrangements.

More than 80% of LLWR personnel have worked consistently from home during the

pandemic, maintaining impressive productivity levels.

"Office based workers are returning to the workplace gradually, as invited by their managers, for some face-to-face team meetings. And there's a real focus on getting people who are new to the company in the past 12/18 months familiar with the workplace and meeting colleagues.

"We are taking the time to ensure that safe behaviours are reinforced. Good habits around the use of footpaths, walkways, stairways/handrails and avoiding distractions are important if we are to maintain our excellent safety performance".

The workforce reaction to the changes has been positive with an increasing number of face-to-face meetings and site visits, including customers, suppliers and local stakeholders, safely conducted over the previous weeks.



*Safety first: sanitisation stations are still a feature at LLWR*

## Introducing LLWR's new apprentices



*Martin Walkingshaw, LLWR CEO, meets the new apprentices.*

*Left to right, Dawson Tanner, Joseph Palmer, Beth Ponting and Lewis Gribbin. Not pictured: Sarah Clarke.*

LLWR is investing in the future by recruiting five new apprentices – our largest intake for three years.

Joining LLWR are:

- **Dawson Tanner**  
Quality Technician, within the Quality Team
- **Sarah Clarke**  
Health and Safety, within the Health and Safety Team
- **Beth Ponting**  
Project Controls, within the Project Controls Team
- **Lewis Gribbin**  
Procurement and Commercial Supply, within the Commercial Team
- **Joseph Palmer**  
Project Management, within the Project Management Team

The Health & Safety and Quality apprenticeships are being offered by LLWR for the first time, through training provider Lakes College.

"These are two areas of the business that felt they would benefit from growing some of their own talent," said Abbie Wright, Apprentice Scheme Coordinator. "We have selected our five apprentices based on their existing qualifications, work experience and an interview process to gauge their understanding of the subject area and enthusiasm for undertaking an apprenticeship with us.

"There are no guarantees of a job on the completion of an apprenticeship, but LLWR has a great track record in retention of its former apprentices. Many request to go on to Further Education after completing their apprenticeships, whether that be at foundation degree or honours degree level, so many of our former apprentices are still on their developmental journey with us."



# We help Windscale achieve their goal

Scores of young Windscale footballers had their season secured after LLWR agreed to host home games for the club's junior teams on its Pelham House pitch.

The club had been struggling to find a temporary new home base for up to eight junior teams, ranging from under-eights to Under-16s, due to regular facility at Falcon Field being unavailable for the year following the installation of new drainage as part of Egremont's flood prevention scheme.

Geoff Turrell, Windscale President, organised games on the pitch in the Pelham House grounds through SASRA in the 1990s, when he worked at Sellafield, and he decided to approach LLWR for permission.

"We're indebted to Cath Giel and the LLWR team for arranging usage and providing a solution to the Club's problem," said Geoff. "It indicates the support LLWR provide to the local community."

"We have all the equipment required, and we will mark out the pitch and cut the grass when needed."

"We are aware that we need to keep the place clean and tidy and we're happy to comply with any conditions put in place. We are also aware that apart from having respect for the facility, we must also give consideration to the residents in the adjacent neighbourhood."

"The pitch looks in decent condition. Compared to some of the pitches the kids play on, it looks like Wembley."

The pitch has not been used utilised for some time and Windscale will replace one set of goalposts and provide all the necessary playing equipment. Most matches will be played at weekends, starting in late September.

Windscale FC are a sporting section of SASRA - Sellafield Area Sports and Recreational Associations - and Geoff is SASRA Chairman.



*The football pitch at Pelham House has been made available to Windscale's junior sides*

# Safety accolade is well in Order!



*Mike Cunningham, left, and Mike Pattinson, a Senior Safety Advisor, display LLWR's latest RoSPA award as representatives from the company's Maintenance, Infrastructure and Low Level Waste Operations teams, and contractors GRAHAM Construction, Jacobs Clean Energy and Fugro, look on.*

LLWR has earned a prestigious award from RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) after continuing to demonstrate high health and safety standards throughout 2020.

RoSPA's Order of Distinction recognises the organisation's achievement in earning 16 Gold Awards over recent years for its health and safety impact.

Almost 2,000 organisations from 46 countries were represented in this year's Awards and LLWR was invited to take part in a virtual presentation ceremony last week.

"We're proud that once again our performance has been

recognised by RoSPA," said Mike Cunningham, LLWR's Head of Safety and Radiation Protection. "We work hard to ensure that our high standards are maintained."

More than 2.8 million hours have been worked since LLWR last suffered a Lost Time Accident of greater than seven days, in February 2018, and its Total Recordable Incident Rate stands at zero, with no lost time injury over the past 13 months.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought its own unique challenges in 2020 and LLWR maintained a focus on workforce wellbeing with a series of initiatives throughout the year and up to the present time.

*And finally ...*

It's hard to believe that two months has now passed since the 12<sup>th</sup> of July and LLWR's transition to become a subsidiary of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA).



I was fortunate to receive an extensive and well-planned handover from Paul Pointon as our outgoing CEO, I suspect all of you that know Paul (or dealt with him during his tenure) would expect nothing less!

We also bid farewell to David Rossiter and Rob Yetts as a result of the transition, so further changes have now been completed at Executive level and I am delighted to welcome back Dr Craig Ashton (Director WMS) following his secondment to the NDA, plus three new team members; Mike Pigott (Director LLWR Site), Helen Cassidy (Head of Transformation and Business Change) and Paul Tuohy (Head of Commercial and Procurement).

A new waste division will be established in January 2022 to enable LLWR and Radioactive Waste Management Ltd (RWM) to work more closely together. Each company will change and adapt to take on much more work as we continue to make progress in delivering the NDA's mission, dealing with the UK's nuclear legacy. However, LLWR and RWM will continue as separate legal entities for the foreseeable future.

LLWR's performance on all fronts has been good, despite the additional work associated with transition. I am delighted that our safety performance remains among the strongest in the NDA group, but we won't be complacent. Our focus of late has been on implementing a gradual return to the workplace of staff who have been working from home, in line with Government advice (as detailed on Page 2).

People returning to the workplace are being reminded of the need to follow all of the safety arrangements we have in place, including the COVID-19 precautions we have retained for now. Time is being made available for re-familiarisation as people gradually return, but I envisage a 'blended' approach, with some home-working and some time spent in the office likely to become more common for many people whose roles are desk-based.

Of course, many people have continued to work as normal from the LLWR site throughout the pandemic, their efforts ensure that safety, security, operations, maintenance, environmental monitoring and project delivery are not compromised. Workplace testing for COVID-19 has now been replaced with home testing, all our employees and contractors are now required to perform a home test before attending the workplace.

Thankfully, we have had very few positive tests from the thousands of workplace tests performed and our team have responded well in taking personal responsibility for testing themselves. Next time I write this column, I should be in a position to provide you with more details on the waste division and how our blended working approach is progressing, but in the meantime, please keep safe and well.

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

## TRS Drums will start to arrive on site by rail within months

A project launched five years ago to dispose of more than 1,000 drums of low level waste at the Repository from the Magnox Treated Radwaste Store (TRS), at Winfrith, is set to see its first retrievals from the Dorset site.

The first batch of drums is expected to arrive at LLWR by rail around the end of the calendar year, with disposals in Vault 8 beginning in 2022. The NDA's initial plan was to move the drums from Winfrith to the Harwell site for interim storage, but early disposal at LLWR will result in significant financial savings to the UK taxpayer.

Disposal of the waste in single drums also enables LLWR to utilise otherwise unusable space within the vault, reducing the amount of in-fill material required to close it. Meticulous planning has gone into the project with the methodology for handling, transferring and emplacing the drums finalised by LLWR and supply chain partner, Cyclife UK, with assistance from colleagues across the NDA group, notably Sellafield and Dounreay, who have a wealth of experience in handling such drums.

More than 1,000 trial movements were made over several months at a test rig at a Jacobs Ltd facility, near Beckermeth, to ensure emplacement operations could be handled safely. The rig was modified to represent the dimensions of the vault spaces into which the drums will be lowered, with testing of grabs, lifting, handling and camera equipment.

A new roadway on which to transport the drums was also constructed along the edge of Vault 8 to enable access to the gaps where the drums will be disposed.



*Extensive trial disposals of TRS Drums have taken place at the Jacobs facility near Beckermeth*

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