



On the Level

News and views from the LLW Repository site

Paving the way for Repository Development

The civil engineering work which completes preparations for the Repository Development team to commence the closure of Vault 8 and adjacent trenches is now complete.

Along with the completion and sign-off of the detailed design for the engineered cap for Vault 8, this is a significant milestone in our commitment to the Environment Agency to protect the environment from the disposed waste.

During the enabling works phase, over more than two years, a haul road has been constructed from the rail sidings on site to the vault and trenches, to segregate future construction vehicles from regular site traffic.

Two large material stockpile areas have also been established for the significant volumes of material that will be required for the closure works, and extensive drainage infrastructure including drainage channels, lagoons and settlement ponds have been built to manage surface water during the main works.

Jonathan Evans, Project Delivery Director (Operations and Services), said of the enabling works: "We will be able to look back at it with pride, as a real team effort, which has set us up for the future of Repository Development.

"We've faced challenges, but the culture has been really impressive and everyone involved has been really proactive. The working relationship with our main contractor Graham Construction has been collaborative, and they have worked with their supply chain to minimise any impacts on the work and the local community.

"I feel everyone has mucked in – the project team, of course – but also the functional support, from the Engineering, Quality, Safety, Environmental, Work Management teams and others.

"The attitude to safety has been exemplary with no reportable accidents during the enabling works. That's nearly 400,000 hours on the project without a lost time accident"

Community considerations were paramount from before the launch of the works, with noise barriers erected on site to mitigate noise from construction activities.

The project team was impacted by the Covid-19 lockdown within days of mobilisation in March 2020, and it also faced issues with the unearthing of uncharted services and spells of atrocious weather.

The Repository Development team, now armed with the detailed designs and the required site infrastructure, head into a period of establishing the best model for the main delivery phase of the work. Procurement activities are under way to secure the next batch of supply chain members to partner us over the next few years.



Progress being made on the haul road, in November 2021

Living in harmony with nature on site

Our work to ensure nature continues to thrive alongside industry on the wildlife-rich site during the enabling works phase of the Repository Development Programme has proved successful.

A new haul road, drainage lagoons and stockpile areas, built to facilitate the major civils phase of the work, when a cap will be constructed over the vaults and trenches, has transformed the look of the site over the past two years.

But wildlife has continued to prosper amid the construction with protected species including great crested newts, nesting birds, pipistrelle bats, badgers, slow worms, adders and lizards all continuing to be found on site.

Species not afforded specific legal protection including roe deer, rabbit, stoat, feral cat, common frog, common toad, smooth newt and palmate newt, are also still around. Red squirrels have also made a return this year.

"I'm not sure we could have done much more, from a wildlife perspective, though as ever there are lessons to be learnt for future phases of the work," said site ecologist Chris Arthur.

"There was a balance to be struck between the need for space to

accommodate RDP and preserving/enhancing areas that encourage wildlife."

The RDP team was well attuned to ecological requirements and would alert Chris to their construction plans in plenty of time so he could ensure the best possible outcome for wildlife that may be affected.

Areas in the vicinity of work were surveyed to identify any wildlife present and what was needed to protect them.

Environmental projects on site included:

- Enhancement of two ponds suitable for great crested newts, and the creation of a third
- Work with the potential to affect great crested newts undertaken under licence from Natural England, demonstrating that risks were suitably assessed and appropriate mitigation implemented
- Amphibian-proof fences placed around lagoons and a large area of spoil material to be used in the final cap over the trenches and vaults, to keep creatures from harm
- Trapping and removing wildlife from one long-standing spoil area yielded around 240 slow worms, 40

lizards and an adder, all released in an area of the site away from development

- Numerous log refuges created for amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates
- Bat and bird boxes to compensate for the loss of trees cleared for RDP. These trees will eventually be replaced.

Chris does not expect a major upheaval for the site's wildlife when the capping gets under way.

"I don't think the disturbance level will be high," he said. "The new road, drainage and stockpile areas are already in. The major civils work will mostly be in areas of lower value to wildlife."



Our ecologist Chris Arthur at an amphibian-proof fence on site, to keep the creatures out of a drainage lagoon

GRAHAM's depart

The completion of enabling works will mark the end of a successful eight-year association with GRAHAM Construction.

Alastair Lewis, GRAHAM's Civil Engineering Contracts Director, said: "We are delighted to deliver our third works programme for Nuclear Waste Services which demonstrates our ability to safely deliver civil engineering works in environmentally sensitive areas of the Repository.

"During the partnership, we have provided technical engineering, design and construction expertise for the Security Enhancements Programme, the Repository Infrastructure Programme and now on this Repository Development Programme.

"The collaborative approach of the project team comprising client, contractor and supply chain has been key to the safe and successful outcome of this nationally important infrastructure project."

Office equipment donation to worthy groups

We are delighted to have been able to support local charities, community groups and parish councils with donations of surplus office equipment that we have accumulated over a number of years.

Desks, tables, chairs and large notice boards from the Repository site and Pelham House are among the items being given to worthy causes.

Drigg & Carleton and Calderbridge parish councils, Women Out West, which supports victims of domestic abuse, West House, care and support provider for adults and children with disabilities, autism charity Bee Unique and New Rainbow Pre-School, in Whitehaven, are all benefiting.

West House, for instance, has been gifted 10 large notice boards it will utilise at its site at Harrington Youth Club, displaying photos of events and detailing its services.

Natalie Fee, Support Worker with West House, said: "We very much appreciate the boards, they will certainly come in handy. They will help promote us and show other groups that use the centre what we do."



Asset care programme in spotlight during Safety committee visit

Maintaining and improving our asset base on site – everything from buildings to essential services and machinery – is a priority for Nuclear Waste Services, so it was no surprise that a look at the new programme launched to deliver this work was on the agenda for our Environment, Safety, Sustainability and Security Committee (ESSSC) during a visit to the Repository.

The committee, comprising Adrienne Kelbie (Chair of NWS Board), Neil Baldwin (Chair of the ESSSC), Martin Walkingshaw (Chief Operating Officer) and Nigel Lister (EHSSQ Director), met members of the Repository Asset Care, Enhancement and Remediation (RACER) programme during their visit.

Team members were able to express their passion and commitment for what they do, while highlighting the challenges they face.

Reflecting on the day, Adrienne said: "It was timely for us to visit the LLW Repository site and see first-hand the expertise delivering our disposal operations. It was an opportunity to remind ourselves of the condition of our site infrastructure and gain an appreciation of work required to maintain it for the duration of our mission.

"It was really rewarding to meet the team on the ground, to see their pride and passion for the work they do and to understand how we can collectively improve arrangements and conditions."

Site Director, Mike Pigott, added: "I think we successfully conveyed the need to maintain an injection of resource and funds into the asset base on site. The enthusiasm, pride and level of commitment conveyed by those who met the committee was commendable."



Neil Baldwin and Adrienne Kelbie in the Grout Plant on site

Playing a key role in NDA programme

The first active shipment of legacy waste drums from Magnox Harwell to Sellafield has been completed using Nuclear Waste Services' Type B Gemini container fleet following a multi-million pound refurbishment.

Around 800 concrete-lined drums of Intermediate Level Waste will be transferred over the next three years for interim safe storage at Sellafield, ahead of eventual disposal in a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF).

The three-strong Gemini fleet of specialist packages was brought back into service specifically for its role in this project, which forms a critical part of the NDA's Nuclear Materials Transfer (NMT) programme,

They spent two years in France with ORANO NPS undergoing a condition assessment and refurbishment before undergoing extensive Site Acceptance Testing at Sellafield and Harwell to ensure their readiness for a return to service.



Drums of material to be loaded into a Gemini container for the first shipment from Harwell

Wellbeing on track

Marathon man Gary McKee and a host of hardy volunteer runners from Nuclear Waste Services braved atrocious weather conditions to open the new wellbeing track at the Repository.

Gary cut the ribbon to officially open the track before setting off on the 10.5 circuits that comprised his 265th marathon in as many days, on his way to 365, in his quest to raise £1m for charities Macmillan Cancer Support and Hospice at Home West Cumbria.

Visit his [justgiving page](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/threesixfive) at www.justgiving.com/fundraising/threesixfive.

"I enjoyed it," said Gary, after completing his Repository run. "It was great to come down here and see all the support from people. Nuclear Waste Services gave me the chance to open the track and I felt honoured to do it."

The wellbeing track is a picturesque 2.5-mile circuit around the site, open to NWS walkers and runners at specified times of the day.

Mike Pigott, Repository site Director, was among those to take part in the run, and he thanked Gary for agreeing to get involved.



Gary McKee cuts the ribbon on the new track as Site Director Mike Pigott assists



Net gains for our footballers

We've proved to be on the ball with our support of women's football, Chief Operating Officer Martin Walkingshaw shaking hands on a large donation to Whitehaven Amateurs' Senior Ladies team.

Track suits, T-shirts, new footballs, medical equipment and special jackets to keep the substitutes dry, in total worth £2,300, were supplied ahead of their first season in the Lancashire League.

And finally...

As you can see from the newsletter, we remain busy with operations and project work on the LLWR site and at Pelham House, in Calderbridge, where our Waste Services and functional support teams are based.

I'm pleased to report that we're on track to achieve all our targets and milestones for this year, but more importantly we're maintaining our high standards on safety and environmental protection.

In recognition of the former, we've just been awarded a 17th consecutive Gold Award from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), along with a RoSPA Order of Distinction for a sustained level of high performance.

Everyone in the business has contributed to this achievement and, as you've read earlier, we're carrying out a lot of construction work on the site, so the last few years have been particularly challenging.

One of our top priorities is progressing the final capping and closure of the historic trench disposal area and Vault 8. Enabling works for this activity are now complete. We've tried to deliver this work with minimal disruption to our neighbours, and the new roads, stockpile areas and water management features we've introduced on the site are vital to continuing in the same way.

My thanks go to our main contractor GRAHAM and their hard-working team, including a number of local sub-contractors.

Working together, we've kept the enabling works going right through

the Covid-19 pandemic, pausing when necessary but never losing momentum.

The enabling works have changed the site for the better and set us up to begin placing the final cap over the waste very shortly.

Employee Health and Wellbeing are important topics for us, and we're also quite thrifty... it hasn't taken long for members of our team to realise that some of the newly completed roads and paths on the LLWR site provide a cost-effective way of keeping fit, so we have formally established a 'Wellbeing Track' for people to use to exercise during their break times.

We were delighted that local hero Gary McKee could come to the site for an inaugural run, as part of his Three Six Five Challenge, raising money for Macmillan Cancer Relief and Hospice at Home West Cumbria.

Visit Gary's fundraising page on the QR code above, Gary also inspired our entry for the Drigg Scarecrow Festival this year.

Martin Walkingshaw
Chief Operating Officer



Support Gary McKee on his Three Six Five Challenge.

14-1

The team went on to open its league account with a stunning 14-1 home win against Blackpool Town earlier in September.

Team manager, Neil Hetherington, who is Nuclear Waste Services Records Management Lead, was delighted with the donation – and the debut game.

"Nuclear Waste Services has invested in the community and I can't thank them enough for backing a local team," he said. "We will wear the tracksuits at all our home and away games and people will see what they've done for us, it's fantastic.

"It was a great opening performance from the ladies, they put into practice exactly what we had been working on training over the last few months.

We were not sure what to expect with being new to the league and playing teams from out of the county, but the ladies have been looking forward to this moment for such a long time and they never looked back from the first to the final whistle."

Nuclear Waste Services

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