



CHAPELCROSS SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUP (SSG)
WEDNESDAY 18.03.2026
ANNAN, DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

Attendees:

Attendance

Cllr Archie Dryburgh MBE Annandale East and Eskdale (Chair)
Cllr George Jamieson Annandale South (Vice Chair)
Willie McNairn 2km Resident Representative
Carol Midwood Federation of Community Councils/Canonbie and District CC
Donna Mounce SOSE
Neil Carruthers Community Councillor Annan
Cllr Sean Marshall Dumfries & Galloway Council
Danine Hamilton Scottish Government
David Stone SEPA
Cllr Stephen Thompson Councillor for Annandale North

Operators and Officers

Claire Aitken NRS
Bill Hamilton NRS
Richard Murray Site Director, Chapelcross
Georgia Irving NRS Minute Taker
Jaime Nicholson Dumfries & Galloway Council
Diane Hamilton Scottish Government
Phil Carson NRS Principle Consultant

Apologies

Tanya McCloud ONR
Neil Carruthers Royal Burgh of Annan Community Council
Max Anderson GA Consultants
Neil MacGregor SOSE
David Wallace NDA
Helen Emberson Dumfries & Galloway Council, CX Programme Lead
Josh Jamieson
Peter Dreghorn Restoring Annan's Waters
Emilie Wardhaugh Galloway Fisheries Trust
Cllr Caroline Wilson Councillor for Annandale North

1. Chair's Welcome

Chair opened meeting at 10am.

The Chair noted that this was Bill Hamilton's final meeting prior to his retirement and extended best wishes to him for the future.

The Chair also acknowledged the passing of Andy Stott and expressed sincere condolences to his family.

Apologies for absence were received from Tanya McCloud, Caroline Wilson, Helen Emberson, Neil Carruthers, Max Anderson, Neil MacGregor, David Wallace, Josh Jamieson, Peter Dreghorn and Emilie Wardhaugh.

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were proposed by Willie McNairn and seconded by Carol Midwood, and were duly approved.

Claire Aitken confirmed that a date has been arranged for the SSG site visit on Wednesday 22 April. Further details will be circulated closer to the time.

Claire Aitken advised that the new structure diagram was included in the meeting pack and is also available on the SSG website.

Claire Aitken confirmed that Richard Murray's presentation from the previous meeting has been uploaded to the SSG website.

Willie McNairn requested a copy of the "Renewable Power for Homes" document. **Action:** Claire Aitken to provide.

4. NRS Chapelcross Site Report – Richard Murray

EHSS&Q Performance

- The Total Recordable Incident (TRI) rate remains at 0, with no significant events reported during the last period. The Days Away Case Rate is also 0; the last recorded case was in January 2025.
- A heightened focus on safety continues across the site.
- Environmental and security management remain priorities, including recent changes to the security regulator. A new ONR inspector is due to commence on 1 April. Radiation dose levels continue to be effectively managed.
- An ONR inspection has been carried out against Licence Conditions (LC) 28 and 35. ONR is now expanding its scope to include conventional health and safety, in addition to nuclear safety, with a general H&S inspector involved. The focus is primarily on eight licence conditions, aligned with current site arrangements. The inspection regime has reduced from four inspections to two.
- A SEPA inspection was undertaken in relation to MILWEP stack value maintenance. Quality, environmental, and H&S qualifications were also reviewed.

Site News

- 18.6 tonnes of Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) have been retrieved.

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- CXPP retrievals are progressing well, with the target of 36 packages achieved, despite some issues with zeolite skips.
- 20 consignments of Low Level Waste (LLW) have been dispatched.
- Work on the south face Cut and Grout (C&G) has been completed.
- Potable water works have been completed.
- Design Assessment Review 4 for pond divers has been completed.

Recognition and Achievements

- At the NRS Excellence Awards:
 - Care Category Winner – Wellbeing
 - Commitment Award – CX Low Level Waste
 - Highly Commended – ILW/CXPP
- The site has successfully retrieved 95% of legacy waste, having built capability from the ground up.

Workforce and Recruitment

- Recent recruitment includes:
 - 2 x Production Technicians
 - 1 x Project Manager
 - 1 x Systems Engineer
- Update on MAVE:
 - 13 individuals identified, with 11 leaving in the current financial year and a further 2 expected to leave in the next financial year.
- Current vacancies:
 - Production Technicians
 - Electricians
 - Project Manager
 - Project Engineer
 - Work Control Scheduler
 - Operations Engineer
- Upcoming recruitment:
 - 4 x Health Physics Monitors (Level 7)
- Apprenticeships:
 - 1 x Mechanical Apprentice
 - 1 x Electrical Apprentice
 - These represent the first apprentices at Chapelcross in 30 years.
- Development initiatives:
 - Existing employees are being trained to become NVQ assessors.

Internal Promotions

- Head of High Activity Waste
- Permit Officer
- Lead Waste Engineer
- Waste Engineer

Radiological Protection Achievements

- 5 monitors successfully passed the 3-week RMP Core Competency Course.
- 4 trainee monitors passed Level 5 Monitor interviews.
- 2 trainee Assistant Health Physicists (AcCHPs) successfully passed their interviews.

Staff Wellbeing and Community Engagement

- A Christmas quiz event was held in December 2025 with good turn out rate and £36 raised for local Veterans Garden.
- Mental Health Awareness training was delivered to line managers and safety representatives, equipping them to have difficult conversations with colleagues. This training has now been completed by 95% of line managers.
- Staff participation in blood donation initiatives was encouraged and supported.

Programme Updates

CXPP Decommissioning Update

- Ongoing decommissioning activities continue to focus on process line ILW retrievals. A total of 164 drums, equating to approximately 13 tonnes of waste, have been removed from the plant. Progress updates, including photographic evidence, were provided covering the period from February 2025 to November 2025.
- Work has progressed on the removal of zeolite skips from the ponds, with ten skips removed to date. The process has been reviewed, including radiological considerations and discharge arrangements.
- A revised approach has been agreed:
 - Skips will no longer be sent directly for grouting.
 - Following removal from the plant, they will be placed into weatherproof boxes and held in a buffer store before transfer to the Interim Storage Facility.
 - Grouting will then be carried out offline.
- This updated method better supports the primary objective of draining the pond.
- Preparations for diver operations are ongoing, including plans to reduce skip size. Equipment previously used successfully at Sellafield will be utilised to support this work.

Cooling Towers

- Progress is being made on the pre-qualification of tenderers, alongside preparation of commercial documentation and engagement with the supply chain.
- Work is anticipated to commence in late summer 2027.
- The current proposed approach is to inject grout into the structures to stabilise them.

Low Level Waste and Asset Care Update

- Work on Low Level Waste (LLW) continues to progress well, with approximately 95% of legacy waste now removed. Activities are ongoing to address the remaining 5%.
- Preparations are also underway for the next phase of High Activity Waste (HAW) management.
- Significant progress has been made in Asset Care, with approximately £5.2 million of work delivered. This includes:
 - Installation of new electrical supplies to the reactors
 - Removal of ageing infrastructure to ensure assets are fit for future use

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- Much of the equipment being replaced is between 60–70 years old, including around 800 distribution boards. Following recent high winds, a number of boards were lost, and a proactive decision was taken within the contract to remove the remaining boards from the roof.
- Work has now progressed to the east face of the Cut and Grout (C&G) project, with plans to move on to Reactor 3 next.

SOC EC Initiatives

- Uptake of SOC EC initiatives has been limited.
- Potential opportunities were discussed, including improvement works to the walkways at Lochmaben Castle. These works are estimated to cost approximately £2,000 and would enhance both safety and accessibility.

Questions?

Q1: (Co-Chair) I understand some training schemes can't be in Scotland, have you tried to work with 'Skills Development Scotland'?

A1: (RM) Yes and we need to find a colleague to work with them to allow 'in classroom' learning. RM phoned Skills Development Scotland to use English provider but declined. It's frustrating but hoping to find solution.

Q2: (Co-Chair) In regard to the health physics & engineering, are these transferable skills?

A2: (RM) Yes for Engineering. HP bit more particular to our industry.

Q3: (SM) Do trainee monitor still spend time at Sellafield?

A3: (RM) No we do it all at site, AccHP's and rad team support as well as central will also come up to site.

RM added the introduction of Chapelcross Young Generation Network to site, support from RM and Lead Team to allow colleagues to develop, inspire and encourage, and hopeful for future community projects.

Q4: (SM) In relation to Intermediate Level Waste (ILW), it has previously been mentioned that waste will not be taken off site. Is this the best environmental option?

A4: (RM) This is taken into consideration as part of identifying the best overall solution; the environment is a significant part of that process.

5. NRS Corporate Update - Bill Hamilton

The Chair wished Bill Hamilton a long and happy retirement.

Bill Hamilton advised that the corporate representation of NRS and the NDA at SSG meetings is changing.

Following a review, the NDA will no longer attend SSG meetings on a regular basis. Instead, there will be two in-person meetings and two online meetings each year between the NDA and the SSG.

It was noted that the key connection between the site and the community will continue to be the Site Director, unless there are specific or significant issues requiring further involvement.

Questions and Discussion

Q1 (SM): This represents a significant reduction in NDA presence and engagement with the SSG. What is the rationale behind this decision?

A1 (BH): This change forms part of a wider SSG review. It reflects increased trust in NRS to take on a greater role in engagement and representation.

6. Other reports from SSG bodies – ONR, SEPA, Scottish Government

6a. Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) –

Claire Aitken noted that Tanya McCloud had submitted her apologies. Her report was included in the meeting pack, and any feedback will be collated by Claire Aitken and forwarded accordingly.

Questions and Discussion

Q1: It appears that ONR is now placing greater emphasis on conventional safety aspects. What is the reasoning behind this?

A1 (RM): ONR has recognised that the balance of risk has shifted from predominantly nuclear safety risks to conventional health and safety risks. Across the wider industry, there have been a number of fatalities (not within NRS, but in other organisations), which has contributed to this change in approach.

A recent task force reviewed regulatory arrangements across the business, and ONR is now focusing on how it can support faster and safer decommissioning. This includes taking a more targeted approach to site remediation and regulatory oversight. ONR is also considering where it can add the most value in supporting progress. Additionally, ONR has undertaken its own cultural review, with some findings reflected back to NRS as a business. SM noted that, from an SSG perspective, accelerating decommissioning is a key priority, and this approach from ONR is viewed positively in helping to progress work more efficiently across sites. RM agreed, noting that ONR is actively looking at how it can support and add value to this objective.

6b. SEPA Update – David Stone

A report was submitted by DS on behalf of SEPA.

SEPA attended Chapelcross during the week commencing 9 March 2026 to investigate a potential minor incident. The headline conclusion was that there was no risk of harm to individuals or to the environment.

During the visit, SEPA engaged with site staff and reviewed the management of the valve involved. It was confirmed that this was a new item of equipment, which had been

appropriately included in the maintenance schedule, although it had not yet undergone an extended operational period. The site is now considering the introduction of a more robust valve.

The issue occurred during the December outage period, when activities were subject to increased levels of monitoring, with the equipment checked daily.

An update was also provided on the variation application, which is progressing towards public consultation. The proposed variation seeks an increase in the overall site limit; however, this is not considered to be environmentally significant and is unlikely to have any material impact.

Prior to public consultation, a radiological assessment will be undertaken. SEPA will shadow the assessment conducted by NRS to ensure alignment. Consideration will also be given to public and scientific interest, including whether a transboundary assessment is required, and to opportunities for local stakeholders to view and engage with the consultation process. The proposed discharges remain only a small fraction of the overall site limits, and no issues have been raised by the public consultation team to date.

In addition to RM's update on CXPP, SEPA confirmed that an inspection of CXPP was carried out on 17 November last year. The site permit includes a bespoke condition requiring a substantial and progressive reduction in gaseous discharges associated with CXPP, particularly relating to historically higher levels of tritium. The site has made significant progress in this area. The inspection also involved the Head of RA Rescue, who expressed satisfaction with the progress made to date.

SOSE - Diane advised that the Scottish elections will take place on 7th May. As a result, a pre-election period will be in effect from 26th March until the election. During this time, essential business will continue as normal; however, any ongoing policy work will be paused. This includes the High Activity Waste (HAW) policy review. It is anticipated that a more substantive update on HAW policy will be available at the next SSG meeting. Diane also confirmed that work undertaken with the NDA on its latest business plan has now concluded. The plan was formally approved by both Scottish and UK Ministers on Monday 16th March. A link to the document will be provided to Claire Aitken for onward distribution.

7. External Meetings and Invitation

Archie advised that the SSG Chair and Vice-Chairs met with Rob Fletcher on 12th December.

A further meeting was held on 6th February to discuss the new arrangements for SSGs. Archie also attended an IT Skills session on 6th March, which focused primarily on the use of Microsoft Teams.

It was noted that regular one-to-one meetings are taking place between SSG Chairs and the NDA.

The next SSG quarterly meeting will take place in person on 10–11 June.

The Chair expressed thanks to Peter Hughes (ONR) for his support and commitment to the Chapelcross SSG over the past year, and welcomed Tanya McCloud to her new role.

8. CX Project Update/Plenary/Other Report – [Donna Mounce]

Donna Mounce advised that work is ongoing behind the scenes on the Strategic Development Plan, including negotiations with the NDA. An update, including timelines, is expected at the next SSG meeting.

George (Co-Chair) noted the complexity of the programme but highlighted the significant opportunity for development across Annan and Eastriggs. He emphasised the importance of a coordinated approach to planned activities and ongoing engagement with the UK Government, including alignment with wider initiatives.

George asked who has overall responsibility for progressing the work, given the scale of the opportunity.

Donna confirmed that a Chapelcross Programme Board is in place, comprising representatives from the Council, South of Scotland Enterprise, NDA, and NRS, all working collectively to drive the programme forward. She noted that the Chapelcross power element is being progressed separately through a commercial agreement between the NDA and CX Power.

Donna added that resources have been allocated to support the partnership, with Helen leading the development of the business case. This is expected to help secure up to £15 million of investment for the region and the Chapelcross site. The Programme Board operates under a Memorandum of Understanding, which is working effectively.

Donna concluded that, while there is still work to be done, the programme is in a positive position. She also highlighted the potential for future training and development opportunities for young people as the project progresses.

Sean Marshall asked about the AI Growth Zone.

Donna explained that the AI Growth Zone initiative was introduced by the UK Government; however, proposals were not sufficiently developed at the time for Chapelcross to be included. A bid was submitted, led by the Council, to ensure the area remained under consideration, particularly in relation to Eastriggs. Following confirmation of CX Power as the preferred developer, and with the first round awarded to Lanarkshire, further discussions with Government indicated there was still an opportunity. Work is now ongoing with a development partner to refine the bid and refocus it on Chapelcross. This work is progressing well and is expected to conclude within the next few weeks.

Q (WM): Query regarding the Green Cat hydrogen development and previously indicated job numbers.

A (Donna): A revised submission was made recently. Initial figures reported were incorrect; updated documentation confirms that job numbers remain in the region of 40–50, as originally outlined during consultation. Work is ongoing with the Council and SOSE to update reporting, and the issue is being addressed. The project is seeking funding through UK Government programmes and private investment.

Q (WM): Clarification on energy supply, noting references to non-solar sources.

A (Donna): These are commercial discussions and specific details are not available. However, a range of energy options are being considered at the site, including solar, battery storage, and hydrogen, although these remain commercially sensitive.

Q: Concern raised regarding the impact of proposed solar developments on nearby properties.

A: This is a matter for the planning process.

Q: Query regarding transport routes and potential use of local roads.

A (Donna): All planning applications include a Transport Management Plan. Infrastructure considerations, such as roads, drainage, and power, are being progressed through Site Readiness Investment funding to support future development.

Q: Will CX Power undertake noise and vibration assessments?

A (Donna): These assessments are not yet at that stage but will form part of the planning conditions in due course.

Steven noted that the Council had previously supported a Growth Zone bid focused on MOD land, with a further submission expected shortly.

Q (SM): Query regarding substation capacity at Chapelcross and future provision.

A (Donna): Through the UK Industrial Strategy, funding opportunities such as the Strategic Site Accelerator are being pursued. SOSE is leading an expression of interest in partnership with CX Power. Current projections indicate sufficient energy capacity for Phase 1; however, further grid connection, potentially via Harker, will be required for future expansion phases.

9. Any Other Business – [Chair]

The group discussed SSG membership in light of changes to NDA attendance. It was noted that some individuals, including Ian (a member of CMBB), regularly attend but are not formal SSG members. Consideration was given to whether Ian could join the SSG.

Sean advised that, under the current Constitution, members are typically required to represent a formal group or community council. Current representation includes Annan, Canonbie, and a position for Gretna Community Council, and the process for membership is clearly defined.

Bill Hamilton noted that NDA guidance, on which SSG constitutions are based, allows for the co-option of individuals with relevant expertise as full members. He suggested this could be a suitable route, recognising Ian's experience and the value it could bring to the group.

Sean added that any such appointment would need to follow the formal process, including a written request, and would be subject to committee agreement.

Claire confirmed that the SSG Constitution is currently under review. Draft amendments have been submitted to the NDA, and feedback has been received. The revised Constitution has not yet been finalised, and this may present an opportunity to review membership arrangements. Claire will circulate the updated draft following the meeting.

10. Public Forum –

Ian thanked the Chair for the suggestion regarding potential SSG membership and welcomed the progress made.

Q: Ian asked Richard Murray, given that ONR inspections are now scheduled twice per year, what alternative forums exist for site safety representatives to engage with ONR.

A (RM): Safety Representatives can contact the ONR inspector (Tanya McCloud) at any

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time if required. Internal reporting processes also remain in place. While ONR site visits are currently scheduled twice per year, open communication channels remain available. Sean Marshall reiterated his concern regarding the reduction in NDA attendance at SSG meetings, noting that no formal communication has been received to confirm this change. He highlighted that, given the NDA's previous level of engagement, further context should be provided to the wider SSG community. The Chair advised that the change is likely linked to wider UK Government departmental changes and suggested that cost considerations may be a contributing factor. Sean emphasised the need for a formal response, noting that the SSG previously received regular quarterly reports, and that communication has now reduced significantly without explanation.

Action: Claire Aitken to seek formal clarification from the NDA regarding future attendance and reporting arrangements.

Meeting close – 11:40am

Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 4 November 2026