



# On the Level

News and views from the LLW Repository site

## Local community site tour is a success

**The LLW Repository site opened its gates for a community site tour in April. We welcomed 25 local residents, who read about the event in our previous edition of 'On The Level'.**

The tour included a stop at the rail sidings and trench caps, where the group learned about the soon to be installed herringbone drainage. Then it was on to the vaults followed by the magazines, which used to store plutonium-contaminated material but have now been decommissioned ready for demolition.

Next, it was on to the grouting facility, where operations have recently started again after a three-year break (see page 2), and finally to the Site Emergency Control Centre (SECC), to hear about our recent £35million security enhancement programme.

Local resident Laura Cummings attended with her mother, Janey Hewitson, who worked at the

Repository site for a number of years before retiring.

**Laura said: "Thank you to the amazing team for our site tour. It was extremely informative and delivered with good humour."**

"It was great that I was able to take

my Mam to see all the changes over the years since she last worked there as a Health Physics Monitor some 30 years ago. She certainly enjoyed it and couldn't believe how much progress has been made over the years and how clean and well-managed the site was."

Martin Walkingshaw, Chief Operating Officer, led the tour and commented that it was "one of the highlights of my week."



Community site tour

Our next community site visit will take place on Tuesday 22 August 2023. To register your interest, email [visits@llwrsite.com](mailto:visits@llwrsite.com) and we'll confirm joining instructions nearer the time.

# Celebrating spring

Spring has sprung at our Repository site and it's been lovely to embrace nature. We take our environmental commitments seriously at NWS and work hard to protect our natural environment.



## Dragonfly

Our Ecologist Chris Arthur captured some amazing photos of a broad-bodied chaser dragonfly emerging from its larvae.

Chris tells us: "We found lots of these larvae in one of the ponds while doing newt surveys. Dragonflies spend most of their lives as larvae but in spring/summer they leave the water and climb onto nearby vegetation. The adult then moults the larval skin and emerges, but needs to 'rest' for a short period whilst the wings and abdomen harden – these photos

show that period. Broad-bodied chasers are one of the eight species of dragonfly that can be found on site, along with three species of damselfly."



## Newts

Chris and his team have also completed our annual newt surveys. These are carried out in spring and consist of six surveys after sunset. As great crested newts are a European protected species, you need to be licensed by Natural England to use these survey methods (which Chris is!).



The team surveys each of the ponds with torches, and set up traps which are left overnight and checked first thing in the morning to allow us to

monitor the population and allocate a size class. We also search for eggs during the daytime to confirm which ponds are used for breeding.

Findings were as expected and consistent with previous years, with small populations of great crested newts in two of our ponds, along with palmate and smooth newts, frogs, common toads and aquatic invertebrates found across various ponds on site.

## Reptiles

We also have three populations of reptile that live on site – common lizard, slow worm and adder. These can be found across the site but we survey for them in certain areas using artificial refuges that reptiles use to warm themselves up. The 2023 surveys found that all three species continue to thrive, with slow worms doing especially well – though these are also the easiest to find!

## Wildflowers

If you've been down Shore Road recently, you may have noticed that we've changed the way we manage the grass verges along some of the site boundaries. This means that we'll cut them less frequently to encourage a greater diversity of wildflowers, which will improve the habitat for pollinators and other wildlife.

Next time you're there, see if you can spot some of the butterfly species enjoying the area, such as common blue and meadow brown.

# Container grouting is under way

It's good to see the grouting facility back in action at our Repository site after four years of outage due to the covid pandemic and refurbishments.

We're in the process of preparing 260 containers of low level waste – which could include anything from rubber and plastic, to metals and brick – ready for disposal in the vaults.

Each container will be grouted using a cement mix to form a monolithic block of waste, ensuring that radioactive material is stored safely and in line with our environmental permits.

Ahead of this work, we made extensive improvements to the grouting facility and to the compressor technology used in the grouting works.

Russell Beckwith, LLW Operations Manager, said: "Moving forward with this work takes the waste a step closer to its final storage destination, helping us to achieve our goals of making the waste permanently safe, sooner.

"The improvements and refurbishments at the facility have enabled us to do this work to the highest standard and with maximum efficiency."

## 260

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# Repository Development work – keeping you in the know



**We were pleased to welcome a number of you to our first couple of Repository Development drop-in events at Drigg Village Hall during May and June.**

We shared more details about what you'll see and hear over the next six to twelve months, and how we're planning to mitigate and minimise any associated noise, dust, traffic, ecological and visual impacts. Subject matter experts and members of the Repository Development Programme (RDP) team were there to answer your questions too.

RDP will see the construction of a final engineered cap over the existing vaults and adjacent trenches, providing long-term protection to the wastes and the environment.

Couldn't make it? A further event will take place as follows: 7 July, 1-3pm, Drigg Village Hall

## Former apprentice flying high

A huge congratulations to Chloe Glaister from our Infrastructure team for making it to the final of the NSAN Nuclear Skills Awards. Chloe was a finalist in the Advanced Apprenticeship category.

Our apprentices are the future of the nuclear industry so it's great to see colleagues like Chloe succeed and make their mark.



## Community funding is making a real difference



**Martin Walkingshaw visits Baby Basics**

Supporting local causes through our community funding streams is one of the best parts of our job, and Martin Walkingshaw recently visited Howgill Family Centre's Baby Basic West Cumbria project to see how the funding is making a difference.

Based in Cleator Moor, it provides essential baby equipment, clothing and toiletries to women and families in Allerdale and Copeland, who are struggling with the financial and practical burden of looking after a new baby.

Martin said: 'We're proud of the important work that our fund is supporting but the real heroes are the volunteers that work with people in need.'

"Being able to guarantee the future of Baby Basics for a further three years will help ensure that families can meet the key requirements for their new-borns."

## Drigg and Carleton Gala Day 2023

The Drigg & Carleton Gala Day is the biggest annual community event, providing free entertainment and activities for all ages.

We sponsored the children's art competition once again this year and Simon Martin, our Head of Infrastructure, went along to judge the competition. It was a family affair with Simon's son Charlie and daughter Honey helping him choose the top three across each of the five categories.

Simon said: "I had a wonderful day representing Nuclear Waste Services. I had the honour of judging the children's art competition – the standard was really high which made it difficult, but there were plenty of rosettes and prize money on offer to make a lot of children happy. It's lovely to see these traditional community events not only still alive but thriving."

Well done to everyone involved in making this such a wonderful event.



If you wish to be considered for funding you will need to meet eligibility criteria and complete an online application form which will be assessed by the LLWR socio-economic funding committee.



## And finally...

**As you'll probably know by now, we've seen an increase in operations at the Repository site in recent months.**

It's good to see our grouting facility up and running for the first time since before the pandemic, and our Repository Development work – which ultimately involves the final capping of the vaults – is also about to hit some key milestones.

Of course this increase in activity may impact our local community, but it's always at the forefront of what we do to lessen this impact in any way we can. We have regular monthly liaison meetings with your Parish Councillors and would encourage you to reach out to them should you have any concerns which we can then discuss at those meetings.

Our recent Repository Development drop-in event at Drigg Village Hall gave some of you the opportunity to come and speak to us about the work taking place.

This face-to-face community engagement is so important to us; not only do we get to be open and transparent with you about what's coming up, but we can take your feedback on board, make adjustments where we can and make sure there are no surprises.

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**We've got another event planned in July so please do come along if you can.**

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Our recent community site tour in April was a personal highlight for me and gave me another opportunity to meet our local residents. This event was so successful that we've already booked in another date on 22 August. Do get in touch if you'd like to register your interest. We had a wonderful morning; I enjoyed meeting so many of you and hearing your take on our Site.

I'm sure many of us have been enjoying the warm spell recently. As summer approaches, it's wonderful to see ecology thriving at the Repository site. We've spotted plenty of dragonfly, newts and adders along with the more common species. The work that our Ecologist Chris Arthur and his team do to protect wildlife and manage our environment is a credit. We'll continue to do all we can to protect the environment.

Finally, from the pictures I've seen it looks like everyone had a wonderful day at the annual Drigg & Carleton Gala. This is always a fantastic local event and one we were pleased to support once again through our community funding.

I wasn't able to make it to the Gala this year but I'm told Simon Martin and his young children did a great job in judging the children's art competition! And a shout out to Jim Carnall, one of our project managers at the Site, who manned the tin can stand too – it's great to be a part of this community.

**Martin Walkingshaw, Chief Operating Officer**

# The results are in...

**In our last edition of On The Level we told you how the remains of a ship on Drigg beach has been surveyed, following a community request (March 2023, Edition 35 – Drigg beach surveyed for shipwreck).**

We've had the report back, and although no clear evidence of sub-surface timbers was found (likely due to saline water saturation), the results did show subtle features which could suggest the presence of timbers.

If the results did represent the keel of a shipwreck, the ship could be a minimum of 13m long by 6-7m wide, assuming the exposed ribs are still attached to the keel.

## 13m long

**If the results did represent the keel of a shipwreck, the ship could be a minimum of 13m long by 6-7m wide.**

However, this interpretation should be treated with caution – we couldn't get any conclusive results from the survey. If further investigations go ahead, the report recommends using other geophysical techniques which are better suited to the saline water environment of the beach. Our thanks to Fugro and Jacobs for providing their services.



Survey on the beach

### **Nuclear Waste Services**

LLW Repository site, Old Shore Road,  
Holmrook, Cumbria CA19 1XP

Pelham House, Pelham Drive,  
Calderbridge, Cumbria CA20 1DB