

Summer 2023

Berwick

What Happens at Augean Berwick?

Augean Berwick is a hazardous facility operating a range of waste treatment and recovery processes and providing comprehensive waste solutions to customers.

The site has a particular expertise in providing specialist metal recovery to a wide range of industries, so this valuable and finite resource is not wasted. Metals such as Copper, Nickel and Cobalt, to name just a few, can be recovered and recycled from a variety of wastes such as water-based solutions, filter cakes and contaminated solids.

Berwick is also the only industrial-scale Mercury recovery facility in the UK. In the recovery plant Mercury compounds in contaminated wastes can be broken down into the metallic form of Mercury. The site also offers a nationwide Mercury decontamination and spill service.



Copper recovery



Future Industrial Services Ltd Acquired by Augean

In March 2023, Augean completed the acquisition of Future Industrial Services Limited (FIS) which now has become part of the Augean Group.

The combined business will offer a more diverse range of recycling, recovery, treatment and disposal services for hard to handle wastes underpinned by a network of strategically located sites and service centres. The Augean Group now has 23 sites across the UK. This enhanced footprint will allow the company to work to achieve the best environmental outcomes for wastes through an increased spectrum of capabilities.

Both Augean and FIS have a wealth of expertise, high standards of operation and strong reputations for excellent customer service. Most importantly FIS shares a strong commitment to health, safety, and environmental compliance, which is a cornerstone of the business. With these same objectives and values, Augean has wholeheartedly welcomed all its FIS colleagues into the Augean Group.

Importantly, this is an example of the ongoing support and investment in the future of the company by Augean's shareholders Ancala Partners and Fiera Capital Infrastructure.



What are Hard to Handle Wastes?

Hard to handle wastes refers to many common waste materials produced by modern industrial or commercial markets that possess characteristics which mean that they have the potential to harm the environment or human health. These are often known as hazardous waste. For this reason, these wastes need to be managed and handled in a careful and expert way.

While the term 'hazardous' may seem worrying, in reality if you open up the cupboard under your kitchen sink or look in your garage or garden shed, you will find many very common items that you handle daily that are classified as hazardous if you need to dispose of them.

Our network of sites across the UK allows for a wide range of hazardous

and non-hazardous wastes to be treated, or sorted and sent to an appropriate facility, so that materials can be re-used, recycled, recovered or the hazardous content reduced. Where no further treatment or recovery is possible, we are also supported by a hazardous landfill site in the North East and one in the East Midlands, two of less than 10 such facilities in the UK, for safe final disposal.



Some common examples of these hazardous wastes include:

Construction and Demolition Wastes:

e.g. contaminated soil, treated wood and asbestos.

Electronic Wastes:

e.g. televisions, fluorescent tubes and computer monitors.

Industrial waste:

e.g. solvents, paint, varnish, oils, cleaning cloths, filters and used protective clothing.

Residue from Other Waste Treatment:

e.g. ash from incinerators or dewatered sludge from treatment plants

Where does the name Augean come from?

Did you realise there is a meaning behind the name of Augean? It does not sound like a name from the UK, so it is often assumed that Augean may possibly be a French company? The name is indeed not native in origin, but it is not French!

The name Augean actually has its origins in the myths and stories of Ancient Greece, specifically those of the legendary hero Heracles, who we know more commonly by the name he was given by the Romans – Hercules. Of the many tales of Hercules, probably the most famous is the Twelve Labours of Hercules which is where you will find the meaning of Augean.

In this legend, Hercules was obliged to be in the service of the King of Mycenae for ten years. The King thought of Hercules as a rival and a threat, as he was actually the rightful ruler of Mycenae, and so he set him a series of seemingly impossible or highly dangerous tasks. The fifth of these tasks was to clean the stables of the exceedingly numerous livestock of King Augeas – the Augean Stables. The accumulated filth in the stables had not been dealt with in decades and Hercules had only one day to complete the job.

Instead of relying on just his prodigious strength to muck out the stables in the conventional way, Hercules also applied

some intelligence to achieving the goal. He dug channels that diverted two rivers

so that they flowed directly through the stables, completely cleaning them within the deadline of a day.

Today the phrase 'cleaning the Augean Stables' is synonymous with a large and often unpleasant, task that can only be achieved with great difficulty but will only get worse with inaction. Dealing with the more difficult to manage wastes that our society produces has become Augean's

modern Herculean Task that we approach with the same care, innovation and intelligence as the ancient hero.



Meet the Site Manager

As our site at the East Ord Industrial Estate in Berwick-upon-Tweed transitions from Future Industrial Services to Augean, you may well have seen changes to signage around the site. Another key change that has taken place is the promotion of Ryan Reay to the position of Site Manager.

Ryan has worked at the site for over seven years and so has a detailed knowledge of how it operates already. As well as his operational experience, he also has our shared enthusiasm for Health, Safety and Compliance, ensuring the safety and welfare of our employees at all times and delivering the best environmental outcomes.

Augean has always made a conscious effort to be part of and support the local communities near to our sites. This important aspect of our business ethos is realised in a variety of ways through our Community Funds, discretionary donations to local community groups or projects, regular litter picks and charitable fundraising. As the new Site Manager, and especially as a local man himself, Ryan is eager to develop similar activities and forge stronger links within the community going forward.

Ryan is also keen that we continue to act as a good neighbour and will be the main contact for the local community if anyone has any questions or concerns about the site.

Ryan Reay
Site Manager



Health and Safety First

Historically, the waste management industry did not have a good reputation for Health and Safety. For nearly two decades, Augean has been a leading figure in changing that perception, by building a culture within the company where Health and Safety is at the forefront in the mind of every employee, every day.

Employees are encouraged to report even minor cuts and grazes as the next person doing the same thing might not be so lucky. Reporting Near Misses are also encouraged, where an accident nearly happened but didn't, so we can change that action or process to make it safer. Reporting Safe Acts can also help make changes for the better. We set annual

targets for the reporting of Safe/Unsafe Acts or Conditions and we communicate our progress on this back to everyone on a regular basis. All of our workers are made to feel empowered enough that they feel able to stop any unsafe working practice or action, whether this is by a colleague, regardless of seniority, or a contractor.

Our attitude to Health and Safety may not be shared by other companies. When it is necessary to use an outside contractor on one of our sites, they are given a full site induction where the site rules are explained, how we do things on site and any potential hazards are clearly identified.

One of the biggest risks when it comes to Health and Safety is complacency. Raising

and keeping awareness of the safety of all our staff and those around them is a constant task that is never finished.



One of our apprentice Chemists

Apprenticeships at Augean

We see our people as our greatest asset. They are a key resource that possess the skills and qualifications necessary for us to safely deliver the wide range of services that we offer in a challenging sector. Continuous training and personal development investment in all our workforce forms an essential part of our continued success.

The waste sector is very exciting to work in and Augean provides roles that may be not immediately obvious like employing chemists and engineers. There are diverse opportunities that could lead to being part of providing innovative solutions to manage difficult by-products of the things we use every day, reducing carbon, reusing waste, and developing waste as a resource. There is a fantastic opportunity for everyone in the sector to make a difference to the environment and leave a positive legacy.

Augean invests in encouraging the workforce of tomorrow through Apprenticeships. These allow young people, or those wanting a change of direction, to develop the right skills and knowledge for a career in the context of a real, paid job, learning alongside more experienced workers. The hands-on experience underpins the 20 per cent of working hours that are spent in study towards qualifications.

There are now Apprentices at most of Augean's sites (and the equivalent in Scotland where Apprenticeships work a little differently) filling a variety of different roles. Our Apprentices play an essential part in supporting the success of teams across the company and are crucial to ensuring that Augean has the highly skilled people that we need, now and in the future.

Changing Perceptions With NUSTEM

NUSTEM is an educational initiative started by Northumbria University to encourage more young people to consider a career in Science, Technology, Engineering or Maths (STEM) and also increasing the diversity of people who do so.

Working primarily with partner schools across the North East, NUSTEM believes that early and sustained engagement is very important to changing attitudes and perceptions of STEM. Their outreach ranges from pre-school to post-16 education using a variety of interactions, from in-person workshops and events, including family workshops, to providing resources and guidance for teachers and families.

A key element is helping children and young people to see the importance of STEM in the world around us and how

studying science can translate into a wide variety of career pathways and professions. One tool that is used to engage with children is the STEM Person of the Week cards distributed to local schools, which introduces a diverse range of STEM role models that challenges stereotypes and changes the vocabulary to describe science and scientists. A recent STEM Person of the Week featured our very own Site Manager from Augean Berwick.

Augean is committed to continuing to develop our relationship with NUSTEM and our own educational initiatives, such as careers breakfast earlier in the year at Berwick Academy, to promote STEM with Primary and Secondary school children and young people in the area. To find out more about NUSTEM and what they do please visit www.nustem.uk



Chemical analysis in our site laboratory

The Waste Hierarchy

The protection of the environment and human health through the safe and responsible management of wastes that we all collectively produce as a society is the primary role of the waste management industry. In recent years there have been significant changes in policy and legislation designed to encourage an increase in treatment, recycling, reuse or recovery of waste. This is referred to as the waste hierarchy.

There is a need to produce less waste and manage the wastes that cannot be reduced in the most effective way. This means putting waste to beneficial use; or recycling it into another useful product; or deriving energy from it like energy from waste plants. This is particularly important for managing household waste.

There is increased customer and public interest in sustainable methods of waste management, and this has encouraged companies like Augean to take an innovative approach. We have sought to continuously improve the services

we provide by introducing new processes so we can continue to deliver the best environmental techniques and solutions for waste management. The company explores ways of improving existing techniques and ways in which it can increase the recycling and reuse of materials following treatment and to substitute wastes for products in processes saving material resources and limiting the amount and types of wastes sent to landfill.

We all want to see reuse and recycling improve, but the reality of that ambition is that these processes on industrial waste streams will always generate small quantities of material that can't be reused, recycled or recovered in a cost-effective manner. This is normally because the wastes are contaminated or their chemical composition means the residues cannot be safely reused, recycled or recovered without presenting



long-term environmental risks. Therefore, the best environmental option for that material is in a landfill that has been constructed to ensure the residues are sealed to prevent unacceptable risk to human health or the environment. Landfills are an important necessity of the waste management infrastructure that a thriving economy needs, and they might well be a resource in the future.

Waste Crime

Fly tipping is probably the most visible type of waste crime that we see or experience on a regular basis. Unfortunately there are a range of types of waste crimes that are not so visible, these are generally categorised as; waste sites that are operating without permits or regulation, sites that do have permits but the actual activities of the site breach these, misclassifying waste, burning waste and illegally exporting waste.

While there may be different types of waste crime, they all present a danger to the environment and human health. They also have a very tangible cost in other ways. In 2021, the Environmental Services Association (ESA) conservatively estimated that waste crime cost the UK economy £924 million in 2018/2019, and it is probably more than that in 2023. This is a substantial rise from the estimated cost in 2015 of £604 million to taxpayers, legitimate businesses and private landowners through loss of revenue and the expense of clean up.

As a responsible waste operator, Augean abides by a very wide range of regulation and legislation to lawfully operate as a business. Planning permission has been sought for every Augean site and permits obtained that set out in minute detail what can and cannot be present or carried out on each specific site. The relevant permits for each site are published on our website at www.augean.co.uk. As well as our own internal inspection programme, Augean's

performance on every aspect of a site is subject to scrutiny from external bodies such as the Environment Agency, Health and Safety Executive and other independent auditors.

It is a collective responsibility that all the waste that we produce as a modern society is reused, recycled, recovered or disposed of in the most appropriate and legal way.



If you have any concerns about the waste activities of an individual or a business, you can anonymously raise your concerns with CrimeStoppers by calling 0800 555 111 or on their website www.crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information.

CONTACT

Despite the change of name we are keen to continue to act as a good neighbour. To ask any questions or to raise any concerns about our sites, please contact:

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Email: info@augean.co.uk



For further information about Augean, please visit www.augean.co.uk or contact our Telephone Helpline: **01904 373057**

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