

# Secretary of State shows support for Welsh firm's COVID-19 response during virtual visit

Press release

Transcend Packaging converted their production lines to create face shields for the NHS.



Welsh Secretary Simon Hart has visited South Wales company Transcend Packaging to hear about how the company has responded to the coronavirus pandemic.

The company, based in Ystrad Mynach, usually specialises in providing sustainable packaging products to restaurants, but have since converted production lines and almost doubled the permanent workforce to 127 staff in just four months after switching part of its operations to create PPE.

During the visit, which was carried out using online video conferencing, Transcend Managing Director, Lorenzo Angelucci, showed Mr Hart how the company used its expertise in creating sustainable products to develop and produce protective face shields from reinforced paper boards and recyclable materials.

Transcend Packaging has now supplied more than 15 million face shields to the NHS, while more of their PPE products are being used worldwide by frontline health and social care staff.

**Secretary of State for Wales, Simon Hart said:**

Although this visit could only be undertaken virtually at the present time, it was fantastic to see the work that a Welsh business like Transcend has done to support the front line in the coronavirus pandemic in Wales and beyond.

Seeing their work shows that the people and businesses of Wales are

capable of innovative solutions under incredible pressure and I thank him, Transcend, and their staff for everything they are doing at this incredibly challenging time.

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## [Wheal Jane mine water treatment scheme](#)

The Wheal Jane treatment scheme in Cornwall pumps water from an abandoned metal mine to stop uncontrolled surface discharges and remove contaminants such as arsenic, cadmium, copper, iron, lead, manganese, mercury and zinc.

In an average year, 5,600,000 cubic metres of water are treated – enough to fill 2,240 Olympic-size swimming pools – removing 429,306kg of iron, equivalent to the weight of 33 London Routemaster buses.

The scheme is now part of the [Water and Abandoned Metal Mines \(WAMM\)](#) programme, funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and delivered by the Coal Authority in partnership with the Environment Agency (EA), to make our rivers cleaner and healthier to benefit people, wildlife and the economy.

### **The Wheal Jane outbreak**

Wheal Jane metal mine in Cornwall was worked, mainly for tin, from the mid-18th century and when it closed for the final time, in March 1991, the pumps which kept it dry were switched off.

The mine workings filled up with water and in November 1991 this started to discharge from the Jane Adit.

This historical drainage tunnel was quickly plugged and limited pumping took place for 2 months with the mine water being stored in the Clemows Valley tailings dam, a facility originally formed using waste from the former tin mining operation.

Pumping stopped on 4 January 1992 because the water draining from the tailings dam was too contaminated.

On 13 January 1992, a blockage in the Nangiles Adit suddenly failed, which caused an outbreak of 50 million litres of metal laden, acidic mine water over a 24 hour period.

A highly visible plume of ochreous (iron rich) water containing very high

concentrations of cadmium, arsenic, copper and zinc polluted the Carnon River, Restronguet Creek and Falmouth Bay.

Emergency pumping and treatment was immediately put in place by the National Rivers Authority (now the EA), with funds from central government, to prevent further pollution.

## **Research into passive treatment options**

In 1994, a multidisciplinary team of scientists from universities, the National Rivers Authority and the mining industry used government funding to build a large pilot treatment plant to treat about 2% of the Wheal Jane mine water flow.

A series of shallow lined lagoons were used to evaluate different “passive” technologies, which established biological, geochemical and physical processes were effective at removing many key toxic metals like cadmium, copper and aluminium.

However, these passive systems require much more land than traditional chemical dosing – or “active” – systems and so would not be feasible for the very high flows that have to be pumped from the Wheal Jane mine to control water levels (which average 330 litres per second).

## **How the active treatment process works**

In 2000, a new active scheme was commissioned to improve management of the mine water and sludge, which continues to operate today.

Up to 660 litres per second of mine water is pumped from the historical workings to the pre-reaction chambers, where it is mixed with sludge recirculated from a later stage in the treatment process to aid the formation of high-density particles.

This then gravitates to the reaction chambers, where compressed air is introduced and it is dosed with lime slurry to create the required conditions for chemical reaction and metals precipitation.

Treated mine water gravitates to the lamella clarifiers – a type of “settler” designed to remove particulates from liquid – and sludge is returned to the pre-reaction chambers.

Treated mine water is discharged into the adjacent watercourse, which then flows down to the Carnon River.

Effluent is continuously monitored for pH (a measure of acidity or alkalinity) and suspended solids – any “out of spec” effluent is automatically diverted to the Clemows Valley tailings dam.

Surplus sludge is discharged to the sludge tank, from where it is pumped to the Clemows Valley tailings dam, a 114 acre raised mine waste containment

site, where it settles, dries and solidifies.

Any water draining from the dam is returned to the treatment plant.

### **The future of the Carnon River**

Although the Wheal Jane mine water treatment scheme is very effective, the Carnon River is still the most metal polluted river in England.

Monitoring by the EA shows that two key sources need to be treated to return the river to a healthy ecological condition. These are:

- the Great County Adit, a 65km network of tunnels that drain many abandoned mines
- the Tresavean Adit, located in Hicks Mill Stream, a tributary of the Carnon River

The EA and Coal Authority are investigating potential remedial options to manage pollution from both these sources.

This work underpins the government's [25 Year Environment Plan](#), which recognises that 'cleaning up pollution from abandoned metal mines will protect aquatic organisms and deliver economic and environmental benefits for local communities.' and solving pollution from abandoned metal mines will help to deliver statutory [River Basin Management Plans](#).

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## **Top award for regulator training**

News story

A training course for our regulators developed and delivered by our nuclear experts has won an international award.



The IChemE Awards attract interest from all over the globe and are widely recognised as the world's most prestigious chemical engineering awards.

The Sellafield Ltd awareness induction for new inspectors won the 'training and development' category in the Institution of Chemical Engineers (IChemE) [Global Awards 2020](#).

The induction, which covers the whole of the nuclear industry, is delivered by Sellafield Ltd employees to inspectors from the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) and Environment Agency, alongside input from across the nuclear sector.

The course was submitted to the awards as a joint entry by Sellafield Ltd and the ONR, and was announced as winner at a virtual event this week.

Sellafield Ltd, chief process engineer, Elisabeth Cooke said:

The work we did on the course has already been acknowledged by the ONR and won a Sellafield Ltd employee team award.

I'm delighted that the entry won as it provides recognition to the whole team – made up of those from Sellafield Ltd and their colleagues across the UK Nuclear sector.

The contributors to this course have demonstrated all of our expected behaviours whilst doing their bit to create a safe environment for future generations. I'm very proud to have been associated with such a dedicated group of nuclear professionals.

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## [Companies House urges all companies to sign up for email reminders](#)

News story

Companies should sign up to our email reminder service for annual accounts and confirmation statement – we're no longer sending paper reminders by post.



From Monday 9 November 2020, we're contacting all companies currently receiving paper reminders. The letter explains that we've stopped the paper service and shares our plans on how we'll reinvest the cost saving.

The service is free, and you can:

- choose up to 4 people to receive a reminder (including an agent)
- file your document immediately from a link within the email

Stopping the paper reminder letters will save us around £1.2 million each year. We can now reinvest this saving into our products and services, to make us more efficient and improve our customer experience.

More information about:

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## [Statement on UK-Singapore Economic and Business Partnership](#)

News story

The 6th annual UK-Singapore Economic and Business Partnership was held this week to strengthen and deepen the economic relationship between the UK and Singapore



On the 4th and 5th of November 2020, Antonia Romeo, Permanent Secretary for the Department for International Trade (DIT), and Sarah Munby, Permanent Secretary for the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), attended the 6th annual UK-Singapore Economic and Business Partnership (EBP) Steering Committee hosted by the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) in Singapore, Mr Gabriel Lim.

The EBP is an important platform for the UK and Singapore to discuss and deepen our trade, business and investment relationship. Taking place virtually over the course of two days, it was co-chaired by the Ministry for Trade and Industry for Singapore and jointly by BEIS and DIT in the UK.

The EBP Steering Committee was preceded by a business event with over 25 UK and Singapore business representatives on 30th October. This provided an opportunity for businesses to directly input to preparations for the EBP.

Discussions at the EBP Steering Committee focused on the economic and trade policy priorities for both countries, the COVID-19 pandemic and economic strategies to mitigate its impact, as well as opportunities to collaborate on green recovery, innovation and the digital economy where both the UK and Singapore have strong ambitions.

During the EBP, the UK reiterated its intention to pursue accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). Singapore is a key member of CPTPP and will take on the role of CPTPP Commission vice-chair in 2021.

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