



On the Level

LLW Repository site newsletter – Autumn 2024

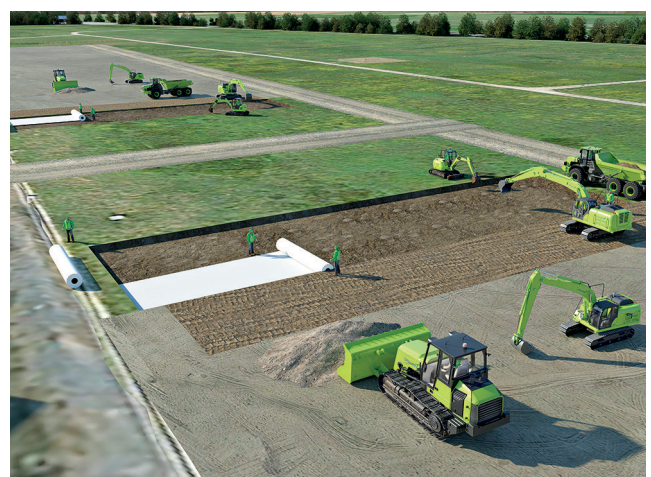
STIM works set to begin

We recently shared the news that we have awarded our Southern Trench Interim Membrane (STIM) contract to Graham Construction Ltd (GRAHAM), who will be responsible for placing a membrane – or protective layer – over the legacy disposal trenches over the next four years.

This marked an important step forward in our Capping Operations journey, and we are looking forward to seeing the physical works begin on the Repository site in the coming months.

Over the last few weeks, we have seen increased construction activity on site and this will continue as the contractors prepare to mobilise.

To share more about our upcoming capping and STIM work, and what you can expect to see and hear, we are planning to host drop-in sessions at Drigg Village Hall in the new year. We will share further details in the December issue of On the Level and on the Drigg and Carleton Parish Council website. We will continue to keep you updated as work on site progresses.



Computer-generated images of the work being carried out on the legacy disposal trenches

Final disposal in Vault 8 officially begins

Our project to fill the remaining space in Vault 8 ahead of its final closure has officially begun, with the first of 251 waste containers being disposed of in the vault.

The containers – which were recently grouted as part of our successful grouting campaign – have been stored in Vault 9 awaiting final disposal in the small area of Vault 8, often referred to as the ‘tennis court’ area.



Movement of the containers began last month

Movements officially began last month, with the first container being disposed of mid-September 2024, and the project is expected to take approximately 12 months to complete. Once all containers are in their final disposal location, this will be a key step forward to officially closing Vault 8 ready for capping.

Mike Pigott, Director of Sites and Operations, said: “This is a significant piece of work which will allow us to deliver our vision of making nuclear waste permanently safe, sooner. It’s fantastic to see the progress that’s already being made with the project, and to know we are taking another step forward in our Capping Operations with each container that’s disposed of.”

We’re very pleased this work has started and we will continue to share more as the project progresses.

Spreading smiles and colour with community Pride

The vibrancy and heart across our community is always amazing to see, and Proud and Diverse Cumbria’s Pride by the Harbourside in August was no exception.

As proud sponsors of the event, NWS team members were pleased to attend for the second year running, meeting many members of the community – each with their own incredible stories to share with us.

It wasn’t just Pride we had the joy of taking part in; we also attended the opening of Proud and Diverse Cumbria’s new Colours Hub on King Street, Whitehaven. After providing funding through our NWS LLWR Socio-economic Fund, it was great to see the hub open and ready to welcome everyone through its doors.

Well done to the Proud and Diverse Cumbria team and everyone else who played a part in the week’s events!



Our colleagues had a great day at Pride by the Harbourside



Liz Peace CBE, Chair of the Nuclear Waste Services Board

Welcoming our new Chair, Liz Peace

Introducing Liz Peace CBE, new Chair of the Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) Board.

We are delighted to welcome Liz who joins us following more than 35 years’ experience in government and the property sector, including 13 years as Chief Executive of the British Property Federation.

On 1 September, Liz officially began her term and succeeded Adrienne Kelbie CBE, who announced she would be stepping down from the role earlier this year.

Liz said: “It’s a privilege to take on the role of NWS Chair. I began my career in the civil service working on projects relating to nuclear safety, so it feels like I’ve come full circle.

“I look forward to supporting the NDA and NWS Boards and Executive teams to ensure we are managing nuclear waste safely and sustainably, to leave a positive legacy for the environment and future generations.”



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

Checking in on our wildlife

We take our environmental responsibilities very seriously, with wildlife being a key focus for us. To help protect and nurture the wildlife we have on site, our dedicated Ecologist Chris Arthur carried out his annual surveys over the summer to monitor the populations of amphibians – specifically great crested newts.

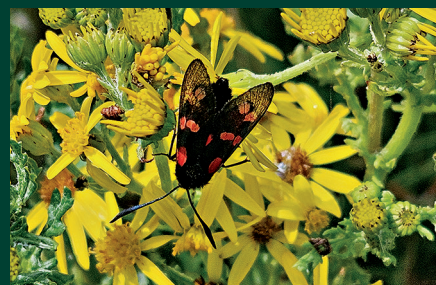
During the series of six surveys, Chris monitors the protected species of newts that breed in two of the Repository site's ponds, using three methods: torching at night, bottle trapping and egg searching.

Torching at night refers to simply searching for the newts and other amphibians at night and counting the numbers and species seen. Bottle trapping involves leaving traps (which are not harmful) around the pond edges overnight and checking them in the morning, with egg searching requiring Chris to look through vegetation for any eggs. Once just one egg is found, it can be confirmed that breeding is taking place, and the search can stop to prevent unnecessary disturbance.

These surveys take place annually on our Repository site, and we have consistently found great crested newts, palmate newts, smooth newts, common frogs and common toads.

Chris was also recently joined onsite by Ruth Davey, our Senior Environmental Sustainability Advisor, and volunteers from the Cumbrian Biodiversity Data Centre. Together, they observed and reported on the array of insects and animals we host, finding solitary bee eggs, queen ants, fungus-eating ladybirds, and even evidence of otters and badgers.

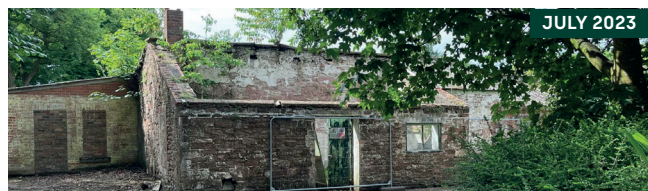
This research was very useful in both helping the team to understand the biodiversity of the Repository site, as well as how best to support and enhance it. We're proud to have so many species of flora and fauna on-site, and we continue to take every precaution in protecting them all.



The team were pleased to find a range of insects, and evidence of otters and badgers

Collaboration, collaboration, collaboration!

Collaboration is one of our core values at NWS because we have greater success when we work together, so when we get to work with not one, but three different teams on a project, we make real progress.



Pelham House, walled garden

We are pleased to have been involved in a recently completed seven-month-long restoration project on our walled garden at Pelham House, led by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA).

The garden is home to an allotment that is bursting with vegetables and wildlife, including bats, owls and bees, and now that this work has been completed, the space is once again safe for the local allotment holders – who have cared for the allotment for many years – to return and continue to enjoy using the space.

The project was the work of many hands, and we were happy to support the NDA, construction team firm Stobbarts Ltd, and our knowledgeable allotment holders in seeing the project through. Each team played their own vital part, and we are incredibly pleased that the allotment holders have now been awarded a long-term lease and can nurture and develop the land for years to come.

This is a true collaboration success story, and we would like to thank the NDA and Stobbarts Ltd for making it happen.

Did you know?...

Being a good neighbour is very important to us, and we always consider our local community and potential environmental impacts when planning and carrying out work on our Repository site.

Did you know, we:

- Aim to use specific tools and equipment to reduce pollution – noise and environmental – such as opting for electric chainsaws over diesel-powered ones when trimming trees and shrubbery where possible.
- Adhere to strict curfew times for deliveries to and from site to ensure peak times such as school drop-off and pick-up are avoided, and congestion through our communities is reduced.
- Leave hedgerows and wildflowers to grow where possible across our Repository site, providing vital habitats and food sources for a variety of insects and animals that call our site home.
- Employ people specifically to support these areas, including our sound monitoring teams, our onsite ecologist, environmental monitoring teams and more.

In addition to informing you of work that could affect the community through letter drops, our newsletter and Parish Council Liaison Meetings, we are thankful to Drigg and Carleton Parish Council for also sharing information on their website:
<https://drigg.org.uk/>

Nuclear Waste Services

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

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

And finally...

Following a vibrant and colourful summer – made all the more impressive with Proud and Diverse Cumbria's fantastic Pride by the Harbourside – I'm looking forward to an equally brilliant autumn, both within NWS as well as out in the community.

There are so many opportunities to feel proud of people across our great county, and it's exciting to have another great event to look forward to: the Cumbria Women of the Year Awards 2024.

It is a privilege to be sponsoring the main award at the event taking place this month, which will see women from across Cumbria rightfully celebrated for their priceless work within their communities. We have so many unsung heroes out there, and it will be fantastic to see the spotlight shine on them all.

Continuing with the theme of community pride, I am personally very proud to share that we have been able to help launch Cumbria Youth Alliance's (CYA) Enrichment Bursary Fund by providing a grant through our LLWR Socio-economic Fund.

I'm not exaggerating when I say this fund will go towards directly changing lives for young people across Cumbria who have experienced living in care. It will provide essential support, opportunities and experiences, helping young people to pursue their dreams and build a brighter future for themselves. Not only will the fund support their educational growth, but it will also help them take the major – and often daunting – first step on to the career ladder. This could be from funding training courses and tuition fees, or even gym memberships to improve their physical and mental wellbeing, which is fantastic.



Martin Walkingshaw,
Chief Operating Officer

It's an honour to be involved in CYA's valuable work, and I can't wait to see what the inspirational young people of Cumbria achieve with the bursary's support.

As you know, our mission at Nuclear Waste Services is all about making waste safe sooner. We're making good progress at the Repository, where our STIM project will be taking full advantage of the new site infrastructure created over the last four years, during the 'enabling' phase of our capping activities. Our Near-Surface Disposal programme is also moving forward and we're working closely with Sellafield Ltd to identify waste that may be suitable for this route. Our Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) project now has considerable momentum; I've been spending time with my teams at our Harwell office in Oxfordshire, as well as those 'on the ground' in our own region and across the country in Lincolnshire, where the Theddlethorpe GDF Community Partnership has recently recruited David Fannin as its independent Chair. I'm hoping to welcome David and members of the partnership to Cumbria over the next few months. We'll be showing them around the neighbourhood and introducing them to as many of you as we can. I want them to see (and hear) for themselves what its like to live alongside the nuclear industry – warts and all!

Thank you for your continued support and for engaging with us to help us learn and improve. If you would like to ask us a question, share your thoughts or raise a query, please email us at info@nuclearwasteservices.uk