



On the Level

News and views from the LLW Repository site

A welcome from Mike

Following a year of good progress on our Repository site in 2023, we now look forward and focus on delivering our targets for 2024, each one supporting delivery of our mission to make nuclear waste permanently safe, sooner.

We have already celebrated two important milestones onsite in the first few months of 2024; completing our first container grouting campaign in more than four years, and the disposal of the final Treated Radwaste Store (TRS) drums in Vault 8 – eight years in the making from planning, transporting and disposing. I am personally incredibly proud of the team on our Repository site for the progress made on both of these projects, and you can read more about these successes further on in the newsletter.

The safe and responsible management of the Repository site also remains at the forefront of everything we do, and I am pleased to share that our Leachate Management System enhancement programme, that supports our environmental compliance and monitoring, has completed a successful commissioning phase, and the upgraded system will be fully operational in the near future.

I'm particularly proud of the collaborative effort between the teams in completing all of this work, ensuring we maintain our high safety standards and environmental compliance.

With the early works of our Capping Operations being completed in November, the next stage of the project is now underway as we work to secure a main contractor to carry out the Southern Trenchcap Interim Membrane (STIM) replacement and associated works.

I am looking forward to sharing progress with you over the coming months.



Mike Pigott, Director of Sites and Operations

Making waste permanently safe, sooner

We're delighted that our project to dispose of 1,068 Treated Radwaste Store (TRS) drums is officially complete months ahead of schedule.

As we have shared in previous editions of the newsletter, a total of 11 consignments of drums have been transported from Nuclear Restoration Services' (NRS, formerly Magnox) Winfrith site to our Repository site via train, with the last arriving in January.

Despite challenges including extreme weather and rail delays, the final drum was emplaced in Vault 8 in February – two months ahead of schedule.

Not only has this project avoided creating 830 tonnes of CO₂ by disposing of the waste in otherwise unusable space in Vault 8 rather than in Vault 9, but by completing early, it has also saved valuable time and taxpayer money. NRS's Treated Radwaste Store at Winfrith is now free for alternative use or to be decommissioned.

This is a great example of collaborative work across the NDA group, including ourselves, NRS and Nuclear Transport Solutions (NTS), not to mention the fantastic support from our supply chain.

1068

drums diverted from the GDF

830

tonnes of CO₂ avoided by disposing in Vault 8 versus Vault 9

550m³

of clean void infill material avoided



Special celebrations for Seascale

With Seascale celebrating its 175th birthday this year, we're proud to be supporting the village's celebrations.

Seascale is proudly reintroducing their Gala Week, just in time to celebrate the village's 175th anniversary. The event will run from the 17 - 22 June, and NWS are proud to be able to provide support through our LLWR Socio-economic Fund.

The gala was an annual event that everyone looked forward to throughout the 1940s up to the 1970s, and it will be great to see the village come together all these years later to enjoy line dancing, a brass band, bouncy castles, arts and crafts stalls, plenty of food and entertainment, and more.

In addition to celebrating the village, Seascale Gala will also shine the spotlight on community groups and clubs, encouraging people from Seascale and the wider area to join up and get involved.

Good luck to everyone involved in organising this event, and we hope everyone has a brilliant time celebrating the village!



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 Fund committee.

Visit bit.ly/repository-funding



Providing opportunities for young people

Taking the first steps in pursuing your dream career is an exciting time, and we were lucky enough to lend students a helping hand by supporting the Dream Placement programme.



In February, we welcomed students from across West Cumbria to NWS for the third year running, providing them with the opportunity to experience working life and develop key skills along the way. At the start of the week, the four students were given a tour of our Repository site led by Howard Falconer, Head of Waste Services.

During the visit, they learnt more about key projects such as our Capping Operations and the recently completed grouting campaign. They thoroughly enjoyed their time onsite, and all the students commented on how interesting it was to learn more about the work we do.

There was plenty more for the students to get up to throughout the week, including spending time with a range of teams and other apprentices, which allowed them to learn even more about NWS and the wider nuclear industry.

Spreading warmth throughout the community

All of us at NWS remain as committed as ever to supporting our local community and some of our colleagues have been enjoying helping at the Drigg Winter Warm Hub.

Held every Friday over the winter months between 11am-2pm at Drigg Village Hall, the hub offers everyone a safe space to enjoy a hot bowl of soup, tea, coffee and snacks – and a good natter – and it's a pleasure to play our part.



All members of the community are welcome at the Warm Hub.

Crossing the grouting finishing line

You may remember us talking about our grouting campaign in previous editions of *On the Level* – and we're thrilled to share that the campaign is now officially complete.

A total of 251 containers of low level waste have been grouted during the recent campaign. The last time our grouting facility operated for a prolonged campaign was almost four years ago, and the team onsite has worked incredibly hard and efficiently to complete this project.

251

A total of 251 containers have been grouted during the recent campaign.

The waste containers have been grouted in preparation for final disposal in the Vault in the coming months, a step closer to the final closure of Vault 8.



And finally...



It's been over a year since we formed Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) by bringing together Low Level Waste Repository Ltd (which operates our existing disposal site near Drigg) and Radioactive Waste Management Ltd (responsible for delivering our future Geological Disposal Facility – GDF).

In April we'll reach a significant milestone when we complete the legal changes that establishes NWS Ltd; the new 'single legal entity' which takes over from both RWM Ltd and LLWR Ltd.

From a personal perspective it has been a long road. After 25 very happy years at Sellafield, I joined the new standalone LLWR business in late 2006, became a director of the company in 2011 and its Chief Executive in 2021. I joined the Board of RWM Ltd in 2022 and was appointed Chief Operating Officer of NWS at the same time. Most recently, in January 2023 I assumed responsibility for the GDF Programme, dealing with the UK's higher activity waste.

While my role has changed, a number of things stay the same, with the LLW Repository site remaining a vital element of the UK's nuclear infrastructure, providing safe and permanent disposal of waste that is generated in facilities across the UK. These days we are doing a much better job of diverting waste away from disposal, using the same waste hierarchy of avoid, reduce, reuse, recycle that we all adopt at home. Whilst this has resulted in fewer containers arriving at the site, disposal is still an essential capability. NWS will extend that capability by developing the GDF to handle the UK's higher activity radioactive waste.

We're working closely with two community partnerships in Cumbria and one in Lincolnshire to find a site for the GDF, and I'm very proud of how this important engagement and its challenges are being managed.

Working with different communities remains at the heart of our business. Regular meetings with parish, district and local authorities/county councils are essential, and we continue to make sure they are useful for everyone involved, preparing and circulating the relevant information and getting the right people from our business there to answer questions. However, they're not much use if we don't take the time to prepare and circulate information, and get the right people from our business to attend and answer questions.

Crucially, we will still provide the funding for community groups and charities that has made such a difference to local people over the years.

The Copeland Community Fund, our GDF Community Investment Funding and the LLWR Socio Economic Fund collectively are contributing over £5 Million every year – and long may they continue to do so.

Working with our regulators – especially the Environment Agency and the Office for Nuclear Regulation – also remains a priority. Recently we've been working through a revised timeline for placing the final 'cap' over the historic disposal areas at the Repository. I'm confident that we have a plan that meets the expectations of regulators, and we will be presenting this to them soon. Our commitment to the West Cumbria Site Stakeholder Group remains strong, and you can attend this forum in person if you'd like to hear from the regulators on how we're doing. Visit <https://wcsg.co.uk/> to see the upcoming meetings and events.

I'm still living very happily in Seascale but the job is taking me further afield these days, so while the majority of my time is still being spent in Cumbria, if you are local to the Repository site you'll be seeing a bit more of Mike Pigott, Director of Sites and Operations and Jonathan Evans, Site Programmes Director. We have another busy year ahead with disposal and Capping Operations, asset care, maintenance and other activities taking place across the site – so, watch this space!

Keep talking to us, we always welcome your feedback, and it helps us when we're planning ahead. You can get in touch at info@nuclearwasteservices.uk

Martin Walkingshaw, Chief Operating Officer

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