



Newsletter April 2014

Glastonbury Council Urges Hinkley Opposition

18 March

Glastonbury Town Council has written to 300 Town and Parish Councils in Somerset, urging them to oppose a new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point.

The letter raises concerns over nuclear waste storage, nuclear accidents, and the impact of construction traffic on the county. It says that since the council agreed to write to other councils, the record flooding and storm surges in West Somerset have only deepened those concerns. And it ends, "We believe that statements of concern and opposition by local representative bodies such as yours could play a part in determining Somerset's future for the good".

A recent meeting with EDF has done nothing to allay the town's fears, according to Councillor Jon Cousins (St Edmunds Ward).

"Basically, EDF pulled out of a public meeting and sent David Eccles to our council meeting instead to tell us that Hinkley C would be good for jobs," said Mr Cousins. "He could tell us nothing about the nuclear emergency plan for Glastonbury - except that we shouldn't eat or drink anything - and assured us without a blink that EDF were prepared to store spent fuel at Hinkley Point for thousands of years".

"I was shocked to discover that the spent fuel building will not be as heavily protected as the reactor building, making it an obvious target for a malicious attack - and it will still be vulnerable to attack or natural disaster long after EDF have packed up their profits and gone".

The letter from Glastonbury Town to other councils says that Hinkley C would be "the most expensive nuclear power station on the planet" but that the final investment decision has still to be made, as the government's deal with EDF is now under review by the competition commission.

"It's not too late for Somerset people and councils to raise a voice and stop this project before the construction traffic has started rolling," said Councillor Denise Michell (St Benedict's Ward). "Glastonbury is a town which is ill-prepared for the impact of that traffic. But, despite a very reasonable appeal from Councillor Ian Tucker, Mr Eccles said that ultimately it would be up to

contractors which roads they used and EDF could not be expected to give us any assurances."

"It seems that all the big issues with this project are someone else's responsibility, and EDF's only responsibility is making the money. With the public subsidy agreed by the government, Hinkley C profits are apparently set to be well over £50 billion. That puts the so called "benefits to the community" into perspective. Somerset could end up shouldering the liabilities of this project for generations, and Glastonbury council are not at all happy about that," she said.

An Taisce has been granted leave to take its legal challenge against Hinkley Point C to an appeals court.

Yahoo news, 27 March

The Irish national trust body has argued that the UK government contravened international law by not consulting the Irish authorities before receiving approval to build a new power plant, something which a UN Committee wants to be looked at further.

The two-reactor plant at Hinkley Point in Somerset will be the UK's first new nuclear plant for a generation. French energy company EDF clinched a €18.9 billion deal to build it in October — once that deal is confirmed next year, the station could be in operation by 2023.

It's planned that, at full capacity, the two reactors will be able to produce seven per cent of Britain's electricity, enough to power five million homes.

The High Court in London ruled late last week that "there was no need to consult the public in Ireland in the circumstances".

Taisce stressed that it is not a discussion on the safety and viability of a nuclear power plant.

"It's about the public's right to participate in decisions which could affect their lives," An Taisce's Natural Environment Officer and In-house solicitor Andrew Jackson said, "fundamental environmental democratic rights which are underpinned by international and EU law."

He said there was an important "public interest" element to the case.

Pressure mounting over £16bn nuclear site for Hinkley Point

The Independent, 22 March 2014

The Government's plans for a new £16bn nuclear plant at Hinkley Point have been dealt a double blow by the UN and a powerful group of MPs.

A United Nations environmental committee has warned that there is "profound suspicion" that the UK failed to properly consult neighbouring countries over the possible environmental impact that Hinkley Point C could have on them.

In a letter to the Department for Communities and Local Government the chair of the UN's implementation committee on the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment said that the UK's only consultation efforts amounted to "informal exchanges" with Ireland and Austria.

Separately, Joan Walley, who chairs Parliament's Environmental Audit Committee, has written to the European Competition Commissioner, Joaquin Almunia, to help an EU investigation into state aid for the two new reactors at Hinkley Point. This inquiry is considered the last big obstacle preventing the construction of a power station expected to meet around 7 per cent of the country's energy needs from 2023.

The French energy giant EDF could only be persuaded to build the plant if a minimum price was guaranteed for the electricity generated from Hinkley C, thereby ensuring a return for shareholders worried about the enormous upfront construction costs. This minimum, known as the "strike price", would be covered through increases in consumer bills.

The Government has argued that the deal is not really a subsidy, but Mr Almunia fired off a toughly worded 70-page critique, warning that the strike price could give EDF excess profit. He said this could make the deal illegal under EU law.

Ms Walley said in the letter that "the Government was wrong to insist that Hinkley Point was not being subsidised". She has pointed Mr Almunia to a critical committee report published in December to convince him that Hinkley Point should not go ahead under its current financing arrangement.

She added: "As our Energy Subsidies report made clear, our own inquiry concluded that the Government's proposed deal for Hinkley Point constituted a subsidy... The Government's policy is to provide no public subsidy for new nuclear."

The report argued that the strike price would enable EDF to raise capital at a lower cost than under normal circumstances, meaning that it was "already clear that new nuclear is being subsidised". A cross-party think-tank warned this week that returns for EDF will be much higher than for similar projects.

Local Hinkley News

from Allan Jeffery

All seems quiet at the Hinkley C site. It looks as though EDF will not do any major building preparation work, bypass or jetty until a final investment decision about the power plant has been made. Each year this decision seems to be pushed forward into the future! At the Cannington Parish meeting local councilors and residents were informed that this decision might be at the "back end of the year" by Ross Edwards of EDF, due to the EU consultation investigating the legality of government's proposed contract with EDF.

As for the Cannington bypass, EDF project manager, Kevin Murray, said that over the summer, ecological and archaeological enabling works will be carried out. If and when building of the bypass starts, he said, the project should take about 18 months, though EDF still have to select a preferred bidder. Some residents were not happy about the competence of the EDF solicitors in dealing with local bypass issues. Another resident challenged the drainage plans and was worried about possible flood water run off into the south of the village.

Meanwhile, traffic delays from 5 to 45 minutes and long traffic queues are a feature of EDF building a new roundabout between Bridgwater and Cannington on the A39. These traffic light controlled road works are to run for 6 months. Perhaps this is a sign of things to come for at least 10 years of vastly increased building traffic if the new power reactors are built?

Traffic cameras with automatic number plate recognition are now familiar sites on all the roads between the M5 motorway junctions, through Bridgwater and along the A39 and the villages to Hinkley Point. Don't worry, these are EDF's way of managing the vehicle, HGV and worker coach traffic on these crowded roads if building of the station does go ahead.

Apart from improving the security measures between the reactor sites, the only work that was done recently at the C station site was some groundwork involving geological testing where they will build a huge 6million gallon static freshwater storage facility. This is a new addition to the plans as a result of extra safety features that had to be added as a result of learning from the Fukushima accident.

At the Site Stake Holders Group meeting it was reported that the floods and bad weather did not restrict access to the sites, though some workers had required assistance in travelling to work from flooded areas, and at times some workers had been allowed to leave early during very bad weather. The station does have some 4x4 vehicles to help.

Stop Hinkley members joined up with SWAN on 11th March to Remember Fukushima in Bristol.

[report by Jo Smoldon]

We took out waste barrels and a small PA system near the council offices on College Green in Bristol on the Anniversary of the Great Tohoku quake that initiated the beginning of the on-going nuclear crisis in Japan. Its been a while since I was 'on the streets' of Bristol. I had done a series of street stalls on College Green shortly after 'Occupy' moved off the Green 2 years ago and I felt there has been a shift in peoples response since then. Perhaps it was the barrel costumes that made the difference, but I engaged with no-one out to argue, which was great. On the contrary, as I walked through Broadmead and across to the centre I had people laughing, which I see as very positive. Laughter is good energy for the giver and the receiver. A very powerful force, pity we can't run cars on it!



I had one cafe owner come out and offer me tea, and a driver stopped, wound down the window and said how much he liked the costume. We had people wanting to stop and chat as we walked over the centre and they were coming across for leaflets as we stood at the bottom of Park Street.

SWAN had an audio of the evacuation warnings interspersed with some well chosen music which seemed to help the delivery flow smoothly. I persuaded a person who would otherwise not have worn the costume to join in. She could see and feel the benefit of how street theatre works. If you haven't tried a costume on and walked in the street get in touch and we will let you know where and when the next time the barrels will be rolled out. I am sure you will enjoy the experience.

Since then Bristol City Council has had to admit that it couldn't evacuate the city in the event of a nuclear emergency at either Hinkley or Oldbury.

See here for the short video we made https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0GM0K7e_guU

Other Fukushima Anniversary Events

[Reports by Nikki Clark]

Film screening & Expert Panel

I attended a film screening of Into Eternity – the Finnish film about their experience of trying to implement a waste repository for long term storage of higher activity radioactive waste and the ethical, temporal, technical political and social issues that this issue throws up.

After the screening I sat on a panel with two representatives from the Environment Agency's Radioactive Substances department. We took questions from the floor and discussed the issues that the film raises for us in our communities, which was pretty compelling stuff as folks in Somerset grappled with the reality of the recent floods that have brought widespread devastation to the land in Somerset – the home of Hinkley Point Nuclear Power Plants.

London

On Saturday 15th March, as part of the numerous events that were organised around the country, we attended a march and rally in London with a great display from the Nuclear Waste Barrels and the first appearance of DECCs Nuclear waste Fairy!

Public Meetings

We organised two public meetings in solidarity with Frack-Free February. Dr Ian Fairlie spoke on the radiation risks of nuclear and fracking and Nikki Clark talked about Energy Democracy. One meeting took place in Bridgwater and the other in Bristol.

A film is being made of the events and will be available in due course.

We are changing the dates of Stop Hinkley meetings to the first and third Mondays of each month.

The first meeting of the month will be a social meeting, which new members will be encouraged to attend and will either be a film and/or a discussion on a relevant subject. May 5th is a Bank Holiday so we will meet on Tuesday 6th.

The third Monday of the month will be the business meeting when the Coordinating group will be working on current SH business with other invited members who wish to actively help the team.

All meetings start at 7.30pm and will be held at West Bow House.

AFTER THE FLOODS

What Future for Somerset in an era of climate change?

PUBLIC MEETING: ALL INVITED
Tuesday 22nd April 7.30pm at GWRSA/Railway Club, Wellington Rd, Bridgwater TA6 5HA

Massive floods in Somerset and on the Thames; record-breaking rain; a nation battered by wave after wave of storms; ruined fields; shattered homes, roads and railways; climate change; fracking, Hinkley Point 'C', the critical need for green energy. All against a background of government cuts in the Environment Agency, the Fire Brigade and other vital services. How will we cope with these environmental challenges?

Can a government committed to permanent austerity really live up to its commitments to deal with these issues? Concerned? Then come along, listen to different points of view and join in this important discussion

SPEAKERS:

- Julian Taylor Lab Cllr and Fordgate resident
- Environment Agency spokesperson
- Kevin Warden-Prospect (EA workers)
- UNISON speaker (EA workers)
- Somerset environment activist

Meeting organised by Bridgwater Trades Union Council. For further details please contact Dave Chapple on 07707 869 144 or davechapple@btinternet.com

European Elections May 22nd

The Green Party is the only party that is anti-nuclear. In the European elections every vote makes a difference unlike our voting system in the UK. So Vote for your Green MEP's this May and give Stop Hinkley another voice in Europe.

South West Green Party new fund-raising website, GreenPlots, supporting Stop Hinkley too.

As part of their European Election campaign to get Molly Scott Cato elected as their first MEP in the SW, South West Green Party have launched a new fund-raising website, GreenPlots <http://www.greenplots.org> They are selling virtual plots of the region in return for donations to campaign funds. And they are passing on a proportion to Stop Hinkley!

Hinkley Point has been marked as a hot spot plot in the South West for special attention with the help of the magic badger to collect lots of donations. After the Election on May 22nd, they will share the proceeds of this plot with SH.



Storm damage to the coastline at Hinkley Point. Lots of debris washed up on the shore with more evidence of the gabions being damaged as well as new rock falls from the extremely fragile field edges all along that part of the coastal boundary.

Events

Stop Hinkley Social meet
Monday April 7th at 7.30pm
West Bow House, Milton Place
off West Street, Bridgwater TA6 3RT

Allan Jeffery will lead a discussion on Nuclear Waste

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Stop Hinkley Social meet
Tuesday May 6th at 7.30pm
guest speaker Neil Crumpton, independent energy consultant. All welcome.
West Bow House, as above

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