



FINAL

Present:

Darren Beriro (Chair)
Liz Hart (Deputy Chair)
Alex Lee (Outgoing Chair)
Nicola Harries (Secretariat)
Rob Foers & Charlotte Airey

Madeleine Berg
Graeme Duggan

Angela Haslam
Matt Llewellyn & Trystan James
Caroline Thornton
Mark Williams
Seamus Lefroy Brooks
Joanna Wragg
Tom Henman
Kate Baker
Joanne Kwan
Richard Boyle
Stella Keenan

Jane Thrasher
Ruth Easterbrook
Sally Shaw
Emma Tattersdill
David Crook
Richard Hossack
Geraint Williams

Steve Edgar
Steve Millar
Tim Elliott
Robert Tyler

HKA
CL:AIRE
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)
Scottish Government
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
Environment Agency (EA)
Natural Resources Wales (NRW)
Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
Homes England (HE)
Chair of NQMS Steering Group
British Geological Survey (BGS)
Specialist in Land Condition (SiLC)
Society of Brownfield Risk Assessment (SoBRA)
CIRIA
Institution of Environmental Science
Yorkshire and Lincolnshire Pollution Advisory Group (YALPAG)
Environmental Industries Commission (EIC)
Geological Society
National Contaminated Land Officers Group (NCLOG)
UK Environmental Law Association (UKELA)
Local Government Association (LGA)
Office of Environmental Protection (OEP)
Association of Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Specialists (AGS)
The Society of Remediation Practitioners (REMSOC)
National House Building Council (NHBC)
Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)
West & East London Land Contamination Officers' Group (WELLCOG)

Invited:

Helen Gill, Jonathan Allen & Matthew Thompson

Browne Jacobson

Apologies:

Chris Taylor

Soil and Groundwater Technology Association (SAGTA)

Andrew Williams
Edward Lewis

Welsh Government (WG)
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)

Hallan Sambrook

Staffordshire Contaminated Land Officer Group

Agenda

1. Administrative:
 - a. Welcome and Apologies
 - b. Introductions of represented organisations
 - c. Actions from last meeting
 - d. Membership

2. General Knowledge Share
 - a. Government and Regulatory Update
 - b. Opportunity for clarification on the industry updates as received in advance
 - c. Hot or emerging topics open session
 - d. NQMS Update
 - e. Standards

4. Specific Knowledge Share
 - a. Presentation: Jonathan Allen – Partner and Helen Gill – Senior Associate of Browne Jacobson “Achieving Biodiversity Net Gain on Brownfields: Interactions with Land Use and Environmental Policies”
 - b. Question and Answers

5. Discussion: National Brownfield Forum Task and Finish Group to map brownfield development policies and regulatory aspects

6. AOB
 - a. Geoscience Alliance

7. Date of next meeting

Meeting Notes

1. Administrative

a) Welcome & Apologies

Darren Beriro (DB) welcomed everyone to the National Brownfield Forum (NBF) and apologies were given.

b) Introductions of represented organisations

DB introduced Robert Tyler (RT) attending on behalf of WELLCOG. RT provided a short introduction about WELLCOG. He confirmed that WELLCOG currently have between 10-20 London Boroughs represented at their meetings and they are hoping to grow this number with all 33 London Boroughs welcome.

c) Actions from previous meetings

DB reviewed all actions. All were completed or have been added as agenda items.

d) Membership

DB encouraged all to promote the NBF and to think if there are any groups that should be invited.

It was suggested that the following groups could be approached to ascertain their potential interest to participate in the NBF.

- Scottish Land Commission
- Green Action Trust
- Environmental Standards Scotland

2. General Knowledge Share

a) Government and Regulatory Update

DB acknowledged that due to it being pre-election period, government departments are limited in the updates that they are able to provide.

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)

Rob Foers (RF) and Charlotte Airey (CA) provided an update on behalf of DLUHC.

- At the last Forum in April, DLUHC provided details on the recent consultation on proposed changes to brownfield planning policy. In common with other areas of emerging planning reform, following the announcement of the general election and dissolution of parliament, further work on this was paused. It will be for the new government to provide an update on the brownfield proposals, and other planning reforms, in due course.
- Dependent on the outcome of the election, DLUHC are anticipating announcements on future planning reforms will be made in the very near future.
- RF confirmed that the best way stakeholders can get involved in providing evidence etc for future select committee inquiries was to register interest to receive information on their website: ([Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee - Summary - Committees - UK Parliament](#)) . When new inquiries go live, and email alerts are sent out, interested parties are notified. The best way to request email updates, is to send details to their email address luhccom@parliament.uk. For wider updates from Government there is also a general mailing list which includes details of future government wide committee activity. The mailing list can be found here - [How can I get involved with select committees? - UK Parliament](#). It's possible this process/email addresses could change under a new Government.

Alex Lee (AL) also made members aware of the magazine "The House" which is a Westminster publication and wondered whether there would be an opportunity to raise the profile of the National Brownfield Forum within it. Nicola Harries (NH) will make enquiries.

ACTION: NH to enquire with "The House" magazine if a short article about the NBF could be written.

Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

Graeme Duggan (GD) was unable to provide a verbal update on DEFRA activities because of the pre-election period restrictions.

Environment Agency

Angela Haslam (AH) provided an update on behalf of the Environment Agency. She confirmed that a lot of the different projects were still continuing.

Publishing of Guidance

Environment Agency identified that they provided seed funding to CL:AIRE to work on and publish guidance on Monitored Natural Attenuation and Natural Source Zone Depletion. Both documents have now been published and are downloadable from CL:AIRE's Library.

In addition the Environment Agency provided seed funding to CL:AIRE to publish Interim C4SL for PFAS. This report is also now published on the C4SL webpage.

AH confirmed that a chief scientist review group has been set up to discuss PFAS remediation. The decide the right approach

Land Condition Risk Management (LCRM)

Colleagues are working on updating sections of LCRM with respect to the impacts of climate change. In addition they are working with SEPA to move forward and get adoption of LCRM in Scotland. SEPA and the Scottish Government are working with the Environment Agency to identify parts that do not follow the same process in Scotland and so further clarification will need to be provided.

Industry Profiles

The Environment Agency is working internally to scope up and find funding for Phase B of the project following CL:AIRE reporting and delivering on Phase A.

PFAS

All work packages are progressing as planned. This is the last year of funding to complete the work packages, so the Environment Agency will review the results and look to secure further funding to continue the research work. AH offered to present on a “Lines of Evidence – decision/evaluation framework” piece of work, where different remediation technologies that are currently treating PFAS can be compared. This was outside of the main PFAS package of work. This has recently been reported to the Environment Agency. they have commissioned.

ACTION: AH to provide a short presentation on the PFAS decision/evaluation framework for PFAS.

AH confirmed that a chief scientist review group has been set up to discuss PFAS remediation. It may be decided that the Permeable Reactive Barrier (PRB) guidance should be updated as part of the review to assist regulators make decisions, because they have seen recent development of injections as PRB to treat PFAS.

Refresh of Piling guidance

The draft guidance is currently with CL:AIRE’s Technology and Research Group for review. The document will then need to go through editorial review to prepare it for publishing. It is hoped to be published in the Autumn (subject to Environment Agency sign off).

Definition of Waste: Development Industry Code of Practice

AH confirmed that Karen Andrews (DOWCOP lead) has moved roles so there will be a slight pause from the Environment Agency. Mike Smith is no the single point of contact.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) & Welsh Government

Matt Llewellyn (ML) provided an update on behalf of NRW and Welsh Government.

- At the last meeting ML mentioned that Westminster Welsh Affairs committee were due to launch an investigation to look at impact of metal mine pollution on human health, what information is available to the public, and whether existing regulations and standards are fit for purpose. The committee has now met in May to discuss the issue and took evidence from NRW, the coal authority and Nottingham University. Following the meeting the chair has written to Welsh Government raising a number of concerns and making a number of recommendations. Some of the recommendations stray into the area of broader contaminated land regulation... things like maintaining an annual database of contaminated land (or SoCL) and also amending the remit of NRW under Part 2A to deal with all metal mine sites (rather than LA lead). As a result, this may be of interest to the group. ML will update the NBF with any response and whether any are considered to be implemented by Welsh Government. Further information is available here:

[Committee Chair urges action on potential metal mine pollution “scandal” - Committees - UK Parliament](#)

- Also mentioned at last meeting that over the summer there was due to be a Welsh Government consultation on amending the Environmental Permitting Regulations to make the process of creating and changing exemptions easier. This hasn’t progressed and has been on hold until after the general election.
- In June 2023 meeting, ML mentioned that the Interim Environmental Protection Assessor for Wales (IEPAW... equivalent of Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) in England) had received a request regarding PCB contamination in Wales and whether the existing legal framework is fit for purpose. Requests are not always carried forward but on this issue the assessor has now decided to carry out a full report to Welsh Government Ministers. Whilst NRW don’t know the full scope of everything that the report will look at, it does seem that the scope has been broadened from just PCB contamination to whether the contaminated land regime as a whole (in particular Part

2A) is still effective. Additionally, it will also look at whether the regime aligns with the Welsh 'Wellbeing of future generations act' and sufficiently considers extreme weather events and climate change going forward.

NRW are due to meet with IEPAW later in the summer to discuss and give evidence. As the scope is broad enough to consider the effectiveness of Part 2A as a whole, it therefore may be of interest to the group so ML will pass on any updates and findings.

- On PFAS/emerging contaminants, ML mentioned in April 2024 meeting that NRW has seen an increase in proposals to use stabilisation/solidification for impacted soils in the past year or so. ML confirmed that NRW colleagues are also starting to see proposals for PRBs for PFAS contaminated groundwater. It's a remediation technique that's definitely been rare for many years but NRW is now conscious that it may become more common and applicable due to PFAS. The Environment Agency PRB guidance is quite old now and doesn't give much specific attention to PFAS. Therefore NRW would be willing to work with the Environment Agency on this potential gap, and there may be potential for NRW to contribute financially to a review and update of the guidance.
- In terms of planning and NRW responses to applications, it has put together an informative to tie in with the new(ish) requirements of LCRM to consider EWEs/climate change in land contamination assessments. It is an informative and therefore not statutory (similar to the 'strongly advise' wording in LCRM itself) but direction of travel may lead that way via planning policy change in future. Therefore NRW felt it important to highlight and emphasise this aspect of LCRM among the industry.
- BBC buried podcast released last week.
 - Long form series exploring the history of PCB disposal at sites across the UK.
 - NRW received quite a lot of information requests from producers in the build up to this podcast as did the Environment Agency.

Scottish Government (SG) and Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)

Madeleine Berg (MB) provided an update on behalf of SG and SEPA. She confirmed:

- Contaminated Land Advisory Group (CLAG) meeting was held on 11 June where ongoing work on LCRM was discussed, interactions between building standards, planning and Contaminated Land Officers (CLOs) in local authorities and considered future options for discussion. Agreed to create a new working group to explore building standards workstream from the Autumn.
- LCRM working group – working to develop guidance on application of LCRM in Scotland. Meeting monthly since early 2024. Aiming to have a completed draft of in-text changes and accompanying statement ready in coming weeks to share more widely for feedback.
- Groundwater directions are still delayed, however they are being progressed with an aim to lay in the coming months. The SG water environment policy team is leading, liaising with SEPA's water and Contaminated Land teams. There will be a lead-in period before implementation and training sessions to introduce the new standards, expectation this will initially be for local authorities and then for other stakeholders.
- SG Environmental Quality and Resilience (EQR) are progressing an amendment to the Contaminated Land (Scotland) regulations (2005) changing the criteria under which a site designated as contaminated land is identified as a 'special site'. This was a commitment following a groundwater protection consultation in 2020/21. The aim is to remove criteria pertaining to specific geological groundwater aquifers and change this to any site where contamination is or is likely to directly impact the status of the water environment. This is not expected to change the overall number of special sites and therefore regulatory resource requirements. The aim is to allow SEPA to focus their expertise on the most important sites to protect the water environment in Scotland. Setting out more detail in an information note to share with stakeholders.
- Building Standards Technical Unit released their report on [CO2 mine gas – risk assessment best practice](#) earlier this year. Authors have been taking part in training events for both building standards and environmental health / contaminated land local authority staff. Recommendations from this report will be used in our building standards working group to develop broader best practice guidance.

There was discussion whether Environmental Standards Scotland should be invited to join the NBF as they have regulatory powers like Office of Environment Protection in England. AL offered to approach.

ACTION: AL to approach Environmental Standards Scotland to see if there is interest in joining the NBF.

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)

No update was available from DAERA and NIEA.

Office of Environmental Protection (OEP)

Darren Watson provided a written update on behalf of the OEP.

- OEP continues to develop its next England Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) progress report due for publication in January 2025. OEP are, amongst other issues focusing on thriving plants and wildlife, nature friendly farming and its recommendations for the new government across all 10 goals of the EIP. OEP will also be bringing its thoughts on sustainable soil management, circular economy and waste as part of the waste and resources chapters.
- In Northern Ireland, OEP will soon publish its pressures and drivers report which seeks to assess the primary environmental issues in advance of the Northern Ireland EIP being published.
- In May, OEP published its assessment of [Governments implementation of River Basin Management Plans](#). OEP found 'deeply concerning' failures to properly implement regulations designed to protect rivers, lakes and coastal waters in England mean key targets for improvement will be missed'.
- OEP continue to work on several investigations, including the classification and adaptation of Special Protected Areas in England and Northern Ireland and the regulation of combined sewer overflows in England. A link to its investigations page is [here](#) and latest external complaints report [here](#) if the forum would like further information.
- The OEP intervened in the Finch vs Surrey County Council case before the Supreme Court which examined the application of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process to assessing the 'downstream' greenhouse gas emissions from new oil development. OEP sought legal clarity and to make submissions on the interpretation of the law in this area and OEP did not take sides on the particular facts of this case. OEP noted that the judges state, in their majority judgment, that they "found particularly helpful [the] submissions made by the Office for Environmental Protection". OEP's full statement and written submissions can be found on the [OEP website](#).

Homes England (HE)

Mark Williams confirmed that there wasn't anything to update the group on at present.

National Contaminated Land Officers Group (NCLOG)

NCLOG held their AGM in May, with a couple of role changes, saying farewell to a long-standing committee member and welcoming a new member to the steering committee. Following this we had an afternoon of presentations. Kirsty Darby provided an update on how the Environment Agency is regulating and compiling evidence of PFAS in ground water. This was followed by the NCLOG launch of the [Cover Systems Guidance for regulators](#). Then NCLOG had Richard Hossack and Darren Watson to introduce the Office for Environmental Protection and completed the afternoon with Steve Wilson, providing much insight into piling and ground improvements in contaminated ground.

On the 12th June NCLOG held the second of its climate change webinars which considered incorporating climate change and climate resilience into development, beginning with a presentation on the SoBRA award winning guidance on Controlled Waters Risk Assessment and Climate Change (Helen McMillan, RSK Geosciences and Roisin Lindsay, WSP). This was followed by a presentation on the role of healthy soils in climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience by Bruce Lascelles (Arcadis Consulting (UK) Ltd) which caused much debate on the CLO's role in this aspect. Hannah Fraser (H Fraser Consulting Ltd) concluded the session with an engaging presentation on soils, groundwater recharge and climate resilience.

NCLOG have two events coming up in September. Firstly, they will be at the CLR Expo on the 12th September for a presentation, panel discussion and of course networking. The following week, Jonathan Atkinson (CL:AIRE) will be providing a training session to NCLOG members on DoW:CoP and materials management plans. So overall, a fairly busy time for NCLOG!

Yorkshire and Lincolnshire Pollution Advisory Group (YALPAG)

Stella Keenan confirmed that YALPAG has not met since the last NBF meeting. She will provide an update of their activities at the next NBF meeting.

b. Industry Update

CL:AIRE update

Training and events

The following training courses are currently being run:

- Definition of Waste Code of Practice (DoW CoP) - classroom
- Non-Licensed Work including NNLW - for Land Professionals - classroom
- Asbestos in Soil and Construction & Demolition Materials CAR-SOIL™ - classroom
- Verification of Gas Protection Systems - classroom
- Introduction to Controlled Waters Detailed Quantitative Risk Assessment – classroom
- Introduction to Human Health Quantitative Risk Assessment – classroom
- Practical Aspects of Ground Gas, Vapour and Water Monitoring & Sampling – classroom new
- Ground Gas Risk Assessment - More Than Calculating a GSV – classroom
- Procurement of Ground Gas Services - Avoiding the Pitfalls – classroom
- Statistics for Comparing Soil Contamination Data to a Critical Concentration - virtual
- Good Practice for Risk Assessment for Coal Mine Gas Emissions – virtual
- Soil and Groundwater Risk Assessment – eLearning
- Sustainable Remediation – eLearning
- Introduction to Brownfield Site Investigation – eLearning
- Asbestos Awareness for Land Professionals – Full & Refresher – eLearning

CL:AIRE's involvement in forthcoming Conferences and Events are as follows:

- Soils, Materials Recovery and Waste in Construction - SSE Workshop 19 and Mini-WASCON, 14 June 2024 (University of Greenwich, Chatham Maritime)

CL:AIRE is a partner organisation for this event and Jonathan Atkinson is giving a keynote talk.

- Contamination & Geotech Expo 11-12 September 2024 (Birmingham, UK)

CL:AIRE is a partner organisation for this annual event.

- RemTech Europe, 16-20 September 2024 (Ferrara, Italy)

CL:AIRE is represented on the Scientific Committee by Nicola Harries, and will contribute to several scientific sessions. In addition she will be helping chair Sustainathon 2024.

A Chairman's dinner for Principal Members took place on 27 June and a 25th anniversary celebration event is planned for 21 November 2024 for all members.

Projects/initiatives/publications (listed alphabetically)

Aggregates from Inert Wastes Quality Protocol

The Environment Agency held its first task and finish group meeting on 24 January 2024 to discuss the revision of the quality protocol. The task and finish group comprises three partners - CL:AIRE, Network Rail and UROC (United Resource Operators Consortium). The first task for the group's consideration was the current waste inputs/descriptions and how these could be revised and testing requirements that should be implemented.

Category Four Screening Levels Project

The naphthalene and interim PFAS C4SL reports were published in April and May respectively. The latest report on mercury is with the TRG for review.

DoW CoP

CL:AIRE has established an internal Sustainable Soils Task Group, which recently met to discuss an updated version of the code of practice. The Environment Agency continues its work rewriting the DoW CoP but no draft has been submitted to CL:AIRE for review as of yet.

Both the International and Insight schemes have been launched and the first projects are now progressing through both services.

EiCLaR (enhanced in situ bioremediation)

The EC-funded EiCLaR project ends in December 2024 and there are a number of deliverables that CL:AIRE is currently working on, including podcasts, education pack, animation and a series of bulletins.

Gas Protection Verification Accreditation Scheme (GPVS)

There were ten applicants (6 Specialist Grade and 4 Technician Grade) within this accreditation application window with the interviews occurring from early April through to end June. Currently 3 SGPVs and 2 TGPVs have been awarded. Three applicants were unsuccessful, one is on hold and one interview remains. The second application window opens in July 2024.

ICEC - MCM

CL:AIRE continues to support the Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Centre for Mineral-based Construction Materials (ICEC-MCM), led by University College London.

Industry Profiles

Phase 1 of the project to update the old DoE industry profiles is complete.

Landfill Remediation

Unfortunately no progress has been made on this.

Legacy Wastes in the Coastal Zone

This research project, led by Newcastle University, ends in mid-2024 and CL:AIRE will produce a research bulletin to summarise the key messages of the research.

Monitored Natural Attenuation (MNA) Guidance

The MNA guidance was published in April and has been downloaded >1200 times.

National Brownfield Forum (NBF)

In May, CL:AIRE published a factual report of the 2023 NBF survey.

National Quality Mark Scheme (NQMS)

CL:AIRE is currently working with the Environment Agency and SiLC to weave the requirement of using a NQMS Suitably Qualified Person for reviewing and preparing reports for the updated new environmental permitting guidance on GOV.UK. Unfortunately, due to resourcing issues within the Environment Agency this work has currently been put on hold. Currently there are 137 SQPs on the register and 302 declarations purchased.

Natural Source Zone Depletion (NSZD) Guidance

The NSZD guidance was published in April and has been downloaded >850 times.

PFAS

CL:AIRE continues to work on two PFAS bulletins, one on addressing implications on the management of excavated soils and another on methods to detect and quantify PFAS. In addition there are a number of potential demonstration projects also in the pipeline.

Piling Guidance

The Piling and Penetrative Ground Improvement Methods on Land Affected by Contamination guidance is being prepared ready for the TRG to review.

Sustainable Remediation

The SuRF-UK steering group's main 2024 work activity is to look at updating and republishing the SuRF-UK framework document as it was published in 2010 and was instrumental in how globally sustainable remediation has been approached. In addition, SuRF-UK is working on updating its web pages to help visitors navigate all the different resources available.

UK Environmental Law Association (UKELA)

- **Free student membership!**

UKELA offers a year's free membership for students of environmental law and has now extended this to environmental sciences. If you know of students studying these subjects, please advise them to email info@ukela.org to get a promotional code.

- **UKELA Annual Conference, Manchester: “Environmental Law within a Shifting Political Landscape”. 11-12 June online; 14-15 June hybrid.**

UKELA's annual conference took place from 11th to 15th June 2024. Against a backdrop of political change, this year's conference offered a unique opportunity to engage in discussion, debate and collaboration under the conference theme 'Environmental law in a shifting political landscape'. From artificial intelligence to the green energy transition, the conference explored the myriad roles that environmental law can play in charting a more sustainable future.

Dates for your diary:

- UKELA East Region: Visit to Wendling Beck, a 2000-acre nature recovery project in Norfolk. 24th July 2024 10am to 4pm (in person).
- UKELA Scottish Conference is 26th September 2024 9am to 1pm (online).
- Introduction to Wildlife Law course: this annual course hosted by the Nature Conservation Working Party, will be held at the Nottingham Offices of Browne Jacobson solicitors from the 6 - 8 November (in person, Nottingham).

Events are open to members and non-members. You can find more details and sign up on UKELA's website.

Recent consultation responses, copies of which are now available on UKELA's website:

- Response to the Welsh Government Consultation - Securing a Sustainable Future (Wales Working Party - 30/04/2024)
- Response to the consultation paper published by the Scottish Government: Delivering Net Zero for Scotland's Buildings: Proposals for a Heat in Buildings Bill (Scottish Working Party - 08/03/2024)
- Response to the Defra Consultation On Reforming the Producer Responsibility System for Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment WEEE (Waste Working Party - 07/03/2024)
- Response to the Defra Habitats Regulations Assessments survey (Nature Conservation Working Party - 01/03/2024)
- Response to the Proposed Ecocide (Prevention) (Scotland) Bill (Scottish Working Party in collaboration the Nature Conservation Working Party - 09/02/2024)
- Response to the European Scrutiny Committee inquiry on progress and mechanics of reform of Retained EU Law (05/02/2024)
- Response to the call for evidence by the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) on Good Environmental Status (GES) for UK marine waters (Marine Working Party with support from the Nature Conservation Working Party - 31/01/2024)

Specialist in Land Condition

Since April 2024 the SiLC Professional and Technical Panel (PTP) has been led by Louise Beale as Chair with Lucy Bethell as Deputy Chair.

The PTP includes organisational and technical representatives from the constituent professional bodies and AGS, as well as a small number of co-opted members. We have several new representatives of professional bodies on the PTP, including new representatives from CIEH.

The last SiLC PTP meeting was held virtually on 11/06/24 and the next meeting is due on 17/09/24.

There are currently 201 SiLCs (including 7 who passed in the most recent exam round) and 147 SQPs.

We are continuing to offer free conversion to SQP for existing SiLCs.

Other current areas of SiLC activity include:

- The SiLC PTP is undertaking a review of the SiLC application and assessment process seeking to update and streamline the process with the aim of increasing the size of the SiLC register whilst maintaining SiLC's high professional standards and competence.
- SiLC is planning to review and update the National Brownfield Skills Framework over the coming year (but not the accompanying Excel tool as our 2023 survey suggested that this is not widely used). This will include its expansion to cover relevant technical competencies being reviewed by the recently established SiLC Climate & Sustainability sub-group.
- SiLC has provided an article to AGS for their magazine on local authority views on common issues associated with land contamination reports. A response article proposing ideas for how to improve standards of technical reports is in preparation by the PTP.

Following the successful SiLC/ CIRIA Soil CoP Stakeholder workshop on 'Future regulation of excavated soils', held on 1/02/24, SiLC is currently finalising three papers which set the scene around material reuse issues, present the findings of the workshop and present ideas for improvements. These are published on SiLCs website and downloadable at the following links:

https://www.silc.org.uk/content/uploads/2024/07/SILC_CIRIA-CoP_Reuse-workshop_1_setting_the_scene_Rev00.pdf

https://www.silc.org.uk/content/uploads/2024/07/SILC_CIRIA-CoP_Reuse-workshop_2_workshop_findings_Rev00.pdf

Finally, SiLC held a webinar on 'Maximising Natural Capital Benefits for Brownfield and Sustainable Development' on 20 June 2024. The recording of the event can be accessed [here](#).

The webinar included highly informative presentations from Martina Girvan (Arcadis) on maximising natural capital on brownfield development sites; David Stewart (Scottish Land Commission) on reuse of vacant & derelict land in Scotland; Darren Beriro (BGS) and Yolande Macklin (Jacobs) on work for the EA to develop a Remediation and Sustainable Growth Tool; and Tim Graham (RSK Wilding) on applying biodiversity and environmental net gain to brownfield sites. The talks featured some excellent case studies for brownfield sites. As one of the speakers put it "we need to frame how we look at brownfield sites to maximise the benefits... this is a call to action".

The Institution of Environmental Sciences

Recent activities for the Land Condition Community include:

- The Land Condition Community held their last meeting on the 3rd May. Key areas of discussion included PFAs, historic landfills and tyres.
- The Land Condition Early Careers Network held a speed networking event on the 5th June and currently have a survey open to collect views from land condition professionals of all seniority on the resources and topics that are needed for ECNs in order to inform future activities. [You can complete this here](#).
- The Land Condition Community and Institute of Air Quality Management are drafting joint guidance on air quality monitoring on brownfield developments.
- The IES held its inaugural Dialogue Between Disciplines Conference on the 20th May which brought the IES Communities together to discuss how interdisciplinary working could be supported.

- In the run-up to the General Election the IES has held a discussion event aimed at determining the policy priorities for land for the Government in its first 100 days.

Society of Brownfield Risk Assessment (SoBRA)

Conferences

No summer conference is planned for 2024. The RSC Toxicology Group / SoBRA joint Winter Conference (and SoBRA AGM) is scheduled for Tuesday 10 December 2024 at Burlington House, London, and online. A Call for Abstracts is currently live (to 12 July). There will be an Early Careers poster competition again.

Sub-groups

The active sub-groups are:

NAPL

Ground Gases (with a radon working group)

Controlled waters and climate change

Early Careers

The Executive Committee are currently progressing a review of previous sub-group outputs (GWvap) with a view to identifying any updates that are needed since the publication of the C4SLs, and a review of the Practical Tips documents published in 2018/2019 to update them to current legislation / guidance.

Publications

None since previous update.

Details of all recent publications are available at [SoBRA Reports](#).

Accreditation scheme

The first 2024 window was open during February. There were 6 applicants for either RSoBRA or ASoBRA. Some interviews are currently ongoing and therefore the current numbers of accredited members will not be fully updated until all interviews are completed. Currently there are 110 accredited members, of which 53 are ASoBRA for one or more disciplines.

Other activities/events

The early careers sub-group are organising another series of freely available webinars for 2024, but no dates have yet been set. Access to and details of all the previous webinar recordings can be found here [Early Careers Webinars – SoBRA](#). A recently call to SoBRA member for more participants has resulted in an expanded membership of the group.

British Geological Survey

[BGS has released significant updates to its online tool for validating geotechnical data held as AGS files](#). The update includes improvements to the tool's user interface and the ability to convert AGS data into MS Excel files.

[Ordnance Survey and BGS have teamed up to add a range of geological data products to the OS Data Hub, making it easier for users to access and use geospatial data](#). Nine of BGS's primary datasets will now be included as open data in the Ordnance Survey (OS) Data Hub. This development will enable customers to access and combine OS and BGS data on a single platform.

[BGS has developed the first national-scale groundwater model that provides a unique tool for simulating groundwater resources at a national scale](#).

[BGS's National Geoscience Data Centre has released over 8000 technical reports, produced between 1950 and 2000, that cover the full spectrum of BGS activities and subjects](#).

BGS has developed a groundwater flooding forecasting system for nine high-risk flood areas of the Chiltern Hills and Berkshire Downs as part of a Defra-funded project led by Buckinghamshire Council. Forecasts will feed into an online and mobile groundwater flood alert application

CIRIA

Soil

CIRIA Soil conference in Manchester on 10 July 2024. This event will include a green roof site visit and presentations will include Sustainable Soils - Opportunities through Development from a client and a consultant's point of view, Soil and communities of interest, nature and landscape, a Liverpool journey, the right soil for the right SUDS and why we are still developing good practice! Here is the link to the programme:

https://www.ciria.org/CIRIA/Navigation/Events/Event_Display.aspx?EventKey=E24301

CIRIA held a joint event with SiLC in February 2024. We are preparing a series of paper which will be posted on CIRIA's soil portal www.ciria.org/SOILCOP/

Climate change

CIRIA just started the climate change risk and land development projects and is looking for case studies and more people to get involved.

Joanne Kwan will speak at the Contamination and Land Remediation Expo September 2024 about this project.

PFAS

The PFAS guidance report will be out in a couple of months and the PFAS Forum is developing the first UK web portal that will sign-post relevant research, projects and documents for UK projects – let CIRIA know if you can help.

CIRIA will also deliver a virtual PFAS conference on 12 November 2024.

New work

CIRIA will also start two new projects soon – one on odour management and another on developing former landfill sites - let CIRIA know if you want to be involved.

Association of Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Specialists (AGS)

Recent successes of the Contaminated Land Working Group (CLWG)

- A hybrid meeting was held on 16 April with 29 members in attendance.
- A presentation was provided by Darren Watson on the role, function and structure of the OEP for the CLWG.
- An article was published in the March issue of the AGS Magazine on Revision of BS 10175.
- An article was published in the May issue of the AGS Magazine on NHBC's new Performance Standard for Building on Engineered Fill.
- Safety guidance has been published on Asbestos in Soils; Classification of Potentially Contaminated Sites for Intrusive Investigation Activities and Competence.
- The AGS have provided guidance for members on copyright for anyone writing articles, guidance or delivering presentations.
- An Early Careers Webinar was held in June on Drilling Techniques and In-Situ Testing.

The main topics / projects the Working Group are currently working on:

- The CLWG received updates from the NHBC, SiLC, SAGTA, SoBRA, Environment Agency and the OEP.
- A mind map of standards relating to site investigation is being finalised along with article on forecourt drilling.
- Volunteers from the CLWG plan to assist the Data Management Group in reviewing ERES codes.
- An article is being drafted on gas monitoring data and the AGS format.
- Standards update provided relating to BS 10175, BS 8576 and BS 10177.
- An article on new SuRF UK guidance to be drafted.
- An article on turbidity in piling to be drafted.
- An article on historic lab methods vs current methods to be drafted (focus on asbestos risk assessment).

The topics / projects the Working Group will be looking at in the future:

- An article on the Environment Act.

- After the publication of the CIRIA PFAS guidance, two of the authors plan to write a summary for the magazine.
- Simon Firth is delivering a presentation on the PFAS C4SLs for our next CLWG meeting in June.
- The AGS have external presentations planned on the following topics:
 - Early Careers Webinar - Drilling Techniques and In Situ Testing (5 June)
 - How Can We Achieve an Equitable, Diverse, and Inclusive Industry? (25 September)
 - We need to Talk about Groundwater (6 November).

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors

The economic outlook for the property and construction industries is as ever relevant to the brownfield development sector, and RICS tracks this closely. In the latest update Economy and Property Market Update in May RICS economists comment that interest rates cuts are likely to start over the coming months as the inflation trend continues to moderate. This should provide encouragement both for the construction industry and property markets. RICS survey feedback regarding forward-looking indicators of workloads over the next twelve months are already suggesting a broad-based improvement. Similarly, a more positive view of the residential market is visible at this time horizon, even if new buyer enquiries have recently stalled as mortgage rates backed up. The picture for commercial real estate appears a little flatter but sector trends remain particularly divergent.

Also, RICS has recently published the 2nd Edition of its [Whole life carbon assessment \(WLCA\) for the built environment \(rics.org\)](#).

Environmental Industries Commission

EIC continues to develop strategy under new leadership. Recent focus has been around the election, active engagement with all political parties including evidence submissions, with the aim of making sure that our industry's priorities and needs are on the agenda and policy briefings / plans for action are in front of the new government. The EIC Plan for the Next Government (Manifesto) can be found here: [ace-eic-manifesto-2024.pdf \(acenet.co.uk\)](#). EIC will also be writing to new Secretaries of State including DEFRA and DLUHC to congratulate them when appointed and to invite them to planned events including a proposed EIC seminar (DEFRA) and an EIC Planning breakfast (DLUHC).

EIC is keen to work with other industry groups to provide a co-ordinated and enhanced voice, to play to our strengths including our experience in policy and lobbying. We are also keen to work more closely between our different industry task forces recognising the need for a more holistic approach to the one crisis.

The ongoing DoWCoP situation continues to be of major concern to members noting the lack of clarity delaying key government targets such as housing development and circular economy when in practice the DoWCoP should be streamlining processes and enabling safe development.

Members have been updated on the position UKAS is taking with laboratories regarding the accreditation status of analytical results for prepared leachate analysed for the Waste Acceptance Criteria under ISO BSI 12457 standards. Until now, several laboratories in the industry have not held accreditation for the preparation stage of the leachate, including a disclaimer statement in their reports. The subsequent analysis of this leachate has been reported under an accredited method, and reported as accredited. UKAS is now requesting that laboratories demonstrate the leachate preparation step is fit for purpose and submit an extension to their scope for this part of the method to become accredited. If laboratories choose not to comply, they will be required to remove the accreditation status from their analysis report.

c. Hot or emerging topics

Watershed Pollution Map

It was brought to the attention of the NBF of the recently updated Watershed Pollution Map that identifies potential pollution sources. It is available here:

[The Watershed Pollution Map - Watershed Investigations](#)

Although the map was of general interest, people were advised not to rely on the information presented as there were a number of inaccuracies that have been identified.

Supreme Court ruling on Environmental Impact Assessments

NBF members were also sign posted to an interesting Supreme Court ruling “Finch on behalf of the Weald Action Group v Surrey County Council” that will have an impact on the preparation of future Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) for large development projects. The court ruled that the EIA should also take into consideration future environmental impacts downstream from the resultant extractive processes. The ruling is available here:

[R \(on the application of Finch on behalf of the Weald Action Group\) \(Appellant\) v Surrey County Council and others \(Respondents\) - The Supreme Court](#)

It was agreed that a presentation at the next NBF on this case would be helpful. AL offered to make contact with a potential speaker.

ACTION: AL agreed to make contact with Corner Stone Barristers.

Supreme Court ruling with respect to unauthorised discharge of untreated foul water

Members were also made aware of another interesting Supreme Court ruling, “The Manchester Ship Canal Company Ltd v United Utilities Water Ltd”. This case was in relation to whether a private law claim in nuisance and/or trespass in respect of unauthorised discharges of untreated foul water into a canal could be made. The ruling is available here:

[The Manchester Ship Canal Company Ltd \(Appellant\) v United Utilities Water Ltd \(Respondent\) No 2 - The Supreme Court](#)

Buried – The Last Witness : BBC podcast series

As discussed previously, the recently released BBC podcast series has created quite a lot of interest in contaminated land, and the impact of buried chemicals has on the environment. The programme has brought Part 2A back into the spotlight and the lack of funding available for such sites. In addition, it was felt that the NBF member organisations need to be aware of such programmes and have good risk communication strategies in place to prevent negative publicity, and to be able communicate clearly to be able to dismiss conspiracy theories getting traction.

Members were reminded that there is a section of useful documents on [WALL](#) under Communication including the SNIFFER publication – [Communicating Understanding of Contaminated Land Risks](#).

- d. [National Quality Mark Scheme for Management of Land Contamination \(NQMS\) Sub Group](#)

Seamus Lefroy-Brooks (SLB) provided an update on the NQMS and reported that over 300 declarations have now been purchased. The scheme has grown in stature with more SQPs joining. The steering group unanimously agreed to appoint Liz Hart as the new chair with immediate effect but they also agreed that the chair will be in post for two years with the appointment of a deputy chair. Therefore NBF members are asked to go out to their members and ask for nominations for a deputy chair.

ACTION: All to discuss internally within their membership groups for nominations for a new NQMS steering group deputy chair.

Standards

Nicola Harries (NH) shared the update that Mike Smith kindly provided outlining the new standards that are in preparation or out for consultation. Sincere thanks were given to Mike Smith for collating and sharing this information. Full details are provided here:

4. Specific Knowledge Share

Presentation: “Jonathan Allen (JA) – Partner and Helen Gill (HG) – Senior Associate of Browne Jacobson “Achieving Biodiversity Net Gain on Brownfields: Interactions with Land Use and Environmental Policies”

DB thanked JA and HG for their really informative presentation. It has helped NBF members understand the implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain better.

The presentation is available here:

<https://claire.co.uk/component/phocadownload/category/110-2024?download=1004:bng-presentation-browne-jacobson-llp>

5. Discussion on National Brownfield Forum Task and Finish Group to map brownfield development policies and regulatory aspects

DB explained that at the last NBF meeting there was interest to discuss brownfield development policies and conflicts with regulatory aspects. In addition, the NBF annual survey also highlighted frustration where different regulatory regimes conflicted. Following the last meeting, NH confirmed that she had received a good response from NBF members of their interest in participating in the discussion. DB proposes to set up a task and finish group to map out the potential conflicts to help government and regulators see the difficulties that industry is currently facing. DB explained that it is important to bring all parties together to work collaboratively to try and identify key conflicting areas, as ultimately we are all keen to drive the industry forward and help government meet its ambitious targets. DB confirmed that he had contacted government departments and regulators separately and there was general interest but people were unable to commit due to it being the pre-election period.

It was agreed that step one would be to agree the key focus areas to look at, establish a vision, look at what the outputs will be and timescale to deliver. DB agreed to arrange a meeting that hopefully all parties will be able to attend.

ACTION: DB to arrange a meeting to discuss the setting up a Task and Finish Group to map brownfield development policies and regulatory aspects.

6. AOB

a. Geoscience Alliance

At the last meeting AL brought to the attention of the NBF members the Geoscience Alliance launch event. AL attended the event and informed the NBF that there is a good opportunity for its members to get involved. At present there are a group of organisations (mainly academics and schools) that are trying to promote geoscience to address the potential skills shortage in the industry. AL thinks it is important for groups such as NBF to engage to demonstrate the different roles that Geoscientists can do and to let students know that there are careers out there. Unfortunately scientific and numerate students have lots of career options.

It was acknowledged that many of the NBF members already have early careers groups to try and support their membership, so would it make sense for the NBF to form a “skills” working group, so the early careers groups can meet and get some consistency between them for their offers? In addition, this group could be the representative body at the Geoscience Alliance.

AL, confirmed that the Geoscience Alliance is currently crystallising its terms of reference and he has agreed to keep the NBF informed.

AL to maintain point of contact until next meeting, where suggestions by NBF members on a volunteer to engage with the Geoscience Alliance going forward is made.

Further information is available here:

ACTION: ALL to discuss internally for interest to participate in a NBF skills working group to be able to liaise with the early careers groups and to also have representation on the Geoscience Alliance.

b. Vacant and Derelict Land Scotland

Tom Henman brought to the attention of the NBF that Scottish Government has recently published the recent Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey 2023, which shows that the amount of derelict and urban vacant land has fallen by over 25% since 2016. This was reported in National newspapers.

The report is available to download here: [6. Derelict and Urban Vacant Land: Location and Trends - Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey 2023 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/consultation-papers/collections/documents/6-Derelict-and-Urban-Vacant-Land-Location-and-Trends-Scottish-Vacant-and-Derelict-Land-Survey-2023-gov.scot)

It was felt that the Scottish Land Commission would also be a good group to approach to join the NBF with their interest in brownfield land.

ACTION: MB - Scottish Government to speak to colleagues in the Scottish Land Commission to gauge their interest in joining NBF.

c. Green Action Trust

It was also suggested that perhaps the Green Action Trust could also be represented.

ACTION: TH to discuss with the Green Action Trust if there is interest to have representation on the NBF. TH is currently a Trustee so may be able to provide an update if this is of interest.

7. **Date of next meeting**

- 28 November 2024

DB thanked everyone and closed the meeting.