



# Newsletter

## April 2016

### Hinkley Point: Pressure grows at EDF

[BBC, 30 March](#)

A board member at French energy firm EDF has said he will vote against its plan to build a new nuclear reactor at Hinkley Point in the UK.

Christian Taxil, who represents the CFE-CGC union on the board, said conditions were "not right" for the £18bn project.

The same union has previously suggested that investment in Hinkley Point C should be delayed until 2019.

It said there were problems with a similar reactor design in France.

Last week, French economy minister Emmanuel Macron said EDF would now make a final investment decision on the Hinkley Point nuclear reactor in early May.

Mr Taxil expressed his opposition in a letter to EDF employees. He said EDF's weak financial position, technical issues and the current state of the energy market were all factors that had influenced him.

Meanwhile, it has also emerged that some EDF engineers have expressed renewed doubts about the reactor technology.

In an internal company document, leaked to the Financial Times, they argued that a redesign was needed in order to make the plant less complex and less expensive.

Instead of pledging that the plant would be operational in 2025, they said, the company should adopt a more "realistic" date of 2027.

In response to the FT article, EDF issued a statement denouncing "unfounded rumours and fanciful stories".

The firm added: "EDF refutes these rumours and confirms that the date of first operation of the first reactor is fixed at the end of 2025 and that no delay is anticipated.

"EDF regards this anonymous press campaign as seriously harmful to our interests, as well as the interests of the industry and to jobs in France and Europe."

EDF, which is 85% French state-owned, has yet to outline how it will fund the project.

In October last year, EDF agreed a deal under which China General Nuclear Power Corporation (CGN)

would pay a third of the cost of the project in exchange for a 33.5% stake.

But EDF has been struggling to find the cash for its remaining 66.5% stake.

Earlier this month, the company's chief executive, Jean-Bernard Levy, said that the financial context was "challenging" and that he was negotiating with the French government to secure more funding.

The UK government has been criticised for guaranteeing a price of £92.50 per megawatt hour of electricity - more than twice the current cost - for the electricity Hinkley produces for 35 years.

The UK government has said it is "committed" to Hinkley.

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### Row over 'secret' Hinkley Point documents set to reach tribunal

[The Guardian, 20 March](#)

An 18-month battle to discover the true cost to consumers of building the Hinkley Point C nuclear reactors is to come to a climax in London.

The information commissioner has been blocking freedom of information requests to publish subsidy documents held by the Department of Energy and Climate Change. However, it has finally agreed to hold an oral hearing on the issue.

The decision comes just days before EDF's chief executive in Britain, Vincent de Rivaz, faces a grilling from MPs about the £18bn cost of Hinkley, which is underwritten through subsidies and customer bills.

EDF is yet to make a final decision on whether to go ahead with the project and MPs have said there are "serious questions" to answer about Hinkley's viability. EDF's finance director quit over concerns about Hinkley's impact on the already heavily indebted company. However, David Cameron and François Hollande have strongly backed the project as "a pillar of the bilateral relationship" and "a key aspect of Britain's energy policy".

Greenpeace and Request Initiative, a Freedom of Information Act specialist, has been trying since 2014 to obtain the contents of seven documents that are understood to contain details about the subsidies for Hinkley.

They were submitted to the European commission as justification for the need to provide state aid, which is generally against competition rules.

Greenpeace said it was extraordinary that the information commissioner had been supporting DECC's wish to keep vital information from the public. The environmental group now hopes progress can be made at an Information Tribunal hearing expected to take place in London in May.

Doug Parr, policy director at Greenpeace, said: "Bizarrely, the Information Commissioner and DECC are hell bent on keeping the evidence showing Hinkley is a good idea for Britain a secret. The reports we have been trying to see for 18 months illustrate the assumptions that DECC used to decide that Hinkley is the best bet to power Britain in the future.

"We think it's hard to think of any reason it should be kept secret unless the evidence shows that Hinkley isn't such a good idea. The argument it has to remain a secret because it would damage the government's negotiations is now over because the negotiations have finished.

"Today's school leavers will be paying for Hinkley until they're about to draw their pensions, the government should tell future generations what they are paying for and why."

The information in the documents was largely prepared for ministers by advisers such as KPMG, Poyry and Oxera, with modelling work and scenario planning by DECC itself.

The preliminary view of the bureaucrats in Brussels was that the measures constituted unlawful financial support, but the final decision reversed this and gave the UK government the green light.

The information commissioner initially agreed to withhold the documents on the grounds that "the reports contain and discuss matters of a sensitive commercial nature and the information was provided to DECC in the expectation that it would be treated as confidential".

It also accepted that the disclosure of the information would "disadvantage the government in the context of future negotiations with other (nuclear plant) developers".

The commissioner said there is a strong public interest in disclosing the contents of the documents. but said this was overridden by the other considerations around commercial sensitivity.

But despite this, it has accepted that an oral hearing is "appropriate" in this case.

EDF itself has always argued that it is totally committed to transparency, saying this would separate the nuclear industry from the secrecy that characterised it in the past.

Last September de Rivaz said: "At EDF Energy, transparency is at the heart of everything we do. It is our responsibility, as the custodians of Britain's nuclear fleet, to be transparent, open and receptive to questions.

"We are approaching the Final Investment Decision for our new nuclear project Hinkley Point C. As we do, scrutiny has naturally increased. Just as we embrace transparency, we welcome scrutiny. We relish challenge based on facts."

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Last month, Stop Hinkley member Jo Smoldon wrote to the Japanese government of her concerns about the ongoing disaster in Fukushima. We would encourage others to do the same. Please write to the Embassy of Japan at 101-104 Piccadilly, London W1J 7JT

Here is Jo's letter:

Dear Sirs

On the fifth anniversary of the Fukushima nuclear disaster I am travelling to London to join with people from all around the UK to remember the tragedy that struck Japan after the Tsunami in March 2011.

Nuclear power and more importantly nuclear waste has a huge impact on the environment in the close proximity of the 'accident' but also the wider global environment, as the radiation contamination spreads deadly, silently into earth, water and air. It knows no boundaries and is un-negotiating as it seeps into the life around, penetrating to the heart of the DNA in every living organism it touches.

My concern is that we are not learning from this evil thing we have created and in the UK, France, Japan and others there is a push to reopen, and build new nuclear power stations that may one day have the next unprecedented 'accident.'

We must as a collective humanity draw a line in the ever increasing radioactive, contaminated sand and STOP NUCLEAR.

I am a Stop Hinkley member and became involved with the subject after the Fukushima disaster unfolded. Two years previously in May 2009, I had a prophetic dream which revealed there was to be a natural disaster that would cause a nuclear disaster in Japan. I was shocked as I awoke, nuclear I had not previously given much thought to, I had studied the principals in my science education but that was largely it. The dream or in fact the nightmare revealed that life on the planet will be changed because of it, many will die and it will be a major shift in the picture of life on earth, that still haunts me and heavily influences how I live my life today. Making people aware of the dangers of nuclear is the most important drive in my life since 2011.

I am writing to the Japanese government now to ask they take a lead and acknowledge the nuclear disaster that is still happening at Fukushima and help educate the rest of the world in its dangers. Japan, following now the polluting of the Pacific Ocean from the radioactive waste must find the courage to stand up and announce the true picture of what is happening. Also, more importantly be the nation that leads the world in leaving nuclear behind and embrace renewable energy sources and energy conservation. I pray this will be so.

# Stop Hinkley Members Activities

Allan Jeffery, Stop Hinkley Spokesperson

February and March has been a very busy time. Here are a few examples of what happened:-

On 15 Feb Stop Hinkley joined the international call to "Occupy EDF" by forming a multi-bannered demonstration at King's Square, Bridgwater outside the old EDF office. After being interviewed and photographed by the local media, about 60 supporters marched, escorted by the civil nuclear police, to Angel Place shopping centre. There we handed in a detailed letter to the EDF office, explaining the many reasons why investing in Hinkley C would be a disaster to everybody, including their own organisation. <http://stophinkley.org/PressReleases/pr160215Letter2EDF.pdf>

At the same time a group of anti-nuclear protesters climbed into the walled gardens in Cannington, (now the EDF'S engineering training centre), and had a colourful, musical picnic with "radioactive champagne!"

On 27 Feb Some SH members took part in the London National Trident Protest March at Trafalgar Square, carrying 2 large posters from our latest leaflet showing the strong links between nuclear weapons and nuclear power. <http://stophinkley.org/NucPower&WeaponsLinkLeaflet.pdf>

On 4 March Roy Pumfrey gave an entertaining and informative talk on the historic story of Hinkley C leading up to the present situation, to the North Somerset Green Party at Weston Super Mare.

On 10 March Stop Hinkley organised a public talk at the Methodist Temple Church in Taunton, with two speakers, Lynda Walker (Chernobyl Children) and Brian Jones(Wales CND). They updated us with their

recent experiences of how people today are trying to deal with the consequences of these disasters, Chernobyl 30 years on and Fukushima 5 years ago.

11 March an evening vigil was held outside the Japanese Embassy in London attended by representatives of SH. This was followed the next day by SH members joining Japanese Against Nuclear (JAN) and all its supporters for a big colourful event. We took our radioactive waste barrel costumes, flags and banners and marched to Westminster to remind the public that, 5 years on, Fukushima is still an on-going human and environmental disaster. There were moving speeches and music from international speakers and performers.

The next weekend SH members attended a "Beyond Nuclear" conference in Manchester, bringing together anti-nuclear groups from America, Europe and Britain. We heard fascinating scientific and political speakers, talking about the health, environmental and legal aspects of the Chernobyl and Fukushima accidents, and the future energy revolution under way. One based on decentralised renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency. The last day involved discussions on how all the different groups could develop their communications to work together strongly to get our messages to the public.

**The Stop Hinkley AGM is on May 16<sup>th</sup>. Please let us know if you will be able to come**  
[admin@stophinkley.org](mailto:admin@stophinkley.org)  
**We look forward to seeing you then.**



# Hinkley Point C - The Story So Far

Roy Pumfrey, Stop Hinkley Spokesperson,

Every so often, it may help Stop Hinkley members to have a recap of where we've got to and how we've got there. I hope this helps to outline developments.

EdeF first proposed a third nuclear power station at Hinkley Point over eight years ago. Not surprisingly, with the Department for Energy & Climate Change backing new nuclear, they obtained planning permission in 2013.

Since then, everything that could go wrong for EdeF has gone wrong. The European Pressurised Water Reactor chosen for the project has proven to be virtually unconstructable in China (Taishan), Finland (Olkiluoto) and France (Flamanville). Reactors there are years overdue and hugely over budget.

Despite agreeing a deal with DECC to supply electricity at £92.50 \* per Megawatt, three times the current price, index linked and guaranteed for 35 years, the only other reluctant investors are Chinese. Reluctant because they are only interested in HPC as a lead in to building their own reactor at Bradwell in Essex. British investors have walked away from a deal that looks gold plated and the deal is the subject of a Legal Challenge by Austria to the EU. \* *Because the £92.50 is index linked it is already up to £99.00*

In addition to funding Hinkley C, EdeF have to find 55 billion euros for post Fukushima improvements to their 58 nuclear reactors in France. Their financial situation is so grave that their Finance Director, Thomas Piquemal, resigned because he could not persuade his CEO, Vincent de Rivaz, that EdeF should drop HPC. This resignation followed that of the HPC Project Director to spend more time with his family in America.

EdeF has been reduced to pleading with the French Government, which owns 85% of the company, to find a way of funding Hinkley C so that it can make its Final Investment Decision (FID), something it has delayed than ten times over the last three years.

That Decision has to be approved by the Board of EdeF and it is now apparent that at least the Union members are likely to oppose going ahead with HPC. Even their own nuclear engineers are reported to have expressed doubts about the reactor design. Hardly surprising when the French nuclear safety regulator is unhappy about the steel used to construct the pressure vessel at Flamanville and is demanding further testing.

In the absence of the FID, nothing is happening on the site. EdeF have completed the site preparation work and removed most of the asbestos waste from the 'A' station which has been dumped on the HPC site. It would be amazing if EdeF could build HPC by 2025, even if they started now. Yet Amber Rudd, Secretary of state for Energy and Climate Change, now appears relaxed about keeping the lights on without HPC.

Stop Hinkley continues to monitor EdeF's attempts to move forward, as they would call it. The good news is

that the public seems increasingly aware that HPC would be very expensive to build, is an unproven design and would add to their electricity bill.

If the FID gives HPC the green light, Stop Hinkley will mobilise members to protest as we have before.

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## 2015 figures show the growth of green energy in the UK

[Good Energy blog](#)

The latest government statistics revealed that a quarter of all our power needs came from British sunshine, wind and rain last year. It's a testament to our world class renewable resources that clean, green generation is now a major player in UK energy.

We often come up against a perception that renewables play an insignificant role in powering the country, but these new stats demonstrate the lack of accuracy in this view. In fact, renewables are now the second biggest generator of electricity in the UK – just 5% behind gas and ahead of both coal and nuclear, which account for 23% and 21% respectively.

Renewables reached 4% just a decade ago, so it's grown by more than 20% in 10 years. We think that's growth any economist would be impressed by. Scotland sourced 57.7% of its electricity from renewable sources last year, crushing its 50% target by some margin.

The tide has now turned, with UK carbon dioxide emissions dropping below 500 million tonnes for the first time since Queen Victoria was on the throne. That's still a big number, but now we've summited the peak of CO2 emissions in the UK we can get really get moving on the journey back down the mountain.

With evidence showing that economic growth and emissions have been truly decoupled, it's time to pick up the pace.

## Events

**Stop Hinkley meetings third Monday  
18 April & AGM 16 May at 7pm  
West Bow House, Milton Place  
Off West Street, Bridgwater**

## Contacts

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