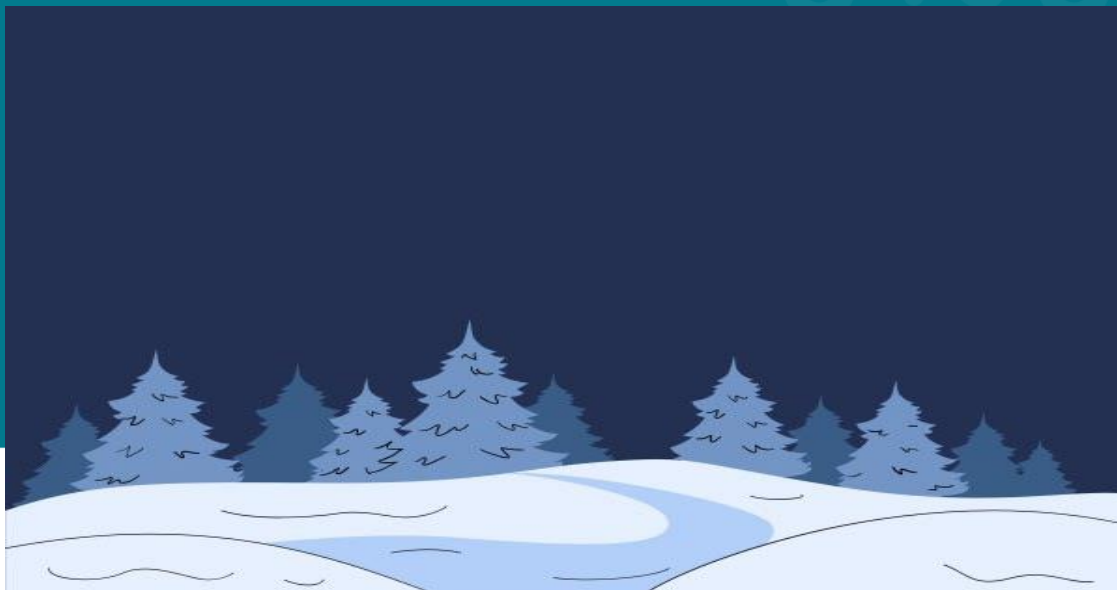


# eBulletin.



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all at Nuleaf!

## Welcome

Here is a summary of topics discussed at the recent Nuleaf Steering Group meeting, forthcoming meeting dates and other items we hope will be of interest.

## Dates for your diary

The next meeting of the **Radioactive Waste Planning Group (RWPG)** will be held, via Teams, between **10am and 12.30pm on Wednesday the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2025**. In addition to the usual papers, we will receive an update from Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS) on their work. Other speakers will be confirmed shortly.

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The next **Steering Group** will be held online on **Wednesday the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025 between 10am and 3pm**. More information on the agenda will be confirmed nearer the time.

Finally, our **Annual Gathering 2025** will take place on the **10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> June**. The event will be held in London and include a Steering Group meeting and AGM; a seminar on the UK nuclear landscape post-election; a dinner with guest speakers and a site visit to Dungeness, location of two decommissioning power stations. Please note the dates – a formal invitation will be sent out in the New Year.

For more information contact Chloe Atkinson: [Chloe.Atkinson@nuleaf.org.uk](mailto:Chloe.Atkinson@nuleaf.org.uk)

## Steering Group report

Nuleaf's end of year Steering Group meeting took place online on the 11<sup>th</sup> December. It had originally been planned to devote a considerable time to presentations and discussion of Nuleaf's consultancy research on local government engagement; and the NDA's review of Site Stakeholder Groups (SSGs). However, delays in the finalisation of the latter study led to this being postponed.

The meeting heard from Bill Hamilton of Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS) who provided a wide-ranging update. Bill explained that NRS was in the process of restructuring into two divisions – one for those that only hosted Magnox sites, and one for those that also incorporated Advanced Gas Cooled Reactor (AGR) stations. He also spoke on the work underway at Chapelcross, where a Masterplan has been developed to guide the development of green industries on the site. Considerable funding for this work has been provided by the UK and Scottish Government through the Borderlands deal.

The Steering Group was also joined by John McNamara, who has recently returned to NDA as Director of Communities and Stakeholder Engagement, following a secondment to Great British Nuclear. In discussion, Nuleaf members stressed the need for NDA support for engagement to be properly funded in order to deliver the maximum value to both the NDA and communities.

Finally, Executive Director Philip Matthews gave a presentation on the range of recent international work that Nuleaf has been involved in, including visits to the rock laboratory and canister factory in Oskarshamn, Sweden; a GMF General Assembly in Salamanca; and an International Atomic Energy Agency meeting on community engagement. Members agreed on the value of these meetings in helping understand best practice that could be replicated in the UK; and in building relationships with nuclear communities across the world.

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**Dungeness – Nuleaf members will visit as part of the 2025 Annual Gathering**

## NDA updates

The NDA has published its **Annual Report and Accounts 23/24** and its **Mission Progress Report**. Meanwhile the timeframe for consultation on the **NDA Business Plan 2025-28** has been amended due to the impact of ongoing discussions on the Spending Review. The consultation will now be launched at the end of January and run for only 6 weeks. Because of Parliamentary Easter recess and pre-election period for council elections on the 1<sup>st</sup> May, it is expected that the Plan will be formally published in early May next year.

A series of changes in the senior management at NDA Group have been announced. Sellafield Ltd. has appointed **Euan Hutton** as their permanent CEO, with Mr Hutton having undertaken the role on an interim basis since summer 2023. In another change, **Dave Wilson** is taking up the role of managing director of Dounreay, joining from AtkinsRealis. **Corhyn Parr** is departing, stepping down as CEO of Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) in March 2025. A recruitment process for her successor now underway.

The ONR has approved proposals by EDF Energy to extend the operation of Advanced Gas Cooled (AGR) reactors at Heysham, Hartlepool and Torness. Heysham 1 and Hartlepool are now set to close in 2027; with Heysham 2 and Torness operating until the end of the decade. The operator had requested this due to delays in the development of new low carbon power sources. The longer operation of the 4 plants will lead to more Spent Fuel being sent for storage at Sellafield.

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## Geological Disposal news

Canada has selected **Ignace** and the **Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nations**, in northern Ontario, as the location for its Geological Disposal Facility (GDF). This follows positive votes by both the local Ignace municipality (77% in favour) and the First Nation community, the **Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nations**. Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) President and CEO Laurie Swami hailed the decision as an 'historic moment' adding that *'This project will solve an environmental issue and supports Canada's climate change goals. And today's decision was driven by a consent-based siting process led by Canadians and Indigenous peoples. This is what making history looks like.'*

The project will now move forward to the regulatory decision-making process. The NWMO has agreed to an Indigenous-led Regulatory Assessment and Approval Process that will be developed and implemented by Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation. This will assess the potential impacts of the project against community values. The project will also undergo the regulatory decision-making processes of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and through the Government of Canada's impact assessment process.

Sweden's GDF siting process also took a major step forward on the 24<sup>th</sup> October after the national **Land and Environment Court** granted an environmental permit for the construction and operation of the repository and encapsulation plant. This decision enables preparatory work to start, although tunnelling cannot commence until the Radiation Safety Authority (SSM) provides an approved safety report. It is expected the facilities will become operational in the mid-2030s.

## Consultation update

The Environment Agency, Natural Resource Wales (NRW) and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) have launched a joint consultation on **disposal facilities for solid radioactive waste: guidance on the requirements for authorisation (GRA)**. The draft guidance documents explain what an operator must demonstrate to get an environmental permit or permits for such facility. The consultation closes on the **28<sup>th</sup> February 2025**.

Nuleaf will be drafting a response for comment and is happy to provide feedback on the draft submissions of any of our members. A parallel consultation is being undertaken in Scotland, as their GRA does not cover deep geological disposal.

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