



Annual Report

APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023



I am pleased to present Nuleaf's Annual Report for 2022/23. It offers a snapshot of some of the important work we have undertaken over the last 12 months.

This was a year of change among our partners and members. The Government launched its much-anticipated consultation on Managing Radioactive Substances and Nuclear Decommissioning, while the process of establishing a single Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) Group was largely completed.

There was significant change within our local government membership too. County and District councils across Cumbria and Somerset, including my own, ended on the 31st March as new unitary authorities were established. I'm delighted that all three of the new councils have become members of Nuleaf. We look forward to working with and supporting them and the other new authorities that joined our network last year.

After the disruption of the Covid pandemic, 2022 also marked a welcome ending of restrictions on work and travel. We held our first Annual Gathering in Somerset in June 2022. This proved very popular and will continue to be part of our future calendar.

Coupled with this, we established new support mechanisms for our members, completed a major overhaul of our branding and communications, and further enhanced our engagement with government and industry. This all leaves Nuleaf in a strong position which we will build on in future years.

Cllr. David Moore, Chair of Nuleaf

A new policy – and better practice?

After much delay, the UK and devolved administrations launched the policy consultation on **Managing Radioactive Substances and Nuclear Decommissioning** in early 2023.

This was the first major review of the nuclear policy landscape for two decades. It proposed changes that will have a significant impact on decommissioning and the remediation of sites. These include:

- A move to a risk informed approach to waste management and the potential development of Near Surface Disposal (NSD) facilities for Higher Activity Waste (HAW).
- The potential for in-situ disposal of Low-Level Waste (LLW) on nuclear licensed sites.

Nuleaf submitted a detailed response to the consultation and engaged with Government throughout the process. Our central message was that, while not opposed to these changes in principle, our members want to see the policy review establish:

- An approach that delivers the best economic, social and environmental outcomes for nuclear communities. Central to this is the establishment of a framework for community benefits across NDA operations; more action on skills and education; and effective steps to reduce environmental impacts and carbon emissions.
- A clear and fair siting process for any proposed Near Surface Disposal (NSD) Facility.
- Steps to reinvigorate local engagement processes.
- The need to recognise the impact of the expansion of new nuclear power on nuclear waste management and the Geological Disposal Facility.

The Government's response to the consultation, and their final Policy, are expected during 2023/24.

Our first Annual Gathering

Over Covid, all Nuleaf's meetings moved online, something that worked well. Now face-to-face engagement is possible again, we have moved to a new model of working. Most of our meetings have remained virtual, reducing the need for travel and enabling additional meetings on particular subjects of interest.

At the same time there was a desire among members for a return to in-person engagement. This led to Nuleaf's first **Annual Gathering**, held in Bridgwater, Somerset in June 2022.

Meeting over two days enabled more time for networking and detailed discussions with Magnox and EDF. Feedback was extremely positive, and the Gathering will become a permanent fixture to be held in different locations each year.

Local Planning Authorities are regulators of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. They have a critical role in waste management and the move towards the next planned use of sites.

Nuleaf's **Radioactive Waste Planning Group (RWPG)** demonstrated its value over 22/23. Our engagement with the NDA Town and Country Planning Group (NIGLQ-P) continued to develop, focussing on a range of critical issues for decommissioning, from Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) and Permitted Development Rights, to the need for strategic planning across all sites.

Fourth community enters GDF process

Summer 2022 saw a significant development in the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) siting process with the establishment of a Community Partnership in **Theddlethorpe**, Lincolnshire. The fourth Partnership to be established, Theddlethorpe is the first community outside Cumbria to formally engage, and the first non-nuclear community.

We were delighted that Lincolnshire County Council decided to become a full member of Nuleaf. We also established a **Local Authority GDF Group** involving members and officers from all local authorities engaged in the process. This provides a forum for discussion and the sharing of experience across all engaged councils.

How do we compare?

Nuleaf's central mission is to deliver the best outcomes for nuclear communities. But how does the situation in the UK compare with that in other nations? We commissioned **Assystem** to undertake an independent assessment of the UK context and the support provided in other countries and by comparable industries. The research generated a range of useful information that we have used to support our engagement with Government and NDA group. The report can be found here¹.

Building our international connections

International engagement has always been important to Nuleaf, helping us learn from

¹ <https://www.nuleaf.org.uk/policy-communications/reports/>



Executive Director Philip Matthews
addressing the **ICGR** conference, Helsinki

other countries and ensuring our voice is heard in international fora. Freed of the restrictions of the pandemic, 2022/23 saw our international reach grow further.

April 2022 saw Nuleaf's Director addressing the 6th **International Conference on Geological Repositories (ICGR)**, organised by the Nuclear Energy Agency of the OECD and held in Finland.

In November, we participated in a major Technical Meeting on local engagement in radioactive waste management, hosted by the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** at their headquarters in Vienna.

Our Executive Director also continued to play an active role in the European Commission's **EURAD** research programme, and as a Vice-President of **GMF Europe**, a network of local authorities with nuclear facilities.