

# Annual Report 24-25







I was delighted to be elected as Chair of Nuleaf during 2025, and look forward to working with our new Vice Chair, Cllr. Paul Thomas, the secretariat and members as we continue our work. I take over from Cllr. David Moore, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank him and the outgoing Vice Chair, Cllr. Mike Caswell, for all their work in supporting our network over the years.

I become Chair at a time when Nuleaf is going from strength to strength as an organisation.

As this Annual Report highlights, during 2024/25 we have been able to appoint a new member of staff, supporting our Scottish colleagues and providing greater capacity for Nuleaf's work. We were able to commission consultants to look at the changing landscape for engagement, and their report will be of great use in helping us to advocate for innovation across the industry.

Nuleaf has also been an important voice on socio-economics, sustainability and around land use planning. Finally, I am proud that we have a leadership role on the international stage, with our work with the IAEA and colleagues from across the planet growing year on year.

This sets us in good stead for the future. The sector in the UK is experiencing great growth and change, from the defueling and decommissioning of the Advanced Gas Cooled Reactor (AGR) fleet, to other new NDA missions and ambitious plans for new nuclear development.

Nuleaf will continue to be an important voice across the nuclear agenda, speaking up for local government and the communities they serve.

**Cllr. Joseph Ghayouba, Chair of Nuleaf**

## Building engagement across Britain

Nuleaf's support for nuclear engagement took a major step forward in February 2025, with the appointment of a Co-ordinator supporting local authority engagement in Scotland.

Nuleaf, as a Local Government Association (LGA) body, has always covered England and Wales. Scotland has a separate local authority body on nuclear matters, **SCCORS (Scottish Council Committee on Radioactive Substances)**. This has lacked dedicated secretariat support and thus has only had a limited capacity to engage.

Discussions between Scottish councils, Nuleaf and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) have sought to address this, leading to NDA funding being provided to appoint a SCCORS member of staff, hosted by Nuleaf. Louise Martin was appointed to the role, initially on a 12 month secondment from her local authority, and immediately set about re-invigorating the network. This has already had an impact, with well attended meetings held and SCCORS active in responding to consultations and engaging with the Scottish Government, SEPA (Scottish Environment Protection Agency) and other stakeholders.

Louise has also been employed to work for Nuleaf part of the time, supporting our policy and engagement work and bringing her experience as a waste planning policy officer. With the NDA working across Britain, from Dounreay in Caithness to Winfrith in Dorset, the hosting of the SCCORS secretariat opens new possibilities for local authorities across Britain to engage together where appropriate.

Funding for Louise's post has now been secured until early 2027, meaning that SCCORS can continue to grow. It ensures that the voice of Scottish councils and communities are heard in what will be a critical period for decommissioning, with the transfer of the Hunterston B AGR reactor to Nuclear

Restoration Services (NRS) for decommissioning; and an anticipated consultation on the ongoing review of Scottish Higher Activity Waste (HAW) policy.

## Members gather in north Wales

Nuleaf members came together in June 2024 for our **Annual Gathering**, held in Llandudno, Conwy.

The well attended event included a site visit to Trawsfynydd (see cover photo), an NDA 'Lead and Learn' site which is pioneering new decommissioning techniques. The event also included a seminar focussed on socio-economics and nuclear in north Wales, which heard presentations from Gwynedd Council, Menter Mon and Cwmni Egino.

With most Nuleaf meetings now held online, in-person networking is an increasingly valuable part of the Gathering. Outside the formal meeting, members were able to get together over dinner and hear from Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn, the Leader of Gwynedd Council, who reflected on the nuclear sector in the area and wider issues around the local economy and Welsh language and culture.

*Local Planning Authorities have a critical role in waste management and the move towards the next planned use of sites. During the year our **Radioactive Waste Planning Group (RWPG)** continued to work closely with the NDA, the operating companies and regulators. This focussed on a variety of topics including Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), Proportionate Regulatory Control (PRC), conventional waste management and engagement mechanisms such as Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) and Permitted Development Rights (PDR).*

## Learning best practice

The engagement landscape has transformed over recent years, with technology and new techniques being employed to connect more effectively with all sectors of the community.

Nuleaf believes that the UK nuclear sector should strive to be 'best on class' when it comes to engagement, looking to innovate and learn from others. We were therefore pleased to receive NDA support to help fund a consultancy review of best practice, both in comparable sectors in the UK and from overseas.

Independent consultants with expertise in nuclear and local government were commissioned to undertake the study. Their research identified best practice from countries including Canada, the Netherlands, Sweden and Finland; and they also sought the views of Nuleaf members on how the local, regional and national engagement landscape could be enhanced. Their report has been published and will be used to underpin a dialogue on future approaches.

## New nuclear technologies

While Nuleaf's focus is on decommissioning and waste management, developments in new nuclear are of great interest to our members and must be delivered with decommissioning and waste management in mind.

Over the year the UK Government launched a range of consultations on the nuclear roadmap, plans for siting of new nuclear stations and the National Policy Statement (EN-7); while Great British Energy – Nuclear continued its engagement with the communities around the existing nuclear sites at Wylfa and Oldbury-on-Severn. Across this fast moving agenda, Nuleaf continued to act as a voice for our members and to advocate a fully joined up approach.



Nuleaf's Executive Director and other members of the Global Partnership welcome Argentina and S. Korea.

## A strong voice on the international scene

Nuleaf has a strong voice on the international stage, and this continued to grow over 24/25 through close work with our international partners.

Nuleaf is represented on the Board of the **Group of Municipalities with Nuclear Facilities (GMF) Europe**, engaging with a growing network of local governments across the continent; and has been active in working with our European, American and Canadian colleagues to found the **Global Partnership of Nuclear Communities**.

This initiative has received strong backing from the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**, which recognises the critical role that local authorities and communities play in nuclear projects across the fuel cycle.

At an IAEA meeting in Vienna in October 2024, Nuleaf's Executive Director joined other figures from the Global Partnership as we welcomed Argentina and South Korea to the network, creating links that help support all in their domestic work.