



Newsletter January 2011

EdF Jumps The Gun with “Preliminary Works” Application

Stop Hinkley has accused French energy company EdF of “jumping the gun” by applying to destroy over 400 acres of Somerset countryside even before it has permission to build on the site.

EdF submitted an application to West Somerset Council in December for what it describes as “preliminary works” in advance of constructing Britain’s largest nuclear power station. In fact this involves completely razing the site at Hinkley Point, filling in a beautiful valley and even starting excavation of the power station foundations.

All this would be done before a formal proposal to build the plant itself has been delivered to the Infrastructure Planning Commission, which could then reject it.

The company has already evicted all badgers from the site by blocking off their setts, an action approved prematurely by Natural England, the wildlife conservation body.

“EdF have already shown that they have precious little regard for the countryside,” said Stop Hinkley spokesman Crispin Aubrey. “Now they are about to treat it with contempt by trashing over 400 acres of woodland, cornfields and coastline. This is jumping the gun on a massive scale.”

The “preliminary works” proposed across 430 acres of land stretching from the Severn Estuary to the village of Shurton – involve:

- Removal of the majority of trees and hedges
- Filling in a valley with excavated earth
- Closure of existing footpaths and bridlepaths, including the coast path
- Security fencing round the whole area
- Stripping topsoil and vegetation to make terraced areas for the proposed reactors



The threatened land at Hinkley Point (Paul Glendell)

- New roads built across the site
- Underground streams re-routed
- The excavation of more than 2.3 million cubic metres of soil, sub-soil and rocks. **This would be enough to fill Wembley Stadium twice over.**
- Noise from up to 12,000 vehicle movements per month
- Construction of a jetty out into the sea (separate application to the Maritime Management Organisation)

The company says it will restore the site to its original state if it fails to gain permission for the Hinkley C power station. “This would be impossible,” said Crispin Aubrey. “You can’t recreate a landscape that has taken generations to mature.”

How You Can Object

Full details of how to object to this application can be found at the **West Somerset Council website**:

www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/Home/Features/Hinkley-Point-C-Preliminary-Works-Application. **The official deadline is 31st January but it is still possible to comment up to the date of the Planning Committee meeting, not expected until March at the earliest.**

Radioactive Contamination Danger at Hinkley C building site

A new study claims that land at Hinkley Point earmarked for the proposed nuclear power station is seriously contaminated with radioactivity.

Analysis by Professor Chris Busby of contamination reports produced by consultants working for EdF shows the presence of radioactive enriched uranium. This is likely to have come from particles released by the existing Hinkley Point nuclear reactors, he says.

Professor Busby reached his conclusion after examining “gamma spectroscopy” radioactivity data collected by consultants working for EdF. This revealed about 10 tonnes of enriched uranium reactor fuel spread across the 430 acre site. The French company has already applied to start advance construction work, including moving more than 2 million cubic metres of earth and rocks.

These findings could have implications for other nuclear power station sites around the country and could also help explain the increased rate of leukaemia and other cancers in people living downwind of the Hinkley site.

Chris Busby’s environment and health research consultancy, Green Audit, is now calling for all work at the “Hinkley C” site to stop because of the danger to workers and local residents’ health. “The origin of the enriched uranium must be independently investigated with more sampling and proper analysis,” says Cecily Collingridge, a Stop Hinkley supporter who worked with Chris Busby on compiling the report.

In a report in the *Western Daily Press*, EdF dismissed the claims as “unfounded and irresponsible”. The Environment Agency also challenged the findings.

• **See the full Green Audit report at www.stophinkley.org**

Calls to Halt Work



Stop Hinkley supporters lobbied both West Somerset Council and EdF calling for a halt to all work at the Hinkley C site until further investigation is carried out to assess the level of soil contamination. Cecily Collingridge (above) handed in copies of the Green Audit report. See film of the event at www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mT2zt4HRmo

Department of Energy Consultation Meeting in Bridgwater

Officials from the Department of Energy and Climate Change came to Sedgemoor Council offices in Bridgwater on 12th Jan as part of their consultation process over the government’s revised policy on energy, including nuclear power.

The first half of the evening meeting covered the issue of the new overhead power lines proposed from Hinkley Point to Avonmouth, the second half was about nuclear. There were initial presentations from Hergan Hays from DECC and Crispin Aubrey from Stop Hinkley.

Not enough time was available for questions, however, and many potential questioners left frustrated. Issues raised included the risk of a terrorist attack and the radioactive contamination of the site (see article above).

More than 70 people also attended an earlier DECC consultation meeting in Bristol at the end of November. There were anti-nuclear protests both inside and outside.

Stop Hinkley submitted its comments on the government National Policy Statements in time for the deadline of 24th Jan. Two major issues flagged up in this response were the storage of radioactive waste at the Hinkley site and the availability of viable alternative electricity generating options to nuclear. The response can be read at www.stophinkley.org.

EdF Gains Permission to Remove “Hazardous” Waste

EdF has received planning permission to remove a pile of waste material, including asbestos, from a field which forms part of the proposed Hinkley C site.

Permission was granted in January by Somerset County Council, which was persuaded that the contamination was serious enough to demand remedial action.

Stop Hinkley argued that, despite EdF protestations to the contrary, this work formed part of clearing the site in preparation to build Hinkley C. EdF admitted that the mound had been there since the building of Hinkley “A” power station in the 1960s - more than 40 years ago - and that the contaminated material “did not represent a significant risk to site users or the wider environment”. So, as we said in our formal objection, why the urgency to deal with it now?

This work will involve numerous lorry movements and provide local residents, especially in the village of Cannington, with their first taste of what life will be like if Hinkley C gets the go-ahead.

“Stage 3” Consultation Planned

EdF is to carry out a third stage of its consultation process with local councils and communities about the effects of constructing Hinkley C. This will take place sometime this spring. The aim appears to be to attempt to agree as much as possible of the detail in advance of the company submitting its application for a power station construction permit to the Infrastructure Planning Commission.

Local Council and community reaction continues to be extremely hostile to the French energy company, however. Both Sedgemoor and West Somerset Councils are still asking the company for a proper compensation package which reflects the level of disruption expected.

Nuclear News

“Subsidies” Package Announced

The government announced on 16th December a series of changes to the electricity market which will effectively provide subsidies for new nuclear power stations. These include a fixed price for avoiding carbon dioxide emissions. EdF and other companies have said they can't easily finance new nuclear plants without this type of support.

The *Daily Telegraph* reported that “years of lobbying by nuclear companies has finally paid off as the government will today reveal plans to subsidise the price that they are paid for generating electricity”. Similar points were made by Stop Hinkley's Crispin Aubrey on *Channel 4 News*. Electricity bills could rise by an average of up to £500 to pay for the measures, some of which will also support renewable energy.

The changes still have to be approved by parliament.

National News



Coalition Formed to Fight Nuclear Plans

A new coalition, Communities Opposed to New Nuclear Energy Development (CONNED), has been formed to create a united front against plans around the country for new nuclear power stations.

CONNED brings together the following local groups:

Bradwell: Blackwater Against New Nuclear Group, Bradwell for Renewable Energy

Heysham: Heysham Anti-Nuclear Alliance (www.heysham-anti-nuclear-alliance.org)

Hinkley Point: Stop Hinkley

Oldbury: Sheppardine Against Nuclear Energy (<http://sheppardineagainstnuclearenergy.blogspot.com>)

Sellafield: West Cumbria & North Lakes Friends of the Earth

Sizewell: Shut Down Sizewell (www.shutdown-sizewell.org.uk),
Communities Against Nuclear Expansion (www.suffolkcane.org.uk)

Wylfa: People Against Wylfa B (<http://stop-wylfa.org>)

The aim of CONNED is to raise public awareness about the consequences for health, the environment, safety and security of potential new nuclear power developments. The alliance is supported by national campaign groups, including Greenpeace, the Nuclear Consultation Group and Nuclear Free Local Authorities.

- A number of CONNED members met Charles Hendry, the Minister in charge of nuclear new build, in London on 12 Jan.

Stop Hinkley News

Social Evenings

The pressure of events means that Stop Hinkley Social Evenings are now being held every Monday, except when there is a full business meeting (see Events list). This gives members a chance to meet, catch up with the latest developments and plan appropriate actions.

The evenings normally start at 7.30pm in the Unity House (Labour Club) bar, Dampiet Street, Bridgwater (close to the public library). Check details with Sue Aubrey (01278 732921).



Seize the Day benefit gig, Friday 25th March

The Glastonbury-based band Seize the Day (www.seizetheday.org) are playing a benefit gig for Stop Hinkley and Sedgemoor/West Somerset Green Party at Bridgwater Arts Centre on Friday 25th March.

Tickets are £10 (£6 concessions). See www.stophinkley.org for more details or call Crispin Aubrey (01278 732921).

Message from the Membership Secretary

Happy New Year to all our members. And it's that time again! Annual subscriptions are due. Of course, if you have already filled out a standing order form, then you don't have to worry because it will be dealt with automatically. If you haven't, then a renewal reminder is included with this newsletter.

Your support over the years has enabled us to keep alive the opposition to nuclear power in Somerset. Now it is vitally important that we fight EdF's plans for new nuclear power stations at Hinkley. They have already shown their disregard for local people's views, but we will be heard. Your continued support is vital at this time. Try to encourage your friends to join too. They can simply send a cheque with their name and address or contact us via the website.

If you don't already receive the newsletter by email, perhaps you can consider this option. Not only do you get the newsletter much quicker, but it saves postage, labour and paper. Contact val@stophinkley.org

Events

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| Every Mon | Stop Hinkley Social, Unity House, Dampiet St, Bridgwater, 7.30pm (except for second Mon of each month) |
| 14 Feb | Stop Hinkley meeting, West Bow House, Milton Place (off West Street), Bridgwater, 7.30pm |
| 25 Mar | Seize the Day benefit gig, Bridgwater Arts Centre, Castle St, Bridgwater, 8pm |

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