



Newsletter
December 2009

Jonathon Porritt, Tom Burke to speak against Hinkley C

Former Directors of Friends of the Earth and famous nuclear critics Jonathon Porritt and Tom Burke will speak at Stop Hinkley public meetings.

We will say more about well known environmentalist, Jonathon Porritt in the next newsletter as he will speak later, on Tuesday March 16th.

Professor Tom Burke CBE will speak on Wednesday 6th January at Bridgwater Town Hall. This is timed to coincide with EdF Energy's Hinkley Point consultation ending on 11th January and the Government nuclear policy consultation ending on 22nd February.

As chairman of four high powered environmental committees, Tom Burke has made many challenging statements on nuclear power. On the Radio 4 'Today' programme recently he said 'The UK would have to build nuclear reactors for fifteen years before we save a single tonne of carbon dioxide.'

One report backed up with figures, 'Decoding Nuclear Nonsense', sums things up his clearly:

"The Government's case for new nuclear build in Britain rests on two key propositions: that it is essential to maintain Britain's energy security and that without it Britain cannot meet its climate change emissions. Neither proposition is valid. Nuclear power can do nothing to improve Britain's energy security or help it meet the urgent challenge of climate change."

Although Tom received a CBE for his services to the environment, having advised several Government ministers, he was 'disinvited' from all three major party conferences this autumn. His views were obviously too dangerous for EdF who sponsored the energy fringe

meetings, according to the Guardian on 1st October:

"And so it was that Tom Burke – a former executive director of Friends of the Earth; special adviser to Michael Heseltine, Michael Howard and John Gummer when they were environment secretaries; and co-founder of Third Generation Environmentalism – found himself in May booked to speak at a series of debates at all three party conferences; and then, last month, found himself unbooked again. The events were sponsored by EDF. The company, having agreed to his appearances, appears to have thought better of the idea. Did it get cold feet? Wouldn't that be something."

The head of Greenpeace's nuclear campaign Ben Ayliffe will share the platform at the Bridgwater meeting.

We will distribute leaflets in local areas so please volunteer if you can help. A basic version is enclosed with this newsletter. Ask us for more coloured leaflets to be posted to you. 0208 395 6191 or stophinkley@aol.com

EdF's Hinkley consultation relates mainly to local planning issues such as hostels for 1,000 workers, a new Cannington by-pass and park-and-ride schemes. The mood of one recent meeting was that EdF can build what they want behind the fence of their massive 500 acre site (four times the area of Hinkley A and B sites combined) but they shouldn't intrude on local villages. One attendee said, "Never have so few imposed themselves on so many!" Security rules since 9/11 restrict workers' accommodation on site.

The latest EdF Hinkley newsletter shows that, from their earlier information-gathering, 78 percent of people have concerns about emissions and pollution while 75 percent are worried about the health and safety of surrounding communities. Respondents said these top issues need to be addressed 'to a very great extent' and came above concerns about traffic at 69%, the construction process 63% and visual effect 40%. Despite this unsurprising long-standing concern about nuclear power, EdF's consultation questionnaire only asks about 'safer' more parochial issues.

National Policy Statement

The Government NPS on nuclear power was announced in November with a consultation. Respondents have until 22nd February to reply on the broader, national questions such as nuclear's role in a low carbon economy.

The Government also launched its consultation on '**Justification**'. This relates to a new EU law whereby governments must defend implementing any new radioactive practices, weighing potential health effects against any advantages.

The Government also set in motion the new **Infrastructure Planning Commission** which will assess the planning application for Hinkley C. The speeded up process replaces the previous public inquiry system but may still take up to a year to judge the Hinkley case. But in 1988-89 the previous Hinkley C inquiry took just 14 months. There may not be much time-saving now but certainly less scrutiny with no possibility for objectors to cross-examine industry experts as in 1988.

'Justification' and health effects

On this issue, Stop Hinkley supporters will be aware of the local health studies we have commissioned which show: excess breast cancer mortality (90 percent over 4 years, Green Audit, 2000) in Burnham North; excess breast cancer incidence (30% over 10 years 1990-99, SW Cancer Intelligence Service and 21% higher over 13 years Green Audit, 2002) and three-fold higher infant deaths along the downwind coast from Hinkley (Green Audit, 2007).

Last year a German Government study found a doubling of childhood leukaemia within five kilometres of all 15 nuclear power station sites (KIKK, 2008). German reactors run on the same Pressurised Water system as the European Pressurised Reactors proposed for Hinkley. But EdF wants to build two of them which would make Hinkley the biggest nuclear power station in the UK. EdF have not published their predictions of radioactive discharges from the two planned reactors.

'Justification' could be a weak area for the Government plans, with Ed Milliband the final decision-maker despite his open bias towards nuclear power. Please send in even a short response on the question challenging his neutrality and quoting health studies.

Hinkley C nuclear waste

Compounding the risks for local residents the **spent fuel** from Hinkley C will be twice as hot and twice as radioactive as spent fuel from Sizewell B. It will therefore be stored in a cooling pond on site for **one hundred years** before it is physically capable of being placed in containers. **So from start to end the nuclear waste will stay in West Somerset for at least 160 years. The Government has appallingly ruled this issue out of bounds for the IPC local planning process.**

Whether even then it will be 'disposable' is an open question. The **Generic Design Assessment** team (part of HSE), examining the safety of the new reactor designs, had received a report on spent fuel 'disposability' but interestingly did not comment on it in their recent assessment, widely covered in the media on 21st November. An independent expert says the issue is crucial to nuclear progress.

A Government promise that plans will be in place to build a permanent Deep Geological Repository *before new reactors are built* starts looks highly unlikely to be kept. This is another challengeable area for nuclear plans in the Policy Statement consultation.

Opponents can also refer to Gordon McKerron, chair of CoRWM (Committee of Radioactive Waste Management) He has repeatedly stated that their proposals for burial of 'legacy' nuclear waste from existing reactors

was not meant to apply to waste from new reactors. CoRWM's position was it would be better not to create any more nuclear waste, as new waste posed different ethical questions.

Safety concerns

The HSE reported their concern about the safety system in the French EPR reactor design. In an unprecedented joint statement, the French, UK and Finnish regulators condemned the computerised system.

They added that more work needed to be done by EdF on ensuring cracks don't develop in the nuclear fuel cladding. This is especially important due to the intensity of the 'high burn up' fuel. And they were concerned that analysis of human factors linked to reactor safety was insufficient.

They had even more to say about the Westinghouse AP1000 design which could be built at Oldbury by 'Horizon', a new EON, RWE conglomerate. The regulators echoed US reports that the containment building could be destroyed in an earthquake, tornado or even high winds! They also questioned the design of new massive 'squib valves' designed to inject a charge of pressurised water into the cooling system if it fails. But HSE thought it might not work when needed or even go off when not needed, dangerously over-pressurising the cooling system.

National activists' network

Stop Hinkley and other group representatives took part in a weekend workshop aimed at involving more climate and coal campaigners into the anti-nuclear power movement. We have since put together and printed 5,000 leaflets which we will hand out at 'The Wave' demonstration in London on 5th December.

Protest

Another outcome of the weekend was a decision to hold a protest outside the EdF offices in Bridgwater to coincide with the Government Energy and Climate Change Select Committee examining the Nuclear Policy Statement.

We will gather on Friday 15th January at 11am in King Square, Bridgwater. Please join us, wearing tape over your mouth or a gag, representing our unheard voices. Tell your friends.

Nuclear Economics

Stop Hinkley attended a nuclear economics conference held at the Houses of Parliament and hosted by Simon Hughes MP. Speakers including Prof Stephen Thomas, Prof Tom Burke and Prof Gordon McKerron lined up to say nuclear power in the UK could not happen without some form of state subsidy.

EdF are in debt to about £32 billion. They had gone on a spending spree, buying British Energy and US Constellation and are now struggling. Having asked the French Government for a 20 percent (!) rise in electricity prices for extensive repairs to their ageing fleet of reactors, the EdF Chief Executive was promptly sacked and EdF were allowed just two percent leaving a black hole in their accounts.

In the UK EdF have asked for a higher 'carbon price' which will hike electricity bills by an estimated yearly average of £227.



To take part in the Government consultations go to:

<https://www.energynpsconsultation.decc.gov.uk/home/> where you can order hard copies of the consultation documents. Or call 0870 600 5533. Ask for all documents related to the nuclear policy statement and 'justification'.

Timetable of events

In the coming months a complex set of milestones are due, which are outlined as follows, including campaign events:

December

5th The Wave pre-Copenhagen climate demo - Grosvenor Square to the Houses of Parliament 12-3pm.

5th EdF exhibition at Danesfield School, Williton, 10-4pm

8th Stop Hinkley campaign meeting, West Bow House, Milton Place, Bridgwater. 7.30pm.

8th EdF exhibition at The Exchange, Express Park, Bridgwater 2-8pm

11th EdF exhibition, Princess Theatre, Burnham 2-8pm

14th EdF exhibition, 14, King Square, Bridgwater

January

6th Tom Burke public meeting, Bridgwater Town Hall, 7.30pm.

7th Follow up campaign meeting, B/W

11th End of EdF Hinkley stage 1 consultation.

15th Protest outside EdF offices in King Square, Bridgwater, 11am. Wear a gag!

February

22nd End of Government (DECC) National Policy Statement consultation.

22nd End of Government (DECC) Justification consultation.

March

EdF expected to make application to Infrastructure Planning Commission.

16th Jonathon Porritt to speak at a SH public meeting. Venue to be announced.

May

Launch of Environment Agency consultation on reactor designs.

August

Generic Design Assessment publishes next step submissions from EdF, Westinghouse.

September

End of EA consultation

End of public comments to GDA.

June 2011 GDA announces results of design assessment process.

2012 EdF hope to start building reactors at Hinkley Point.

December 2017 EdF hope to start the first of two EPR reactors at Hinkley.

Events

Prof Tom Burke CBE
Nuclear Power:
Do we need it?
Town Hall, High St,
Bridgwater
Wed 6th January 7.30pm

Jonathon Porritt CBE
Speaking locally
Venue to be announced
Tuesday 16th March

Stop Hinkley meetings
Tuesday 8th December 7.30pm
Thursday 7th January 7.30pm

West Bow House, Milton Place
off West Street, Bridgwater

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