

# Imerys British Lithium

## Newsletter | Spring 2024



# Ministerial Team Visit

Catch us  
at the Royal  
Cornwall Show  
6,7,8 June

**Minister of State Nusrat Ghani MP visited our lithium pilot plant near Roche in March. She was joined by Steve Double, MP for St Austell and Newquay, Matt Hatfield, Head of Critical Minerals and Mining and Helen Hunter-Hayes, IBL account manager at the Department of Business and Trade (DBT).**

Minister Ghani said of the project and site visit:

"The Southwest has a proud and productive mining history and heritage dating back to the Bronze Age and was the world-centre for the industry in the 18th century. I am absolutely delighted to see for myself how we are building on this wealth of expertise and promoting the Southwest as a world-class mining and mineral hub, boosting jobs, growth and levelling-up both here and across the UK.

"By 2040, the world will need four times more critical minerals like lithium than it does today. It is vital we secure them to improve supply chain resilience, supporting both our economy today and prosperity in the future."

Steve Double, MP for St Austell and Newquay added:

"Lithium extraction presents a huge opportunity for Cornwall to create new, well paid jobs and grow our local economy. I was delighted to bring Minister of State for Industry and Economic Security Nusrat Ghani to see Imerys British Lithium and meet the team who are developing this project. I will continue to work with Imerys British Lithium and the Government to help realise this exciting project."



"Government support has been and is critical in moving our project forward successfully."

"We look forward to completing our pre-feasibility study this year and moving into the planning phase in 2025, working closely with the Department for

Business and Trade, the Office for Investment, and our local and regional stakeholders to deliver this unique project that aims to contribute to the UK's energy transition and the development of an integrated EV value chain."

**Alan Parte**  
Imerys Lithium Projects VP  
and Imerys British Lithium CEO

## Have your say



Your feedback and questions are important to us.  
**Please complete the survey [here](#).**  
You can also fill in one of the paper forms available or contact us at [bl.info@imerys.com](mailto:bl.info@imerys.com)



# Protecting our local environment

**We are committed to the environment and aim for our proposals to be as sustainable as possible, both during development, operation and final restoration.**

As part of our commitment, we are undertaking a comprehensive baseline assessment of the existing environment and an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) that will help to inform and shape our proposals. We are also committed to the international IRMA standard that will help guide the management of our operations in the long term, representing the best in class.

Hensbarrow Beacon will be preserved free from development and public access will continue as present.

We'll maintain adjoining footpaths and temporarily divert them only when necessary, ensuring that a good range of public access is maintained.

We're planning to restore the derelict Grade II listed miner's cottage at the former Hensbarrow Farm and transform the complex into a heritage and visitors' centre. This will focus on the nature and history of the Hensbarrow landscape, the area's mining history and explain how local geology is contributing to a cleaner future for all.

The quarry site is likely to be the subject of a wet restoration scheme - which means it will be restored as a lake. This will be part of wider restoration proposals for the site which is likely to be returned to a mix of heathland, woodland and other complementary habitats. Our goal is to produce at least a 10 percent biodiversity net gain and an increase in native woodland cover.

## Plans on show in Roche and Bugle

**Since the start of 2024, we have held public consultations in Roche and Bugle. Around 150 people attended the two events, raising some excellent questions and providing great local insight.**

Exhibition boards provided information on plans for our future development from pilot to full-scale lithium carbonate production and members of our team were on hand to answer any questions.

"There was a good deal of interest shown in all aspects of our operation and some fascinating stories shared by those who have lived in the area for many years," said Mark Hewson, Imerys UK Director.

"We had a photo of the ruins of an old miner's cottage on display, for example, and someone attending our Roche event told us that he knew the person who used to live there. That building is now likely to be incorporated into the visitor and heritage centre we're proposing and knowledge like that is very valuable when compiling the area's history.

"Mining is a big part of Cornwall's history and culture and I think that was evident in a general sense of positivity at both consultations."

### Further public consultations will be taking place at:

- Penwithick Community Centre on 18 June
- Treverbyn Community Hall on 31 July
- St Dennis Clay TAWC on 11 September
- St Stephen Social Club & Community Centre on 23 October



# Your Questions Answered

Across our two local events – Roche and Bugle – we listened to local people raise some great questions. We have answered some of the most common ones here:

## What will you do with all the additional rock after the lithium is extracted?

During the operation phase, rock will be used to fill existing voids from kaolin mining. These areas will be restored and improved, we are committed to improving biodiversity by at least 10% from the current baseline.

## What impact will this project have on the environment?

Our aim is to design a project which will be well accepted and integrated into its local environment. We will work closely with Cornwall Council, Natural England, Historic England and local charities such as Cornwall Wildlife Trust to minimise impact on the environment, wildlife and historic environment. We will also engage with the local communities in this area and take on board as many opinions and as much local knowledge as possible.

## How many extra lorries will be on the roads?

The project is unique globally as our quarry, beneficiation plant and refinery will be co-located, removing much of the need to transport large tonnages over long distances.

Most of the traffic associated with the mining process will move on Imerys private roads within the project site, with major movements by electric conveyor and pipeline.

We will also make use of existing rail via a nearby siding within Imerys' land for transporting other consumables that we need.

During construction of the full-scale plant, there will be some extra traffic on the local roads. We will however, use internal haul roads where possible.

The new Roche bypass road giving the project direct access to the A30 will be open at this stage, passing through the project site, avoiding Roche and other small, local villages. We will do everything we can during the construction phase to minimise and mitigate any impact. We encourage those that feel they may be affected to contact us so we can work together to quickly and effectively address their concerns.

Our aim is to design a project which will be well accepted and integrated into its local environment. We will work closely to achieve certification from IRMA – the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA) – this is the answer to a global demand for more socially and environmentally responsible mining.

## What job opportunities will there be for local people?

We expect to need more than 300 new full time employees for the full-scale project and many more will be required during the construction phase. This creates opportunities for local residents, especially young people who will be able to train under newly developed apprenticeships and other courses.

We are already considering what training courses will be developed with our local education partners. This presents a fantastic opportunity for many Cornish people.

## Doesn't lithium production require a lot of water?

Our proposed operation recycles all the water it uses and should meet its own requirements. Imerys has significant water supplies across its estate meaning we will not need to draw from SWW resources.

As our unique process uses minimal chemicals, we can recycle water easily back into the process, and we will not be releasing any contaminated water.

## If the process requires lots of energy – how is that 'green'?

Cornwall is well supplied with renewable energy and this is increasing all the time, we will use this as much as possible.

We are also in conversation with the National Grid about accessing more energy.

## Meet Jacob Southey

Jacob is a geochemist who grew up in nearby Rescorla and went to Poltair School in St Austell.

After achieving a degree in geology at the University of Plymouth, he moved on to the University of St Andrews where he was awarded a Master's degree in Geochemistry.



Jacob initially joined IBL for three months as an intern in 2020 before returning full-time in September 2022 as a laboratory technician. Now employed as a geochemist, his role involves process work in the pilot plant and on-site environmental monitoring.

"It's been amazing to see how much progress IBL has made since I was first here on work experience and that's very satisfying from a professional point of view," he said.

"My job is continually evolving - with more emphasis at the moment on collecting, interpreting and reporting on environmental data and designing testwork."

"I really enjoy what I do and am proud to be part of the IBL team."

## Meet Gaby Pazos

Gaby joined our team as a junior exploration geologist late last year.

Originally from Ecuador where she got a degree in geoenvironment, Gaby completed a Master's degree at Camborne School of Mines. She now lives in St Austell and is enjoying her new role - her first job since graduation.



"I find it very interesting and like the fact that no two days are the same," she said.

"I love walking and Cornwall has some beautiful landscapes. The weather is a lot more changeable than Ecuador but it's great to be here and I'm learning a lot."

## Timeline

2017

British Lithium begins field exploration, mapping and surveys

2018

UK's first lithium drilling takes place on Imerys land

2019

-20

Geological evidence for mineral resource officially declared

Patent applications for new technology made

Innovate UK awards £1.5m research and development grant

Preliminary Economic Evaluation successfully achieved

2021

Pilot plant built, partly financed by £2m government grant

99.8% pure lithium carbonate produced at pilot scale

2022

-23

Ongoing work in the pilot plant

£2m scale-up readiness validation grant awarded by Automotive Transformation Fund

Imerys British Lithium formed

Geological evidence for significant lithium deposit declared

## Next steps

2024

Environmental baseline work progressed. Pre-feasibility study completed

2025

Full planning application submitted

2026

Construction of full-scale plant begins

&lt;2030

Commercial operations start

## Contact us

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