



Newsletter

April 2017

Stop Hinkley asks why should anyone believe this astonishing level of incompetence will suddenly end when we start building new reactors?

Stop Hinkley Press Release, 29 March

The day after the Government announced it was being forced to pay nearly £100m for botching a nuclear decommissioning contract and on the same day that nuclear company Westinghouse has filed for bankruptcy in the US courts, the Stop Hinkley Campaign asks why anyone should believe that this astonishing level of incompetence will suddenly end when we start building new reactors?

The Government also announced that it will cancel the £6.1bn contract to decommission 12 old nuclear sites, including Hinkley Point A, nine years early because of the huge increase in work which needs to be done to decommission these sites.

The Toshiba-owned Westinghouse Company has built more nuclear reactors than any other company. It owns a 60% share of the NuGen consortium which had been hoping to build three Westinghouse AP1000-type reactors at Moorside next to Sellafield in Cumbria.

Stop Hinkley Spokesperson Roy Pumfrey said: "Why should anyone believe that this astonishing level of incompetence will suddenly end when we start to build new reactors? Just because Hinkley Point C is not a Magnox reactor doesn't just suddenly make the industry competent."

The Daily Telegraph declared today "if we could, we would stop this madness. In committing to new nuclear, we seem to have joined a runaway train, with no hope of getting off. Has not the time finally arrived for a fully fledged rethink of the merits of Britain's nuclear energy strategy?"

Roy Pumfrey continued: "We agree – it is time to stop this madness. The UK's nuclear decommissioning costs have increased from £55.8 billion in 2008 to £117.4 billion at the last count. Although EDF is required to set aside funds for decommissioning Hinkley Point C, this is only up to an agreed limit. The taxpayer will be on the hook for the all too predictable shortfall."

<http://stophinkley.org/PressReleases/pr170329.pdf>

A United Nations body has asked the UK to suspend Hinkley Point C pending an environmental assessment

Stop Hinkley Press Release, 20 March

A United Nations committee has asked the U.K. to suspend construction of the Hinkley Point C nuclear power plant pending assessment of the environmental impact.

The UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) requested the pause until it established whether "a notification under the Espoo Convention" was useful. The Espoo Convention sets out the obligations of countries to "assess the environmental impact of certain activities."

The UK has failed to properly consult neighbouring countries over the potential environmental risks of building the new nuclear reactors in Somerset. Germany, Norway and the Netherlands have now formally requested that a transboundary environmental impact assessment is carried out. So UNECE has asked the UK to suspend work at Hinkley Point until the assessment has been carried out.

Stop Hinkley Spokesperson, Roy Pumfrey said: "This is yet another embarrassment for the Government and its obsession with outdated, dangerous nuclear technology. This month we have already seen the Daily Telegraph warn that the old energy order is drawing to a close and that Theresa May's Government will be cursed for locking us into Hinkley Point C's ruinously high prices. Commentators and energy experts from all shades of opinion have told her that this phenomenally expensive project is an unnecessary form of power generation. Unlike previous Prime Ministers we know she is not averse to the occasional U-turn, so she should take the opportunity presented by the United Nations Committee to call a halt to this project now."

<http://stophinkley.org/PressReleases/pr170320.pdf>

Nuclear companies struggle with finances but solar is fast becoming the cheapest form of power everywhere

The three companies seeking to build new nuclear reactors at Hinkley Point, Sizewell, Moorside, Wylfa and Oldbury are under growing financial pressure, raising doubts about whether the UK's nuclear renaissance will ever get off the starting blocks.

The French nuclear regulator – ASN – has been investigating a growing nuclear scandal in France involving steel components made at Areva's Le Creusot factory which have been found to contain excessive carbon levels which could make them vulnerable to cracking. There is also evidence that some of the quality-assurance documentation for some components may have been falsified. Although all French nuclear reactors which were temporarily closed as a result have now re-started, the Financial Times reports that ASN now wants to dig further into several issues before they are willing to give a clean bill of health to the French nuclear industry.

In addition, the results of an investigation by EDF at Flamanville will be delivered to the ASN in the coming weeks. The regulator will then analyse the findings and issue a report in the first half of this year. If the structural weaknesses initially found on the reactor pressure vessel are as serious as feared it could have an effect on the development of Hinkley Point C (and Sizewell C). Any significant problems could be catastrophic for EDF as replacing this important piece of the plant would mean restarting much of the construction work, which is already billions of euros over budget and several years late.

If Flamanville's start up is delayed beyond 2020 this would be bad news for Hinkley Point C. EDF's plans depend partly on £2bn of financing from the UK government. To take this funding and get any more there is a condition: Flamanville must be operational by end 2020 at the latest, according to an agreement with the European Commission over state aid. This last point raises questions as to whether EDF could complete Hinkley without the aid.

Another planned new nuclear power station is located at Moorside, adjacent to Sellafield in Cumbria. This is being promoted by a consortium of companies known as NuGen which was originally owned by the French company GDF Suez, the Spanish company Iberdrola, and Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE). SSE withdrew from the consortium in September 2011 and sold its stake to GDF Suez and Iberdrola. Then in January 2014 Toshiba-owned Westinghouse Electric Company agreed to buy all Iberdrola's stake and another 10% from GDF-Suez (now called ENGIE) giving it a 60% controlling stake. The plan is to build three AP1000 reactors with a total capacity of around 3.6 GW. Nugen expects to take its final investment decision by the end of 2018.

In December it was reported that Engie would like to abandon its 40% share of Nugen. And nuclear power has turned into a financial quagmire for Toshiba. Shares in the Japanese company plunged

at the end of December wiping 40% off its value after an announcement that it may have to write down billions due to its acquisition of Westinghouse Electric which is struggling with 4 new reactors in the US which are late and over-budget.

Horizon nuclear, is proposing to build two Advanced Boiling Water Reactors with a total capacity of 2.7MW at Wylfa on Anglesey. It expects to make its final investment decision in early 2019. Horizon nuclear was originally a consortium of two German companies – Eon and RWE. Hitachi Ltd has now bought the project for about £700m in March 2012. Investing billions in new reactors would have forced a credit-rating downgrade on RWE, said Volker Beckers, CEO at RWE npower in May 2012 and Tony Cocker, CEO of E.ON UK said E.ON lacks the "financial firepower".

Horizon has now gone cap in hand to the UK and Japanese Governments. The two governments are to review investment and lending for Horizon through the Japan Bank for International Cooperation and the Development Bank of Japan. Financing of the project from the Japanese side is expected to reach Y1 trillion (£7 billion). Japan is particularly keen for the projects to go ahead after its previous attempt to export nuclear energy technology, to Vietnam, fell through. The UK Government might decide to fund up to 25% of the project according to the Telegraph. The likely cost of the proposed twin-reactor development at Wylfa has not been disclosed but a source close to the negotiations insisted a Reuters report that put the figure at £19bn was wide of the mark.

The FT commented that "all this comes as offshore wind progressively looks cheaper to run, even with all the subsidies, than Hinkley ever will." Swedish utility Vattenfall has agreed to build a giant offshore wind farm in Denmark that would sell power for €49.50 per MWh. Vattenfall has broken its own previous record of €60 per MWh. Once the cost of transmission is included this works out at around £75.50/MWh compared with £100.50/MWh for Hinkley Point C (once inflation has been added to the £92.50 at 2012 prices).

The cost of solar and wind continues to fall. The World Economic Forum reports that solar and wind are now the same price or cheaper than new fossil fuel capacity in more than 30 countries. As prices for solar and wind power continue their precipitous fall, two-thirds of all nations will reach the point known as "grid parity" within a few years, even without subsidies. Bloomberg reports that solar is now cheaper than coal in some parts of the world and in less than a decade is likely to be cheaper everywhere.

Pete Roche

<http://www.no2nuclearpower.org.uk/news/comment/nuclear-companies-struggle-with-finances-but-solar-is-fast-becoming-the-cheapest-form-of-power-everywhere/>

Shadow Cabinet Alan Whitehead meeting in Bridgwater

Stop Hinkley members attended the meeting with Shadow Energy and Climate Change minister where opportunity for discussion and lively debate was made.

When asked about Labour's policy on energy he declared that he was working on the decarbonisation, decentralisation and democratisation of our energy system.

His views shared ours in the process of reducing carbon emissions, using renewable energy efficient means of energy production, expanding the renewable energy revolution and empowering local groups and cities to benefit from producing their own power.

There was an interesting discussion about the conflicting views between union members and others of the party on the wisdom of pushing on with HPC. The effects of the new build have impacted not only on traffic congestion but loss of staff from local business and services as their employees seek higher wages for short term EDF contracts, leaving a hole in the local work pool.

Stop Hinkley works with the Environment Agency

Following on from our inspiring talk in Taunton 2015 by Tim Deere Jones on the Environmental contamination from nuclear waste, we initiated conversation with the local EA to see what sediment samples they had taken and the consideration for taking them further upstream along the tidal river Parrett.

Once we had mutually agreed to extra sampling points along the river we were invited to accompany them to observe the sampling process and subsequently to meetings to discuss the results.



When we compare the results with others in the last Radioactivity In Food and the Environment (RIFE) report they have stimulated our interest to

continue the work as a baseline for future changes that will be taking place in the Bridgwater river Parrett, the barrage of the Parrett, it's dredging and the building of HPC. We are hopeful that the Environment Agency will be willing to continue this important work.

See Tim's talk here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3u_VDEK4q08

6th Anniversary of Fukushima remembered in Aberystwyth

On Saturday March 11th Stop Hinkley members joined NFLA, PAWB, Welsh CND and other antinuclear groups for a conference in the National Library of Wales on the sixth anniversary of the Fukushima disaster. The conference had been established to develop a joint campaign to oppose new nuclear build in Wales and promote renewable energy more pro-actively as well as energy efficiency and energy storage across the country. The event allowed us to meet again the people from Wales that have supported anti-Hinkley demonstrations in the past.

Interesting talks included the Welsh MEP discussing the problems of the nuclear industry now the government has decided to leave the Euratom, and members of the Green Party of Wales explained how the local community action on renewable energy was developing in Wales.

Stop Hinkley was represented by Peter Smith who explained, from his experience working 30 years in the nuclear industry, at Hinkley, the problems keeping the nuclear power stations safe. He reflected on his observations from the inside looking out in the early days, Greenpeace action against nuclear waste being dumped in the Irish Sea. Then later being on the outside of the industry looking in at the designs of the HPC project which will not allow enough time for safety interventions should anything go wrong. Genuine concerns from an experienced engineer whose knowledge is not being listened to by the politicians and nuclear industry today.

The NFLA talked about how many cities and Councils around the UK are beginning to set up their own renewable energy companies eg Robin Hood Energy Company in Nottingham.

Reinhard Uhrig, of Global 2000 Austria, gave an inspiring insight into the European perspective on nuclear new build and how its being overshadowed by the booming renewable energy sector across Europe.

A workshop was held by Linda Pentz Gunter of Beyond Nuclear USA who got the group actively thinking about how new nuclear build in Wales would affect the culture and nature of the Welsh community.

A proportion of the day's presentations were made in the Welsh language to illustrate the importance of keeping their culture. When a large non Welsh incoming work force moves in to the area to build a new nuclear power station at Wylfa the language would be diluted and potentially lost forever.

The participating groups of the weekend all agreed to the Aberystwyth declaration for a Green Nuclear Free Wales to push the politicians and unions which we were happy to endorse. To read the declaration visit <http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/news/nfla-welcomes-aberystwyth-declaration-and-echoes-call-green-nuclear-free-wales/>

Conversations over the weekend on the latest news in Fukushima kept everyone reflecting on how quickly nuclear power stations can become nuclear environmental and social disasters. For Fukushima Update we can recommend the Spring 2017 leaflet which can be found at www.kicknuclear.com

EDF and decentralised energy

CARBON COMMENTARY NEWSLETTER

Les Echos, the French business newspaper, carried an extraordinary article from a Senior Vice President of EdF, the largely state-owned utility that will build the nuclear reactor at Hinkley Point in England. Mark Boillot contends that 'large nuclear or thermal power plants designed to function as baseload are challenged by the more flexible decentralised model'.

He says that the centralised model of power production is dying, to be replaced by local solar and wind, supplemented by batteries and intelligent management of supply and demand. Not only will this be cheaper in the long run but customers are actually prepared to pay more for solar electricity and actively work to reduce usage at times of shortage.

His conclusion is that 'the traditional model must adapt to the new realities, thus allowing the utilities to emerge from ...hypercentralized structures in a world that is becoming more and more decentralized'.

In most jurisdictions Mr Boillot would have been asked to clear his desk. What will EdF do about one of its most senior people openly forecasting the end of the large power station as it tries to raise the ten billion Euros necessary to pay for its share of Hinkley?

<http://us9.campaign-archive2.com/?u=a336c39e55a6260d59adbffb0&id=6945e1e273&e=59b188af48>

5 Years Witch Watch Full Moon Vigil at Hinkley Point

By the full moon on June 8th this year, a determined collection of women and some men visitors will have gathered at every full moon for 5 years to keep vigil at Hinkley Point.

The regular presence has evoked a tapestry of experiences being stimulated by common purpose, shared with like-minded individuals who believe that nuclear power should end at Hinkley and everywhere else on the planet.

Music, soup, football, tea, magic, cake, ceremonies and prayers are amongst a host of things offered to keep the site safe and to prevent radioactive waste from irreversibly polluting the planet.

As we have just had the 6th anniversary of the Fukushima disaster, the radioactive waste water still pouring into the Pacific is a constant reminder of this possibility.

If you wish to join the group in June for more details phone Cap'n Kate 07980731896 or go to the Facebook page Witch Watch Full Moon Gathering at Hinkley Point for times and dates of gatherings.

Events

NB April Meeting cancelled

The next **Stop Hinkley** meeting is the AGM on Monday 15 May.

All are welcome, though only members can vote. Please let Val know if you wish to come to give us an idea of numbers.

The next campaign meeting follows the AGM
At West Bow House, Milton Place
Off West Street, Bridgwater TA6 7RT

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