



# On the Level

LLW Repository site newsletter – Winter 2023

## Spreading Christmas cheer in the community

Christmas is a time for celebration for many and a chance to take a step back and spend time with loved ones, but we all know how difficult this time of year can be for others.

We're pleased that our LLW Repository socio-economic funding and the generosity of our workforce can make such a big difference to so many groups and individuals in our communities as we move into the festive season.

## Bringing joy through toys

Colleagues from the Repository site and Pelham House have been buying extra toys while Christmas shopping to fill our toy collection boxes, and help make Christmas special for local children.

We had a great response with soft toys, dolls, board games, and jigsaw puzzles among the donations.

Our Christmas toy appeal was in support of Family Action Whitehaven, who distribute the presents to families in need across West Cumbria.



A selection of the gifts donated by colleagues

# Christmas for All

The annual Mirehouse Matters 'Christmas for All' appeal is being coordinated once again by local community centre Chair Carl Walmsley, who delivers food, toys and other essentials such as energy vouchers to families in the area that need some support during what can be an expensive and difficult time.

NWS's donation from our socio-economic fund kickstarts the appeal and attracts contributions from other companies and members of the public, so Christmas for All can support even more families who may need a little extra help over the season.

Whatever Christmas time looks like for you, we wish you peace and happiness as we move into 2024.



If you believe you have an eligible project and wish to be considered for funding from our LLWR socio-economic fund, you can complete an online application form which will be assessed by our funding committee.

Visit [bit.ly/repository-funding](https://bit.ly/repository-funding)

# New computers for Seascale library

Did you know that Seascale Parish Council took on the running of Seascale library from the County Council in 2019?

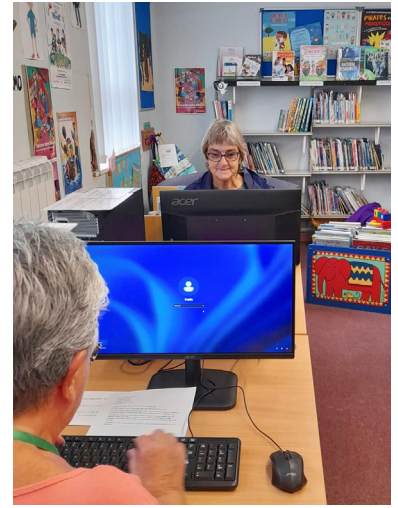
It's now run as a charity, and we were approached to help with some upgrades to make it an even better resource for the community.

Thanks to our socio-economic funding, the library has benefitted from some new computer equipment and desk chairs, along with some general upgrades to make it a more welcoming and useable space.

Penelope Cater, on behalf of Seascale Library, said: "This money will improve the users facilities and experience as well as enabling us to present a more professional image. Since the library transferred to the parish and became a library link, we have grown the footfall considerably. We offer a welcoming space to all generations and the replacement

computers and printer will be an absolute boon!"

It's important to make digital tools available to all, so we were happy to support this project and hope to see it benefit the community for years to come.



Seascale Library is now an even better hub for the community

# Let the next stage of capping commence

**We're pleased that our work on the final capping of the Repository's historic trenches and vaults continues to make good progress.**

The early works for the Southern Trench Cap Interim Membrane (STIM) project is already complete, with drainage fully installed in a herringbone formation, allowing the next stage of the Capping Operations to begin.

We are now working to secure a main contractor who will carry out the membrane replacement and associated works as part of the next phase.

We'll continue to proactively update and engage with you as the project progresses.

**This work is key to Nuclear Waste Services' mission to make nuclear waste permanently safe, sooner, which is vitally important to the UK and future generations.**

**Did you know:** Disposal of low level radioactive waste began in 1959 with waste being tipped into lined trenches at the Repository site. Disposal techniques evolved during the late 1980s and early 1990s through the construction of highly engineered concrete vaults. This resulted in a modern, innovative approach to the treatment and safe disposal of low level nuclear waste in specially designed metal containers, which are placed in the vaults.



Aerial shot of the herringbone drainage installed at the Repository

# Making headlines

## Did you see us on ITV Border News?

In November, we had Hannah McNulty and the ITV Border News team filming at the Repository Site with Mike Pigott, our Director of Sites and Operations and Martin Walkingshaw, Chief Operating Officer, where we were able to share our story. It's great to see our important work at the Repository and the site's rich history reaching a wider audience.



Behind-the-scenes of Mike Pigott and Hannah McNulty filming for ITV Border News

# Putting the Repository on the map

**We've been delighted to welcome visitors from far and wide to the Repository site recently, with industry professionals from Japan and Korea making the trip to West Cumbria in November.**

International visitors regularly come to see how we run operations here at the Repository and we're always happy to share our knowledge and experience with them. There are sometimes opportunities to collaborate on specific projects, and we are always eager to support such requests in order to enhance our knowledge and capabilities.

Our visits programme is a big part of our work at the Low Level Waste Repository – over the past year we've welcomed more than 450 people on over 60 site tours, including a number of community tours. Our small but dedicated Stakeholder team run the visits programme like clockwork!



On-site with members from the Japan Atomic Energy Agency (JAEA)



Welcoming the Korea Radioactive Waste Agency (KORAD) team to Pelham House

# Proudly reflecting on 2023

**Mike Pigott, Director of Sites and Operations at Nuclear Waste Services, takes a look back at what's been achieved at the Repository site over the last year.**

It's at this time of year that I ask myself if we achieved what we set out to at the beginning of the calendar year. In simple terms, did we safely operate the LLW Repository in a responsible manner?

I believe we did, and one external measure of that was securing our 18th consecutive Gold Award and the RoSPA Order of Distinction. This award recognises our commitment to health and safety excellence.

The other measure I consider is the strength of dialogue with you, our community who host our nationally significant facility.

The recent drop-in sessions and site tours provided a reassuring and robust level of transparency and discussion – both about our work and our commitment and dedication to maintaining our social license to operate, which is so important given that many of us work, live and play in this beautiful region.

**We have also made significant progress on our asset care programme, which involves looking after the existing buildings and equipment at the Repository site.**

As part of this, we have our grout plant operating, grouting containers ready for disposal for the first time in four years.

This will allow us to make progress with the closure of Vault 8 and the ramping up of capping operations – making the waste that is safely disposed of already on site, permanently safe, sooner.

As we have covered earlier in our newsletter, you may have recently had the opportunity to see Martin and myself talking to ITV Border News about the progress towards capping our legacy disposal facilities, and I look forward to sharing more as this work progresses.



Mike Pigott, Director of Sites and Operations

# And finally...

**2023 has certainly been a busy year – where have the last 12 months gone? We started the year by making significant changes to our business, and my role personally as I took on responsibility for the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) programme. As a result, you will have seen more of Mike Pigott in the Community as he continues to lead and manage the LLW Repository site for NWS.**

We are making good progress on finding a site for the GDF, and a significant milestone has been reached with us deciding not to progress further in Allerdale. We have strong evidence the geology of the area is not of the quality and type we need. This is the first time we have taken the decision to withdraw from a community. Everyone at NWS is grateful to the entire Allerdale Community Partnership team and their Chair, Mary Bradley, for the way they've engaged in the process. The team did exemplary work to establish the partnership, raise awareness about the programme and make good use of the associated Community Investment Funding. We will honour all the commitments we made to the people of Allerdale, and I'd like to add my personal thanks to Mary and the team for all their efforts.

Work at the Repository site has also progressed well during the year, with the completion of enabling works for construction of the permanent cap over the waste, starting with the historic disposal trenches and Vault 8. You may have also seen the construction work underway on the east side of the site as we prepare to replace parts of the interim cap next year. Capping our Repository is a strategic priority for NWS, our Regulators and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. The work will progress alongside disposal operations and will ultimately be completed when the site finally closes around the year 2130. Mike Pigott, Director of Site & Operations and Jonathan Evans, Site Programmes

Director, are leading this work, and together with their teams have enjoyed talking to you at our various events and site tours, as part of our commitment to keep the community updated on progress at the site.

One of the highlights of the year came in September when NWS was awarded the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Order of Distinction. We've received RoSPA awards over 18 consecutive years, but this was our first as NWS. It is particularly special to receive the award this year, as the nature of work on our site has changed a lot. The success of our Waste Management Services means that much more of the UK's low level waste is being diverted away from disposal. Add to that the services we provide for waste treatment and recycling and the result is fewer containers coming to the Repository for disposal. With increased construction on-site due to capping-related works, safety will always continue to be very important to us – so we're making sure to stay on top of our game.

Sadly, this year two people that have contributed so much to the debate on nuclear in Cumbria passed away – former Councillors David Southward and Eddie Martin. They always prioritised the best interests of Cumbria and its people, and I will certainly miss them both.

Finally, I would like to say a few words about a much loved and respected member of our local community who passed away in November, David Millington. David served faithfully as Clerk to Drigg and Carleton Parish Council for many years, and I was honoured to know him even before I joined the team at LLWR. Dave was one of the most respected senior managers I worked for during my 25 years at Sellafield, and under his leadership we made real advances in making some of the most concentrated forms of radioactive waste in the world safe. He struck the perfect balance between holding us to account on every aspect of our work that affected the village, while acknowledging we had an important job to do. His sound advice, sense of proportion and good humour could always be relied on. On behalf of the entire team at NWS, I would like to offer our condolences to Adrienne and the family – Dave was truly a one-off and I am grateful to have known him.

Looking forward to 2024 one of the milestones we're working towards is the formation of NWS as a single legal entity, formally bringing together LLW Repository Ltd and Radioactive Waste Management Ltd. You won't see any difference in the way we do business but the creation of Nuclear Waste Services Ltd is an important milestone as we deliver our mission to make nuclear waste permanently safe, sooner.

**After a year full of progress and success, we look forward to seeing to what 2024 brings us – and we'll be sure to keep you, our brilliant community, updated on what we get up to. From all of us here at NWS, we would like to wish you a happy and safe festive season and a wonderful New Year.**



**Martin Walkingshaw,  
Chief Operating Officer**

## **Nuclear Waste Services**

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