

Press release: Clean up work completed in Salisbury as area continues recovery

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has today (Friday, 1 March) announced that the final site of decontamination in Salisbury is safe, and has been handed to the South Wiltshire Recovery Coordinating Group.

The completion of clean-up work at Christie Miller Road, Salisbury marks a significant milestone in South Wiltshire's return to normality following the sickening novichok nerve agent attack last year.

The property was declared safe following extensive cleaning and testing by specialist teams. Wiltshire Council will shortly begin to coordinate work to refurbish the property, with residents of Christie Miller Road consulted on its future use.

Alistair Cunningham, chair of the South Wiltshire recovery coordinating group, said:

It is good news that the site at Christie Miller Road has been handed back following extensive cleaning by specialist teams.

This is a significant moment for Salisbury, Amesbury and south Wiltshire as this property is the final site to be completed as part of the complex and extensive clean-up operation. South Wiltshire can look to the future now the short-term recovery work has been completed

Work will begin shortly to reconstruct and refurbish the house so it can return to being a home again. We are continuing to talk to the residents on the future of the property as it is important their views are taken into account on how it is used in the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the residents of Christie Miller Road, and the wider community, for their resilience and stoicism during what has been an extremely difficult and challenging time for them and their families. Since March 2018, we have been working closely to support residents and we will continue to do so for as long as that support is required.

I would also like to thank our partners for their skills and expertise and the diligence they have shown in dealing with this unprecedented situation. This clean-up operation has been a shining example of partnership working in extremely testing circumstances.

Salisbury has proved it is resilient, positive and looking forward

and we are working on a range of regeneration projects and events to focus on an even better future for the city and south Wiltshire.

Over the last 11 months, around 190 military personnel from the Royal Air Force and Army, supported by specialist contractors, have undertaken highly specialised decontamination work as part of our precautionary approach to the clean-up across the twelve sites identified in Salisbury and Amesbury. In recognition of their painstaking work, the CBRN Task Force were awarded the 'Hero at Home – Unit' at the Sun's The Sun Military Awards ceremony in December.

Brigadier David Southall, Chief of Staff of Standing Joint Command, said:

The incredibly complex decontamination work carried out by the Armed Forces over the past twelve months, in collaboration with their multi-agency partners, reflects the expertise, courage and selfless commitment of our Servicemen and women in getting the job done and done well.

The handover of the site at Christie Miller Road effectively now concludes the significant military contribution to support Salisbury and Amesbury following the novichok nerve agent attack on 4 March 2018.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

I want to thank all involved in the decontamination process in what has been a challenging year. Their professionalism, expertise and thoroughness have been exemplary.

While decontamination may be complete, government support for the region will not end and we continue to do all we can to help Salisbury and Amesbury thrive.

Earlier this month, Business Minister Lord Henley was appointed Ministerial Champion for Salisbury, providing local leaders with a single point of contact in the heart of Government as the local area focusses on boosting business in the wake of the attack. As Salisbury gets back to business, the Government is working hand-in-hand with local leaders to deliver an ambitious local Industrial Strategy for the area, ensuring Salisbury not only recovers, but leads the way in some of the industries of the future.

Business Minister Lord Henley said:

In my capacity as Ministerial Champion for Salisbury I am continuing to champion the city and lead efforts to ensure this great city of culture and character continues to thrive, now and in

the future.

The final site of decontamination in Salisbury being confirmed as safe is a significant moment for the area and the Government is working hand-in-hand with local leaders to deliver an ambitious local Industrial Strategy for the area. We are committed to ensuring Salisbury not only recovers, but leads the way in some of the industries of the future.

The government has committed over £13m since March 2018 to support businesses, boost tourism and meet unexpected costs of the incidents. £9.6m of that is special grant police funding.