

# National Brownfield Forum

## Meeting Notes

3 April 2025, 11.00am – 3.00pm Teleconference



### FINAL

#### Present:

Darren Beriro (Chair)

Liz Hart (Deputy Chair)

Nicola Harries (Secretariat)

Shade Nnadozie

Angela Haslam

Mark Williams

Richard Hossack & Darren Watson

David Crook

Stella Keenan

Rebekah Norbury

Robert Tyler

Joanna Wragg

Ruth Easterbrook

Tim Elliott

Geraint Williams

Tom Henman

Kate Baker

Joanne Kwan

Steve Edgar

Steve Millar

Jane Thrasher

Rhodri Williams

Emma Tattersdill

David Stewart

CL:AIRE

Ministry of Housing and Communities and  
Local Government (MHCLG)

Environment Agency (EA)

Homes England (HE)

Office of Environmental Protection (OEP)

Local Government Association (LGA)

Yorkshire and Lincolnshire Pollution Advisory  
Group (YALPAG)

National Contaminated Land Officers Group  
(NCLOG)

West & East London Land Contamination  
Officers' Group (WELLCOG)

British Geological Survey (BGS)

Geological Society

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors  
(RICS)

Association of Geotechnical and  
Geoenvironmental Specialists (AGS)

Specialist in Land Condition (SiLC)

Society of Brownfield Risk Assessment  
(SoBRA)

CIRIA

Society of Remediation Practitioners  
(REMSOC)

National House Building Council (NHBC)

Environmental Industries Commission (EIC)

Home Builders Federation

UK Environmental Law Association (UKELA)

Scottish Land Commission (SLC)

#### Apologies:

Alex Lee (Outgoing Chair)

Matt Llewhellin & Trystan James

Elliot Paton

Caroline Thornton

Chris Taylor

Richard Boyle

Matthew Byerly

Edward Lewis

Graeme Duggan

HKA

Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

Scottish Government

Scottish Environment Protection Agency  
(SEPA)

Soil and Groundwater Technology  
Association (SAGTA)

Institution of Environmental Science

Environmental Standards Scotland

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

Department for Environment, Food and Rural  
Affairs (DEFRA)

## Agenda

1. Administrative:
  - a. Welcome and Apologies
  - b. Introductions of newly 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 and local authority fora updates as received in advance
  - c. Hot or emerging topics open session
  - d. NQMS Update
  - e. Standards
3. Specific Knowledge Share
  - a. Presentation: Emma Tattersdill Environmental Partner, Bexley Beaumont “Planning & Infrastructure Bill”
  - b. Question and Answers
4. Update and Discussion: National Brownfield Forum Task and Finish Group to map brownfield development policies and regulatory aspects
5. AOB
  - a. Geoscience Alliance – feedback from Alex Lee
6. 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 confirmed no new organisations were present however since the last NBF meeting Rob Foers of MHCLG has moved to another position within MHCLG. Whilst his position is being filled, DB welcomed Shade Mnadozie who was attending the NBF representing MHCLG.

- c) Actions from previous meetings

DB reviewed all actions. All were completed except NH confirmed that she had not had a response from “The House” magazine requesting to write an article about the NBF.

Alex Lee (AL) offered to follow up with contacts.

**ACTION: AL to enquire with contacts within the House of Lords to see what opportunities there may be to write an article about the work of the NBF.**

- d) Membership

DB reminded members to think about new potential members to join the NBF. The Mining Remediation Authority were considered an organisation that had a number of interests aligned with the NBF. Ruth Easterbrook (RE) offered to approach and make initial introductions.

**ACTION: RE offered to approach the Mining Remediation Authority to gauge their interest to join the NBF.**

## **2. General Knowledge Share**

### **a) Government and Regulatory Update**

DB introduced the different government and regulatory groups represented and welcomed them to provide an update.

#### **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)**

Shade Nnadozie (SN) confirmed that since the last NBF meeting, MHCLG continues to analyse the responses received on the Brownfield Passport Working Paper, and are considering policy options for how they might streamline and de-risk brownfield development with the aim of helping getting planning permissions quicker. MHCLG is also making wider progress on national policies for decision-making, which they will consult on later this year.

MHCLG confirmed that some changes that they made to the National Planning Policy Framework in December 2024 was to expand the definition of previously developed land to make clear that proposals for development on brownfield land should be approved unless substantial harm would be caused, and amended the standard method to better direct housing to Mayoral Combined Authority areas. <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system/outcome/government-response-to-the-proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system-consultation#brownfield-grey-belt-and-the-green-belt>

#### **Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)**

Graeme Duggan (GD) was unable to provide a verbal update on DEFRA activities due to illness. GD wanted to highlight the publication of the independent review carried out by Dan Corry. [An independent review of Defra's regulatory landscape: foreword and executive summary - GOV.UK](#)

It was felt that there are some interesting points of note including permitting, reusing remediated soil and polluter pays. The report sets out 29 recommendations across five strategic themes.

#### **Environment Agency**

Angela Haslam (AH) provided an update on behalf of the Environment Agency. She confirmed that the Environment Agency is looking at the Environmental Permitting Regulations and how flexible that can be in relation to remediating contaminated soils.

AH confirmed that the Environment Agency is delighted to see the updated piling in contaminated land has recently been published on the CL:AIRE website. The Environment Agency provided seed funding for this piece of important guidance along with Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

The Environment Agency is working with Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) to update the wording of Land Contamination Risk Management (LCRM) so it is applicable across the whole UK.

The Environment Agency is discussing with Association of Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Specialists (AGS) about potentially supporting the preparation of the Industry Profiles. The project scope is currently being revised.

AH confirmed that the Environment Agency is approaching the end of the current 4-year funding period in relation to PFAS which included the PFAS risk screening project. The EA is now looking at various options for publishing as much of the research and reports from the risk screening work as possible.

## **Natural Resources Wales (NRW) & Welsh Government**

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

- In December 2024 Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) received funding of up to £775k from Welsh Government to carry out improvement works and to continue investigation/assessment of a potential Part 2A site. Funding to local authorities for Contaminated Land has not been available from Welsh Government since 2017/18. NRW will continue to provide technical advice to CCBC on pollution of controlled waters issues at the site. [Ynysddu: Improvement plans for toxic waste at Ty Llwyd](#)
- In January 2025 the UK Parliament Welsh Affairs Committee made a call for evidence in relation to the following:
  - What progress has been made in addressing the environmental legacy of Wales' industrial past?
  - How has deindustrialisation shaped socio-economic conditions in Wales today?
  - Is deindustrialisation an ongoing process, and how might it affect Wales' role in the UK Government's growth mission?

Full details here: [Call for Evidence - Committees - UK Parliament](#)

Written evidence received from the Welsh Land Contamination Working Group, the Mining Remediation Authority and Welsh Government has been published here: [The environmental and economic legacy of Wales' industrial past - Committees - UK Parliament](#)

- The UK Parliament Welsh Affairs Committee subsequently met on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2025 to discuss the subject 'The environmental and economic legacy of Wales' industrial past calling for evidence witnesses from Natural Resources Wales and the Mining Remediation Authority. Issues such as the effectiveness of the contaminated land regime in Wales were discussed. Recording available here: [Parliamentlive.tv - Welsh Affairs Committee](#)

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

Caroline Thornton (CT) sent her apologies and confirmed that there were no updates to provide to the NBF.

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

No updates were provided by DAERA or NI EA.

## **Office of Environmental Protection (OEP)**

Darren Watson(DW) provided an update on behalf of the OEP. He confirmed that OEP's latest Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) progress report was laid in Parliament in January, making the following key recommendations:

### **Actions**

1. Get nature-friendly farming right
2. Maximise the contribution of protected sites for nature
3. Speed up action in the marine environment
4. Set out clear mechanisms for reconciling competing demands for use of land and sea
5. Develop a circular economy framework

### **Enablers**

1. Mobilise investment at the scale needed
2. Regulate more effectively
3. Harness support needed to achieve ambitions

<https://www.theoep.org.uk/report/government-has-chance-get-track-meet-legal-environmental-commitments-window-opportunity>

OEP are currently developing its Business Plan for 2025/26 which will continue to focus on nature, marine, clean water and effective governance. New areas of research, in anticipation of potentially developing future work programmes include waste, circular economy and soils. OEP are also in the early planning stages for its next EIP progress report.

As discussed previously, OEP held a workshop on urban soils and land contamination in February, designed to develop its thinking on these issues and examine where the OEP could undertake additional research and have influence. Issues discussed included the need to improve the consideration and importance of soils as the basis for terrestrial ecosystems, the need for greater sustainable reuse of soil and excavated materials in the urban / brownfield context, the influence of climate change and the capability and capacity of regulators in implementing Part IIA and other regulatory regimes. OEP subsequently had a really positive session with colleagues at the Environment Agency. DW offered to give a short presentation on the key outputs from the recent college of experts workshop.

**ACTION: DW to provide a short (5 min) presentation on key outputs following the OEP's college of experts workshop.**

OEP presented on its EIP progress report to the IES Brownfield Symposium and will do so again at the Geological Society Contaminated Land Group 'Hot Topics' event on 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

DW confirmed that OEP has published a report regarding the protection and restoration of Northern Ireland's key natural areas. The report is available : [Action is urgently needed to protect and restore Northern Ireland's 'natural treasures,' says OEP report | Office for Environmental Protection](#)

### **Homes England (HE)**

Mark Williams confirmed that there was no update from HE.

### **b. Industry and Local Authority For a updates**

### **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
- 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
- Ground Gas Risk Assessment - More Than Calculating a GSV – classroom
- Statistics for Land Contamination – classroom **new for 2025**
- Groundwater Monitoring & Sampling – classroom **new for 2025**
- Principles and Practice of Sustainable Remediation – classroom **new for 2025**
- Developing Advanced Conceptual Models for Contaminated Sites – classroom **new for 2025**
- Managing Contaminated Sites using MNA & NSZD – classroom **new for 2025**
- 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 held a Members' Networking Evening in Bristol on 6 March which was well attended.. The next members' networking events are 10 July in London and October in Leeds.

CL:AIRE is also involved in the following Conferences and Events going forward:

- AquaConSoil, 16-20 June 2025 (Liège, Belgium)
- CL:AIRE Members' Networking Evening, 10 July 2025 (London, UK)
- Environmental Services & Solutions Expo 17-18 September 2025 (Birmingham, UK)
- RemTech Europe, 15-19 September 2025 (Ferrara, Italy)
- CL:AIRE Members' Networking Evening, 16 October 2025 (Leeds, UK)

#### Aggregates from Inert Wastes Quality Protocol

Further meetings of the Environment Agency Aggregates Task Group have taken place. Work has been carrying out on various strands of which CL:AIRE is working with its internal working group on.

#### Category Four Screening Levels Project

The team continues to work to get the next C4SL reports reviewed and published which are likely to be 111-TCA, MTBE and xylene.

#### Concawe Sustainable Management Practices Project

The first phase of the Concawe Sustainable Management Practices (SMP) project has now been completed and the report published by Concawe in December 2024. <https://www.concawe.eu/publications/>

The second phase is now starting and will look at quantifying the sustainability benefits across two typical oil and gas manufacturing/processing "hypothetical" sites. This phase started in March.

#### EiCLaR (enhanced *in situ* bioremediation)

The EC-funded EiCLaR project finished in December 2024 and CL:AIRE was responsible for delivering a number of project outputs which were promoted in the February eAlert; these included podcasts, newsletters, an animation, six technical bulletins and an education pack. They are all available for downloading here: [www.eiclar.eu](http://www.eiclar.eu)

#### Gas Protection Verification Accreditation Scheme (GPVS)

As a result of the Autumn assessment window, 2 SGPVs and 3 TGPVs were awarded. All existing SGPVs have renewed their membership. CL:AIRE has started to carry out auditing of CPD for those SGPVs currently on the register. This is a rolling programme. The spring 2025 GPVS accreditation application window has recently closed. The applications are being reviewed. CL:AIRE has started to undertake the auditing of 2023/2024 declarations submitted under the GPVS. Over 500 declarations have now been purchased since the scheme started.

#### Legacy Wastes in the Coastal Zone

This research project has ended and the draft research bulletin is due in April.

#### National Brownfield Forum

CL:AIRE has been assisting on the National Brownfield Forum task and finish group as well as performing the secretariat work of the main National Brownfield Forum.

#### National Quality Mark Scheme

CL:AIRE has been performing the secretariat work for the National Quality Mark Scheme. Further updates will be provided by the Chair Liz Hart.

#### PFAS

A PFAS bulletin addressing implications on the management of excavated soils is now back with CL:AIRE for final review and signoff.

#### Piling Guidance

The updating of the Piling and Penetrative Ground Improvement Methods on Land Affected by Contamination guidance has now been published and is available to download here: [www.claire.co.uk/piling](http://www.claire.co.uk/piling)

#### SAGTA

CL:AIRE is supporting SAGTA in organising a workshop in early June 2025. The event is looking to attract representatives from across the land portfolio/managing legacy land to a

workshop to learn and share key issues about managing land and to also ask about the interest of joining a SAGTA-type organisation.

### Sustainable Remediation

The SuRF-UK steering group continues to work on updating and republishing the framework document. It is aiming to be published in the Summer 2025.

The International Sustainable Remediation Alliance (ISRA)/SuRF International met on 19 November at which a new group, SuRF Germany, joined for the first time. ISRA will be organising a special session at the upcoming AquaConSoil conference in Liege Belgium.

## **Society of Brownfield Risk Assessment (SOBRA)**

### Conferences

Considering an in-person summer workshop in Birmingham in early July (to be confirmed). The RSC Toxicology Group / SoBRA joint Winter Conference (and SoBRA AGM) is scheduled for on Wednesday 10 December 2025 at Burlington House, London, and online.

### Sub-groups

The active sub-groups are:

- NAPL
- Ground Gases (with a radon working group)
- Controlled waters and climate change
- Early Careers

A new vapour sub-group was launched in March 2025 to evaluate currently available vapour intrusion modelling and assessment options, and to produce guidance to support risk assessment practitioners. Full Terms of Reference for the sub-group and deliverables are in the process of being developed.

### Publications

Ground Gas Flux Guidance document published in March 2025.

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

### Accreditation scheme

The first 2025 window was open during February. There were 2 applicants for either RSoBRA or ASoBRA. The process of assessing applications and interviews is currently ongoing. Currently there are 113 accredited members, of which 54 are ASoBRA for one or more disciplines.

A call out to our accredited members to expand the number of scrutineers, particularly in the permanent gases and vapour intrusion disciplines.

### Other activities/events

The early careers sub-group are organising another series of freely available webinars for 2025. To date:

The SoBRA Accreditation Scheme – RSoBRA: 21 January 2025

Introduction to Coal Mine Gas Risk Assessment and Protection Design: 18 February 2025.

Introduction to Acute Human Health Risk Assessment: scheduled for 15 April 2025.

Further webinars, to be confirmed, will be provided throughout the year. Access to and details of all the previous webinar recordings can be found here <https://sobra.org.uk/resources/early-careers-webinars/>

## **Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES)**

Recent activities for the Land Condition Community include:

- The Land Condition Symposium was held on the 11<sup>th</sup> March at the National Brownfield Institute in Wolverhampton. It was a great event with sessions focused on PFAS, updates from the Environment Agency, CL:AIRE and government priorities as well as BNG to name a few.

- [National Contaminated Land Officers Group \(NCLOG\) have joined the IES family](#) as the contaminated land local authority experts within the IES's Environmental Policy Implementation Community (EPIC).
- The Land Condition and Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) joint guidance on air quality monitoring on contaminated land sites will now be opening to member consultation in May.
- The Land Condition Community and NCLOG held a [roundtable discussion on uncovering best practice for PFAS management](#) in January, with a summary and recording released afterwards. They also submitted a contribution to POST in response to their work on producing a POSTnote on the regulation and remediation of 'forever chemicals'.
- The IES published a report [BNG in Practice: One year on from mandatory implementation](#) and have launched a related [BNG in Practice event](#) series including a webinar on [Brownfield land: BNG and other opportunities](#).
- Webinars held include:
  - Land Condition ECN event on chartership
  - [Protecting Scotland's groundwater quality](#)
- The latest Environmental Scientists journal, [A planetary prescription](#), sheds light on the ways in which human health and the environment are inextricably linked.

### **Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)**

The RICS UK Construction Monitor is a quarterly sentiment survey of 1000+ Chartered Surveyors who operate across the UK. Data collection began in 1994 and total responses in Q3 2024 were 1268. In summary, the Q3 survey predicted an increase in workloads over the next 12 months, matching sentiment seen in the previous quarter and highlighting sustained optimism for growth within the construction sector. In particular, the infrastructure sector was expected to lead robustly. The private residential sector showed a notable rise in confidence, and private non-residential construction was projected to pick up momentum.

The latest, Q4 2024 Monitor published in February 2025 largely echoes the positive sentiment captured in Q3, and although several metrics have marginal downward movements, the data indicates that activity in the industry remains stable, with the expectations of a stronger picture emerging over the next twelve months. Infrastructure remains the strongest performing area, especially the energy sector, but is more subdued elsewhere. Financial constraints are still seen as the largest impediment with credit conditions less favourable across the industry. Planning and regulation continues to be the second most widely referenced challenge which chimes with recent policy announcements designed to address these issues. Construction skills shortages also remain a significant concern, for both site trades and professionals -again recent Government announcements address some of this.

Following the March Spring Statement RICS comments that "We are glad the Chancellor has announced a number of measures RICS have been advocating for to support housebuilding, skills development and businesses. The announcement by the government of an additional £2 billion investment to build 18,000 new social homes is an enormous boost for the sector. Alongside ongoing reforms to planning, this should provide increased confidence for housebuilders across the country. According to RICS data, the gap between housing demand and supply continues to widen, so these new social homes will prove vital for supporting new supply and housing the most vulnerable. The £600 million of additional funding for construction sector skills is a decisive investment in the UK's built environment. This should help secure the next generation of construction sector workers and professionals as we look to tackle the challenge of an aging workforce alongside acute labour and skills shortages."

In January 2025 RICS updated its mandatory Red Book Global Valuation Standards as part of its commitment to support high standards in land and property valuations by members and future-proof practices in the public interest. Valuation of development property might be required for loan security, acquisition, sale, the valuation of options, advice on financial reporting, and the assessment of taxes and valuations required within litigation. The changes reflect the new International Valuation Standards (IVS), new content relating to modelling and methods; and adaptation to changes from evolving technology and ESG.



## **National House Building Council (NHBC)**

NHBC's 'Guidance on evaluation of development proposals on sites where methane and carbon dioxide are present' document is well into its transitional arrangement period, which will come to an end on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025. Until this time, applications in terms of site assessments and relating to suitability of products that refer to this publication will still be considered by NHBC.

From 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025, we will not, and references should be to more recent standards and guidance that are/will be available and consider the design and detailing of measures that present reasonable mitigation of the potential risk(s).

NHBC has already provided support to industry in this regard through the NHBC Foundation NF94 publication 'Hazardous ground gas – an essential guide for housebuilders', released May 2023, to which readers are initially referred and that is accessible for free download.

## **UK Environmental Law Association (UKELA)**

UKELA has continued its usual programme of events and participation in relevant consultations. Recent consultation responses which may be of interest (copies of which can be found on UKELA's website) are as follows:

- Response to call for evidence for the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (Daera) review of environmental governance in Northern Ireland.
- Response to consultation on draft supplementary EIA guidance for assessing the effects of scope 3 emissions from offshore oil and gas projects, produced by DESNZ and OPRED.
- Written and in person responses to the call for evidence by the Senedd's Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee on the general principles of the Disused Mine and Quarry Tips (Wales) Bill.
- Response to Scottish Government consultation on National Marine Plan 2 Planning Position Statement.
- Response to HMRC's consultation on expanding the scope of tax conditionality to new sectors (including the waste sector).
- Response to Environment Agency charge proposals for waste crime and hourly rates.
- Response to the Ministry of Justice call for evidence following on from the recommendations of a review by Lord Banner KC on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP).
- Response to the Ministry of Justice Call for Evidence on access to justice in relation to the Aarhus Convention.
- Response to the Defra consultation on civil sanctions for hedgerow management.

### **Upcoming events:**

- UKELA Social Series 2025 – Edinburgh: 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025 5.30pm onwards

UKELA Social Series is our bi-monthly networking evening series. Our next social is taking place in Edinburgh (in person). Open to all - members and anyone interested in learning more about UKELA. Complimentary drinks included, courtesy of HKA.

- Finally, **UKELA's annual conference** will take place at Bristol University on 20/21 June 2025, with some online events also scheduled for 17/18 June. The conference theme is "**Back to the Future - Environmental Law in a New Era**" and plenary sessions will cover urgent topics such as climate change, sustainability reporting, PFAS, energy and waste. Tickets available via UKELA's website.

## **Society for Remediation Practitioners in the UK (RemSoc)**

RemSoc have been updating their website to be more attractive to members and hopefully to encourage more engagement with the society. RemSoc have also been starting to plan the 2025 conference (dates to be announced) which will go ahead in October. The theme planned is “getting the fundamentals of remediation right” we will be placing a large emphasis on Early Careers Practitioners (ECPs) aiming to attract them to attend and also enabling them to present. ECP’s are a real focus for remediation as the sector needs to be developed from the bottom up in terms of recruitment and development. Along that vein we are also discussing collaboration with other societies across Land Quality namely SOBRA, IES and GeoSoc who also have a focus in this area to try and gather some mass. We still have the working groups around signposting chartership and guiding people on getting “Betterment” right, which is being reviewed for upcoming release. We recently ran an ECP meeting after the IES conference which was attended by 8 or so ECP’s.

## **CIRIA**

CIRIA virtual PFAS conference will take place 10 July 2025

[https://www.ciria.org/CIRIA/Navigation/Events/Event\\_Display.aspx?EventKey=E25109](https://www.ciria.org/CIRIA/Navigation/Events/Event_Display.aspx?EventKey=E25109)

CIRIA Free soil seminar in London 7 July 2025 still has free places

[https://www.ciria.org/CIRIA/Navigation/Events/Event\\_Display.aspx?EventKey=E25108](https://www.ciria.org/CIRIA/Navigation/Events/Event_Display.aspx?EventKey=E25108)

CIRIA PFAS Forum is still looking for case studies and will launch the web site in the next few weeks.

CIRIA Soil Community Practice 2025 activities are now all planned, but we are still looking for case studies. Please go to [www.ciria.org/SOILCOP/](http://www.ciria.org/SOILCOP/)

A new project has started - Microplastics and construction projects. More can be found on [https://www.ciria.org/Research/Projects\\_underway2/Microplastics%20in%20construction%20projects.aspx](https://www.ciria.org/Research/Projects_underway2/Microplastics%20in%20construction%20projects.aspx)

## **Association of Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Specialists (AGS)**

### Recent successes of the Working Group

- Virtual meeting of the Contaminated Land Working held on 5th February with 31 members in attendance.
- Presentation provided by Paul Nathanail - CIRIA PFAS guidance ‘Good practice guidance: some per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances in soil and the water environment’.
- AGS collaborated with the British Drilling Association (BDA) to draft joint guidance on ‘Managing Pressurised Gases During Drilling’ AGS – Association of Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Specialists – Managing pressurised gases during drilling. This was published in March and will be discussed in more detail in subsequent AGS meetings.
- Two recent articles were published in the AGS magazine: ‘Thoughts from the Regulatory Front Line’ and ‘The Importance of Task Specific Asbestos Awareness Training’.

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

- The CLWG received updates from the NHBC, SiLC, SoBRA, NBF, Environment Agency and OEP.
- A mind map of standards relating to site investigation is being finalised along with article on forecourt drilling.
- Article being finalised on gas monitoring data and the AGS format.
- Article on turbidity in piling being finalised.
- Article on historic lab methods vs current methods to be drafted.
- A subgroup within the CLWG reviewed and provided comments on v3 of the DoWCoP.
- An update was provided on standards including BS 10175, BS 8576 and BS 10177.

- Article on history of remediation in Swansea to be considered.
- Article being considered on evolution in PFAS analysis.

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

- The Data Management Group, with support from the CLWG and the Labs Group, organised a meeting in Birmingham in November. Following this meeting, the AGS aim to consolidate existing AGS ERES codes and ensure better consistency in reporting of asbestos, WAC, dissolved and total metals and PFAS.
- Future presentation planned for the next meeting on the application of BDA's guidance on 'Safe Intrusive Activities on Land Potentially Impacted by Contamination' (published in January).
- The AGS annual conference is taking place 1 May 2025 in the ICE, London.
- Future events include:
  - Sustainability – Practical Steps for AGS members (12 June, webinar)
  - Trial Pitting – Controlling the Risks (24 September, webinar)
  - AGS Data Conference – Discuss, Engage and Evolve (4 December, Birmingham)
  - Further information is available at: [AGS – Association of Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Specialists – AGS Event Programme 2025](#)

**Soil and Groundwater Technology Association (SAGTA)**

SAGTA is working with CL:AIRE to organise a workshop on 4 June 2025 in London on Environmental Land Management Challenges. Invites have gone out to companies that represent large land portfolios that manage liabilities.

**Specialist in Land Condition (SiLC)**

The Chair of the SiLC Professional and Technical Panel (PTP) is Louise Beale and Lucy Bethell is 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.

The SiLC PTP met virtually on 03/12/24 and 11/03/25 and the next meeting is due on 10/06/25. There are currently 201 SiLCs and 155 SQPs with an application round (7 candidates) currently underway. We are continuing to offer free conversion to SQP for existing SiLCs. An Introduction day was held in January 2025 with 10 prospective applicants. The 2025 SiLC assessors meeting was held on 19<sup>th</sup> March. Feedback from assessors on recent changes to the exam paper were discussed.

Other current areas of SiLC activity include:

**Annual Forum 2025**

SiLCs Annual forum for 2025 was held on 27<sup>th</sup> March with 190 registered and 135 live attendees. The forum looked back at 25 years of SiLCs and how the reasons for its inception remain relevant to solving the issues associated with brownfield regeneration today. Key discussions and presentations included:

- **Judith Nathanail (Land Quality Management Ltd)** presented "PDF to AGS: Al-chemy or AI-chemy?", discussing AI-driven innovations that extract AGS data from borehole logs and laboratory certificates, ensuring critical insights are not lost in PDFs.
- **Andrew Fellows (RSK)** shared findings from an industry survey on climate change risk assessment in land development, offering valuable insights into geo-related impacts and future guidance.
- **Holger Kessler (AtkinsRéalis)** explored "The Future of the Subsurface," emphasizing the challenges and opportunities in underground space management as we adapt to climate change and infrastructure needs.
- **Tom Pashby (New Civil Engineer)** provided an engaging session on effective risk communication, stressing the importance of clear messaging to avoid unnecessary public concern.

- **Joe Jackson (Jackson Remediation)** showcased real-world examples of successful stakeholder engagement in land remediation projects, reinforcing the critical role of perception in project success.
- **Paul Nathanail (Land Quality Management Ltd)** delved into “Risk-Based Management of Emerging Contaminants of 2050,” discussing how proactive measures today can prevent future contamination challenges.
- **Tom Henman (RSK)** covered findings from a SiLC and CIRIA stakeholder workshop, examining the current regulatory landscape and proposals for more sustainable reuse of excavated materials.

One of the highlights of the forum was an interactive **panel discussion** on how brownfield development can support sustainable growth. Panellists, including industry leaders from Arcadis, Mott MacDonald, Dacorum Borough Council, and the EA, provided insights on planning policies, the concept of the ‘grey belt,’ and circular land use strategies aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The final session focused on technological advancements shaping the future of the industry. Discussions centred on AI, big data, and PFAS remediation innovations, underlining how digital transformation is set to redefine land condition practices in the coming years.

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. The current focus is on the format of the exam paper, guidance and support to assessors, the format of the Introduction Day, updating the website and reviewing the SiLC criteria.

Continuing to raise awareness about limitations to **reuse of excavated materials** due to the EA approach to waste permitting which is delaying regeneration projects and could limit the government’s ability to meet its brownfield first and sustainability agenda. This included meetings with CL:AIRE (January) and the Office for Environmental Protection (January) and plans to convene a more industry organised approach with other professional bodies and organisations, to act as a combined voice to raise awareness to government.

A meeting was held to commence an update to the **National Brownfield Skills Framework**. This identified areas where updates were required and new items that could be included. More detail and a delivery programme will be provided for the next update.

The **SiLC website** is being reviewed and updated and will be launched within the next few weeks.

The **SiLC Employers scheme** has recently launched which endorses organisations committed to high standards of land condition competence in the UK. To be eligible organisations must employ at least one SiLC. This aligns with SiLC’s goal of championing quality.

The **Climate Change and Sustainability** sub group has had a number of talks by professionals and is now preparing to equip SiLCs to deliver climate resilient and sustainable brownfield development by preparing some thought leadership pieces.

The following articles have been published in the **AGS magazine**

- How can SiLCs and NQMS help get it right 1<sup>st</sup> time (Jan 2025) - a response piece to “Thoughts from the regulatory frontline” (AGS magazine, July 2024) which discussed land condition reports submitted to planning.
- Introducing SiLC’s female leads – March 2025 Women’s edition

**NQMS steering group** meeting attended by Tom Henman in March.

### **National Contaminated Land Officers Group (NCLOG)**

NCLOG has been continuing to work closely with the IES/EPIC after the membership voted to join the IES family. Our first newsletter via the new IES system has been sent successfully, and we held a Ground Gas Forum on the 1<sup>st</sup> April. As with previous webinars, NCLOG continues to open up training to all regulators with a .gov.uk email address, so please pass this on to any regulator who may be interested.

Our [AGM is coming up on the 21st May](#), which will again consist of the official meeting followed by some training.

A lot of NCLOG's time recently has been taken up by responding to consultations and requests for comment on various topics, for instance we recently published a response to BBC and Netflix programmes on contaminated land (Toxic Town and Britain's Toxic Secrets). We can be contacted at [NationalCLOG@gmail.com](mailto:NationalCLOG@gmail.com) still, or via [ellie@the-ies.org](mailto:ellie@the-ies.org) directly for further information.

### **West and East London Land Contamination Officer's Group (WELLCOG)**

WELLCOG met on the 31 January:

- Jonathan Atkinson from CLAIRE provided an updated and presentation on DOWCOP.
- There was discussion surrounding a high profile Part 2A case in London, which is in the press at the moment.
- Experiences of prioritising land contamination were shared. It appears that there is renewed interest in updating strategies and prioritising potential areas of land contamination by some authorities. A working group has been set up to share ideas and experiences.

WELLCOG acknowledge the recent series of land contamination related documentaries and articles that have been published by the BBC (for example Toxic Town and Britain's Toxic Secrets) and want to understand what is being done by the industry and government to address the issues raised.

The next WELLCOG meeting is on the 10<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

c. Hot or emerging topics

It was acknowledged by NBF members that there are a lot of consultations and calls for evidence currently underway for industry to be aware of and to respond to. The latest being the Cunliffe review where the Independent Water Commission is seeking views on the water sector in the future: [Public invited to have say on water sector fit for the future - GOV.UK](#) and

Defra's Land Use Consultation which has only one reference to brownfield land. It is really important to ensure government department are working together and not in silos. [Land Use Consultation - Defra - Citizen Space](#)

It was acknowledged that there has been a lot of recent documentaries/dramas and press articles relating to land contamination issues. Although this is positive to raise the importance of the industry some of the headlines are quite alarmist and many have significant factual inaccuracies. It was acknowledged that as an industry risk communication is not an area that industry members are typically trained in, so as a result often do not challenge or respond to requests by media to provide their points of view.

NBF members felt it was appropriate to keep a watching brief on new articles/documentaries etc as people were unsure whether the profile will remain high or will reduce over time. Members were asked to flag new articles that they become aware of. It was agreed to add as an agenda item to allow members to highlight

**ACTION: DB/NH to add "brownfield in media" as agenda item for upcoming meetings.**

It was agreed that this profile could be seen as positive profile with brownfield first but depending how things are reported it could also be damaging to the industry as brownfield & land affected by contamination could be seen as dangerous.

d. National Quality Mark Scheme for Management of Land Contamination (NQMS) Sub Group

Liz Hart (LH) chair of the NQMS steering group provided an update.

She confirmed that the last meeting was very productive. The focus of the work of the NQMS steering group going forward is to increase the visibility of the NQMS and its uptake. LH

explained that it is important to explain the role of the SQP and the importance of the declaration. The NQMS steering group discussed the scope of the SQP and how it can be adapted and be more accessible for others such as regulators.

LH confirmed that the Terms of Reference of the NQMS Steering group has been agreed and now the role of the awarding body (SiLC) and administrator (CL:AIRE) are being reviewed to ensure that they are still fit for purpose and up to date as they have not been reviewed since the scheme began.

In order to raise the profile a marketing strategy is being developed, which will include improving the web pages. It is anticipated to have different landing pages for different visitors that may want to know more about the NQMS eg if people were developers, clients or regulators they would want to know different information. It is also expected to create a LINKED-IN page to help signpost for further information.

As the NQMS is a NBF initiative and was established to raise standards, it would be positive for all NBF members to help signpost and fly the flag and speak positively about the scheme and help promote the important message of the NQMS which is to "Get it right first time".

LH explained that it is an exciting time for the NQMS and the role of the SQP. There are huge opportunities for the SQP to be used to help build confidence when redeveloping land affected by contamination. They can perform more project oversight where regulators may be stretched with resources or provide independent review.

e. 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 [here](#).

**3. Specific Knowledge Share**

Presentation was provided by Emma Tattersdill (ET) Environment Partner, Bexley Beaumont: "*Planning & Infrastructure Bill*". ET explained about the upcoming bill and the potential implications of the bill for the NBF members.

DB thanked ET for the very informative presentation. It has helped NBF members understand the upcoming bill and what to expect.

The full presentation is downloadable [here](#).

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

DB provided an update on the work of the task and finish group. He explained how the task and finish group has had three workshops with great attendance and energy at all. DB explained the focus of each workshop and how each workshop built its knowledge on to each. The final stage is now to gather evidence of real world examples both positive and negative of where there has been disconnects between policy and regulatory aspects. The call for evidence is open until the end of April 2025 (now extended to 9 May 2025).

Each NBF member is asked to promote across its memberships so as wide variety of examples can be presented.

DB explained that a short summary report will be produced to be presented to government, regulators, policy developers and business leaders.

**5. AOB**

a. Geoscience Alliance

Alex Lee (AL) was unable to attend the NBF meeting. Geraint Thomas (GT) to ask AL if there was any feedback as to how NBF could get involved in the Geoscience Alliance and whether there are any particular aspects that how time constraints.

**ACTION: GT/AL to provide update on Geoscience Alliance.**

#### **6. Date of Next Meetings**

The next meeting is 8 July 2025 followed by 20 November 2025.

DB thanked everyone and closed the meeting.