



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CHAPELCROSS STAKEHOLDER GROUP (SSG)
HELD AT ANNAN ATHLETIC FOOTBALL CLUB, ANNAN
WEDNESDAY 21 AUGUST 2024**

Attendance/Apologies list

Attendance

Cllr Archie Dryburgh MBE
Cllr George Jamieson
Neil Carruthers
Helen Emberson
Willie McNairn
Carol Midwood
Jaime Nicholson
Ian Park
Peter Dreghorn

Annandale East and Eskdale (Chair)
Annandale South (Vice Chair)
Royal Burgh of Annan Community Council
Dumfries & Galloway Council, CX Programme Lead
2km Resident Representative
Federation of Community Councils/Canonbie and District CC
Dumfries & Galloway Council
NRS Trade Union Representative
Restoring Annan's Waters

Operators and Officers

Claire Aitken
Kate[?]
Bill Hamilton
Dianne Hamilton
Colin Hargreaves
Richard Murray
David Stone
David Wallace
Sarah Johnson

NRS
NRS
NRS
Scottish Government
NRS
Site Director, Chapelcross
SEPA
NDA
Minute Taker

Apologies

Peter Hughes
Cllr Gail Macgregor
Cllr Sean Marshall
Donna Mounce
Oliver Mundell
Jamie Reed
Cllr Carolyne Wilson
Helen Emberson

ONR
Dumfries & Galloway Council
Dumfries & Galloway Council
SOSE
MSP for Dumfriesshire
NDA
Dumfries & Galloway Council
D&G Council - CX Project Programme Manager

1. CHAIR'S WELCOME

Cllr Archie Dryburgh welcomed the attendees to the Chapelcross SSG meeting. He left the meeting and passed the chair to Cllr George Jamieson.

2. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Peter Hughes, Cllr Gail Macgregor, Oliver Mundell MP, Cllr Sean Marshall, Donna Mounce and Jamie Reed.

The agenda was amended to allow Helen Emberson to speak after Richard Murray.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

An update to the current outstanding actions was included in the meeting pack.

Peter Dreghorn asked for details of the impact of water extraction on the Annan. Claire Aitken had information from Scottish Water that she would circulate.

Regarding the action to send the memorandum of understanding (MoU) to SOSE, Dumfries and Galloway Council and the NDA, Cllr George Jamieson asked that it be sent again. He asked Helen Emberson to explain what the MoU covered. Helen Emberson explained that it was meant to solidify the position between Dumfries and Galloway Council and their intent to support the programme of development of the inclusive growth deal with NDA as landowners and landholders, looking at the socioeconomic obligations to the site. They would also support Scottish Enterprise where possible. The MoU defined the roles of each of the organisations.

Bill Hamilton would present the written NRS report during the meeting. A date would be circulated for a site visit.

4. CHAPELCROSS SITE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. Richard Murray (Site Director, Chapelcross)

EHSS&Q Performance

Richard Murray reported no recordable injuries or accidents in the last year. At the time of writing the report, the TRIR figure had been zero. There had been an injury on 15 August, but the individual had returned to work the following day. The repairs and remediation work for the storm damage from January 2024 had been completed. The environmental and security compliance was positive, and there were no major audit findings. An annual exercise for emergency arrangements had been conducted out of hours and had shown that emergency services could be called. There had been a successful demonstration of controlling a fire within the site.

Site News

Richard Murray stated that the key targets for the 2024/25 financial year included the retrieval of the 51 Zeolite skips from the pond. The first was expected to be removed before Christmas and five in early 2025. 12 of the 40 CXPP 500l drums were in the store and eight had been filled in. Six of the 14 dispatches of Low Level Waste (LLW) had been completed. The cooling tower remediation designs were complete. The commissioning of the Zeolite retrieval would be complete before year-end. £5 million had been budgeted for asset care for the year.

Recruitment

Recruitment had continued at pace. There had been five new starts between the last meeting and the writing of the report and two more on 19 August. Other positions were still open. The turnover had mainly been due to retirements and numbers were expected to be maintained.

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Rob Fletcher had visited the site and been shown the work and projects being undertaken and the challenges faced. David Clark had visited as a new non-executive director.

CXPP Decommissioning

The process was moving well. Items including the furnace and the piercing unit for the pellets had been removed and packaged. The programme was split into four projects: the cave line, the process line, the matrix, and the TSVs. The cave line project was complete with over 100 500l drums packaged. The cave line would be left for a maintenance period.

Pond Decommissioning

The removal of the Zeolite skips was being commissioned. There had been some delays to the plan due to the original crane, which had been rectified, so the crane would come back into service that week.

The Modular Active Effluent Treatment Plant (MAETP) was going into the active commissioning phase. Some effluent drops had been done to coincide with the tidal window, mainly with non-active effluent. The commission should be ready for the end of the financial year.

Other pond work included inventory of skips and sludge. Some design and manufacturing work was being undertaken with NSG for equipment to take the skips out. Some sludge remediation work would be brought forward.

Cooling Tower Remediation

Historic issues with the cooling towers included the high pH of water in the basins created by demolitions. That water was neutralised before being discharged. Another disposal route needed to be found for some of the crushed concrete.

The culverts running to the turbine halls were also flooded with the high pH water. Two had been drained and the water neutralised. Two were in the process of being drained. The lines would be capped in October to be backfilled.

In the next year, there would be a contract to create a pad around the area with the crushed concrete, which would take the heat exchanger when they were set down for disposal.

Waste

62m³ of legacy waste had been removed from the site, which was half of the waste. That project would be substantially complete during the financial year. Some problematic waste would be disposed of beyond the financial year, and this had been discussed with SEPA.

The green flasks had been recycled, and other assets would be reused in other stations.

The higher activity waste is to be encased in concrete. The encapsulation plant had been recommissioned. The team had undergone training, and the commissioning was in its final stages. After further containment, the waste would go into long-term storage.

Asset Care

Some of the site windows had corroded and were being replaced with Perspex over a five-year project. The potable water project was about to start. The fire systems would be upgraded. Roof repairs were done as a matter of course.

Socio Economic Update

The CMCIC had been awarded £23,400 to fund a textile hub manager at Langham. There had been positive response to the Youth Beatz work.

Ian Park asked if using local workforce or upgrading local skills could be included in any commissioning contracts. Richard Murray confirmed that it could be included under societal impact.

5. CX PROJECT UPDATE

Helen Emberson stated that the land at the northern edge of the site needed to be brought into economic use for a lasting social legacy for former and new employees. There had been interest from various industries, but the programme did not have an infrastructure package. There was an allocation in the borderlands growth deal of £15.3 million from the UK and Scottish governments and £5.5 million from the DGC to derisk the site and make the infrastructure viable. The NDA had been marketing the site to determine the level of interest.

SoSE had purchased zone 3, which could be developed quickly and could be a catalyst for other development. Investigations had been done and SoSE was looking at drainage design. There was a lot of interest from potential occupiers. The service, supply and potential plots would be looked at.

Dumfries & Galloway Council had commissioned Ironside Farrar to assess interest in the land to the north of the site and optimal adjacencies in order to show what funding could be put towards, and a Masterplan map had been created. Not all the plans were possible, but there could be targeted improvements. Site investigations could not be done on all of the land, but it could be platformed for development. The council wanted to discuss local residents' viewpoints on the Masterplan to take to the environment and infrastructure committee in November. The Council leader had written to the Secretary of State and the energy minister about making Chapelcross the home for Great British Energy, which could raise the region's profile. Once the specifics were known for the site, a design team would be recruited.

The Masterplan included an advanced manufacturing campus in the northwest, a hydrogen campus in the east and northeast, and SoSE land in the south. Roads and entrances would need to be considered. Solar development was planned locally by other companies. Other considerations included housing, natural capital, drainage and the green belt.

On the forward plan, the commercial proposal, which would close on 25 October to appoint by year-end, was for one large developer to develop as much of the site as possible. The Strategic Outline Case (SOC) set out the jobs that were expected to be generated for feedback. The roads and services design would be created, and the business case would be submitted by summer 2027.

Willie McNairn noted, having suffered drainage issues as a landowner to the south of the station, he was interested in drainage solution and what would be done with the north to south road. Helen Emberson stated that there were no plans for the road, but it could be discussed. SoSE could be consulted on the drainage. Ian Park advised that the site would still be decommissioning while the recommissioning works were happening, so the roads needed to accommodate traffic from both.

Ian Park asked where Great British Energy could be based. Helen Emberson stated that the HQ requirements were not yet clear. Cllr George Jamieson stated that Great British Energy would not stop the works that were already planned.

Cllr George Jamieson stated that there were several stakeholders in the site. He asked who would coordinate and make the ultimate decisions. He also asked if the Grid connection was viable if more energy was being generated. Helen Emberson stated that the current Grid connection had 50 MW import capacity remaining, which would be consumed. The export capacity was fully consumed, but there was a pending reinforcement project, which was with MSPs to make the planning decision. There was interest in a private energy arrangement with solar developers. The NDA would appoint the strategic developer, but other organisations would be involved in the evaluation. There were assessment criteria including quality and price.

6. NDA UPDATE

A. David Wallace (NDA)

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David Wallace's report was taken as read. Since the UK election, Ed Miliband had become the new Cabinet Secretary. Lord Hunt was the new Minister for Energy Security and Net Zero. The number of SNP MPs in Westminster had been impacted. The Scottish election would happen in May 2026. The first cross-party group meeting in the Scottish Parliament had happened in late March. Nuclear decommissioning had been introduced, and the meeting had included nine MSPs. Two more had been recruited at a drop-in session the same day. The next meeting would be on 11 September and would focus on skills. The topic in December would be on waste policy in Scotland. The MSPs were keen to meet at the sites in future.

The stakeholder summit would be on 17 and 18 September, and SSG members were welcome to attend. Cllr George Jamieson would nominate attendees. David Wallace stated that there would be workshops and two panels on Strategy 5 and waste.

The Scottish Councils Committee On Radioactive Substances (SCORS) had not been active since 2019, but the NDA had agreed to fund an engagement officer to restart it. The role had been advertised, to close on 13 September. It would support Cllr Michelle Campbell at Renfrewshire Council working for Scotland and one for New Leaf to engage the Scottish local authorities with the NDA and Scottish Government work on concentrated high activity waste.

The NDA had had a secondee working in the Scottish Government on high activity waste policy for 18 months and would extend to year-end. A secondment was due to start in January 2025 for 18 months, and there had been several high-quality applications for this. Interviews would take place in two weeks with four candidates.

The new NDA chair was Peter Hill. His responsibilities would include stakeholder engagement and briefing Scottish Government ministers on decommissioning.

Cllr George Jamieson stated that an independent NDA group had reviewed the SSG's performance. It had determined that local community engagement needed to be less jagged and include more young people. Site groups had been asked to encourage young engagement. An independent survey had indicated that people wanted more objective and academic information to avoid bias. David Wallace stated that some focus groups had been set up, and the final report on engagement would be given at the stakeholder summit. He noted that other SSGs' efforts to bring in young people had not lasted. There was a lack of consistency, so best practice needed to be shared.

Cllr George Jamieson stated that the SSG would be reviewing the disposal of nuclear waste in the next year, including ensuring that it was understandable for an ordinary person. David Wallace stated that the cross-party group would submit views to that consultation.

7. NRS UPDATE

A. Bill Hamilton (NRS)

Bill Hamilton reported that nine of the 13 local MPs at NRS sites had been replaced due to the election. The NRS Chief Executive had sent a letter and briefing note to those MPs on nuclear power and NRS activities.

The new government had initiated a one-year spending review. The chief executive and finance director had been spoken to by officials. The annual budget for all of the sites was approximately £718 million per year. A significant portion of this was to be used to keep the sites safe so the regulators could ensure that the government maintained the required levels, with anything additional used for decommissioning.

NRS was moving away from a one-size-fits-all strategy for sites'. Those would only succeed with communities' involvement, so a long-term programme had begun to widen and deepen their understanding of each site's activities. An independent polling company called Thinks Insight had interviewed 12 people from each local area, including six young people. Some of those had then been brought together in focus groups: one for young people and one for adults. There had then been a quantitative poll of 2,500 people around all sites. A video would be circulated regarding what had happened.

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Next, there would be a deep dive into the communities to further deepen understanding of the sites. This would include a travelling exhibition on the past and how the sites had supported the country, the present and the decommissioning programme, and the future decommissioning strategies and uses for the sites. This would come to Chapelcross in the next few months. Two of the community focus groups would also be based at Chapelcross and would talk about future aspirations for the site.

Cllr George Jamieson asked whether discussions would include sustainable energy outside of nuclear. Bill Hamilton confirmed that it would be an open discussion.

Ian Park recommended that current younger SSG members help to recruit others and create a wider audience. He also recommended discussing recommissioning. Cllr George Jamieson noted that this could be a catalyst for more interest.

8. OTHER REPORTS FROM SSG BODIES

ONR

It was noted that Peter Hughes had offered his apologies. He had submitted a report and could be contacted with questions.

SEPA

David Stone had sent in his report. Two inspections had been undertaken since the last SSG. The first had been on the implementation and development of the environmental monitoring programme, which was used to monitor local radioactivity caused by the disposal of waste from the site. Results were regularly reported. The inspection had found no issues for concern with the programme, and there were triggers for further updates.

The second inspection had been on the site's progress with managing and disposing of legacy LLW. SEPA had previously put pressure on disposing of that waste and asked for an indicative timescale. The NDA had provided funding. Despite Covid stoppages, disposal had progressed, and there was a comprehensive tracking database.

The variation for an increase in the sublimit for gaseous radioactive waste from the operation of the AVDS had been determined. There would also be an application for a further increase to the site limit for gaseous radioactive waste discharges, which would be publicly consulted on.

SEPA had also engaged the site on the best practicable means to remove high activity and LLW that was currently stored in the ponds.

Scottish Government

Diane Hamilton had circulated a report. A Scottish nuclear site stakeholder group had met virtually on 14 August. The meeting had not been well attended but had facilitated a good discussion on high activity waste policy. The policy would be reviewed and consulted on in early 2025. Oli Smith would lead this and had emailed the SSG to invite views on where the policy needed further development or clarification. Claire Aitken stated that the SSG consultation subgroup could meet to gather those views.

9. EXTERNAL MEETINGS AND INVITATIONS

Claire Aitken reported that there had been an SSG review and the Chair and Vice Chair meeting in July. Upcoming meetings included the Stakeholder Summit on 17 and 18 September and the new Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) board with Liz Peace.

10. SOSE UPDATE

It was noted that Donna Mounce's update had been covered by Helen Emberson.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Peter Dreghorn advised differentiation between the definitions of green energy and renewable energy.

12. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no comments.

Next Meeting date: Wednesday 20 November 2024.