

## 25<sup>th</sup> Chernobyl anniversary marked by candlelit vigil in Bridgwater



Photos: Bridgwater Mercury

Members of Stop Hinkley, Sedgemoor & West Somerset Green Party and Bridgwater Peace Group commemorated the 25th anniversary of the nuclear disaster at the Chernobyl power station in the Ukraine on the evening of 26<sup>th</sup> April.

About 35 people, including local people who joined the procession, walked from Blake Gardens in Bridgwater via King Square to Cornhill, where a candlelit vigil was held. A giant banner was spread out on the ground reading "Stop Hinkley C – Remember Chernobyl".

Poignant stories and poems written by survivors were read out, followed by a two minutes silence to remember the many who died that day and those who continue to suffer. This vigil was one of many held around the world.

A collection was held for the Chernobyl Children's Lifeline charity, which has brought more than 40,000 children to the UK from Belarus and Ukraine for holidays, fresh food, and medical attention. £37 was raised.

In a statement to the local press a spokesperson for Stop Hinkley said: "The

price this planet is paying as a consequence of this event continues to unfold after all these years and still we do not know what the final toll will be or exactly how far into the future the effects will extend as mankind continues to add to the radiological burden inflicted on the environment. The Chernobyl accident has passed, but the suffering has not."



-o0o-

### Anti-nuclear groups present demands to Energy Minister

In an initiative coordinated by the Nuclear Free Local Authorities network (NFLA), a statement of eight key demands on nuclear safety in the aftermath of the Fukushima accident has been presented to the government. The document was handed in before a March 29<sup>th</sup> meeting between UK Energy Minister Lord Marland, Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) officials and NGOs representing the anti-nuclear movement.

The joint statement was agreed between the NFLA, Friends of the Earth, the Nuclear

Consultation Group, CND and over 30 other nuclear concerned groups, including Stop Hinkley. The demands were discussed at the DECC/NGO stakeholder dialogue meeting in London and were welcomed by the government as fully explaining the policy position of NFLA and other groups.

The main demands made in the statement were:

- The post-Fukushima nuclear safety review being conducted by Mike Weightman of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) should be held in public and be fully open and transparent. It should consider safety at a wide range of nuclear facilities.
- The 'exclusions' arrangement in the HSE's Generic Design Assessment process (under which certain fundamental safety issues will continue to be addressed while new nuclear reactors are being built) must be abandoned.
- There should be NO public subsidies for nuclear new build.
- The health effects of low level radiation on land and in the marine environment need to be independently verified.
- Ministerial speeches that they have confidence that the proposed policy for new nuclear build radioactive waste management will exist should cease.
- The government should commission an independent security review on current and projected radioactive waste and spent fuel interim storage arrangements.
- Government and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority need to resolve over 100 identified scientific and technical uncertainties before developing a deep underground radioactive waste repository.

-o0o-

## **New Research Shows Effect of Fukushima Scale Accident at Hinkley**

*Stop Hinkley Press Release 19<sup>th</sup> May 2011*

On the day that the government's interim report on safety following the Fukushima nuclear accident was published, a hypothetical modeling of a similar tsunami event at Hinkley Point power station showed that it would have disastrous consequences.

This new analysis has been prompted both by the seriousness of the radiation releases into the environment from the Japanese nuclear plant and by continuing revelations about the extent of the damage, which shows that the situation at Fukushima is still not under control.

The research paper by Professor Chris Busby, Dai Williams and Cecily Collingridge of Green Audit - 'What would have happened to the fallout if a tsunami damaged Hinkley Point on 11th March 2011' – is accompanied by two animations which track the path of a plume following a six hour release of radiation. The paper concludes: "What is clear from these calculations is that radioactivity at the levels being released from Fukushima would contaminate the Home Counties and London and would rapidly make the south of England uninhabitable".

This sobering simulation brings home the fact that although the Hinkley site may seem remote from large population centres, the nature of weather patterns would ensure that millions would be exposed to the plume.

"There are serious doubts as to whether the government's safety review goes far enough in making sure we avoid the type of disaster envisaged in this scenario," said Cecily Collingridge, one of the report's authors. "We really need to appreciate what we might be letting ourselves in for."

Whilst the prospect of a tsunami in Somerset may seem remote, that cannot be said of coolant losses, which are worryingly commonplace. At Hinkley Point B there have been a total of six such incidents since 2005, one of which was a direct leak from Reactor No.4, and a total of 47 coolant loss incidents across the UK.

"There cannot be faith in Mike Weightman's work without a corresponding review of nuclear policy, otherwise it is just another box-ticking exercise," added Cecily. "It's time to see Chris Huhne, who requested the interim report, demonstrate some 'muscular liberalism' in the Department of Energy and Climate Change."

- The Green Audit report and full references for this press release can be found at <http://www.stophinkley.org/PressReleases/pr110518.htm>

## **French Nuclear Safety Authority says proposed Hinkley C reactor design is “very compromised”**

*Stop Hinkley Press Release 8<sup>th</sup> April 2011*

The Stop Hinkley campaign today expressed concern at warnings from the French Nuclear Safety Authority, ASN, about the dangers of the Hinkley C reactor design.

ASN President Andre-Claude Lacoste told the French media that he “could not rule out” a moratorium on the third generation European Pressurised Reactor (EPR) nuclear reactor under construction at Flamanville in Normandy, northern France.

“If the question of a moratorium is raised, and we have raised it, then it will be on the construction of Flamanville 3,” he said. The reactor is costing over €5 billion to build and has run into delays and cost over-runs. Lacoste said the reactor, whose engineering works were led by the French electricity giant EDF, was “very compromised.”

ASN has put in place several new security regulations covering the Flamanville site, which is scheduled to reopen shortly following a partial closure in the wake of a fatal accident in January 2011.

“We are very concerned at the doubts cast by the French nuclear safety regulator on the integrity of construction at the Flamanville site,” said Stop Hinkley spokesman Crispin Aubrey. “This adds further support to our demand, especially after the disaster at Fukushima in Japan, that the Hinkley C project should be cancelled.”

Despite attempts by Areva, manufacturers of the EPR, to brush aside the ASN statements as “nothing extraordinary”, the company's shares were suspended from trading following the remarks.

ASN has meanwhile warned EDF that it needed to “seriously” improve the maintenance of the 58 reactors it already runs in France. Lacoste said an audit of the safety of all French reactors was under way and a report would be available by the end of the year. Presenting his Regulator's Report to parliament, the ASN chief said that EDF needed to “better anticipate a certain number of maintenance operations and the replacement of components”.

Trade union members at several French nuclear plants have been pointing out for some time that safety has been compromised because of cost cutting and the increased outsourcing of maintenance work.

Leaked documents from EDF have revealed that engineers working on the EPR feared “the possibility” of a “Chernobyl style” meltdown because both the materials and workmanship were substandard.

The *Financial Times* has reported that last year EDF discovered “anomalies” affecting dozens of its reactors, including corrosion on parts of the steam generators within its older nuclear plants. “EDF replaced the parts and asked permission to continue operating some reactors, despite deterioration in conditions. This request had been refused,” the French safety regulator said.

## **Stop Hinkley supporter denounces SAGE and urges adoption of ECRR risk model**

*Stop Hinkley Press Release 19<sup>th</sup> April 2011*

A Stop Hinkley member has criticised the government body handling the Fukushima crisis – SAGE (Scientific Advice Group in Emergencies) – for continuing to minimise the impact and underplay the health risks.

“When I heard Sir John Beddington, the UK's Chief Scientific Adviser and Chairman of SAGE, on the radio I became enraged at what he was saying.” she said. All of the reactors suffered a loss of cooling mechanisms and went on to be rocked by a series of explosions and other problems. “He was so laid back I was half expecting him to go on and say that TEPCO should call a plumber!”

“Anyone with any common sense could see that it was more serious than the picture he was giving of ‘a small risk of a small amount of exposure’”, she continued.

In advice given to British nationals residing in China on 18th March, SAGE claimed that it was “wholly wrong” to compare Fukushima to Chernobyl, although they later removed this statement from their website. Since then, SAGE has continued to underplay the risks in its analyses.

(Full version at <http://www.stophinkley.org/PressReleases/pr110419.htm> )

## BBC Radio 4 'The Report'

BBC Radio 4's analytical programme The Report (21<sup>st</sup> April) included questions about safety at Hinkley Point. In the wake of Fukushima, Andy Denwood investigated the recent record of Britain's nuclear safety agency and asked whether the inspectorate - relaunched last month - was up to the job.

The programme included interviews with nuclear engineer John Large, former Stop Hinkley coordinator Jim Duffy - who raised the issue of why a back-up "boron bead" shut down safety system had not been installed at Hinkley B power station - and Stop Hinkley campaigners.

You can still listen to the programme here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/podcasts/series/r4report>

## Stop Hinkley News

### Hinkley C: Your Questions Answered

The yellow A5 leaflet summarising Stop Hinkley's arguments against Hinkley C has been updated in the light of the Fukushima disaster. 11,000 copies were distributed with the West Somerset Trader newspaper, all kindly paid for by a supporter.

You can download the leaflet here <http://www.stophinkley.org/Leaflet.htm> or we can supply hard copies.

### Stop Hinkley AGM

The AGM will be held on Monday June 13<sup>th</sup> at West Bow House (see Events list). All members are very welcome to attend. Please let us know if you are planning to come to give us an idea of numbers. See you then.

### Seize the Day gig

A good crowd enjoyed an excellent evening of music from Seize the Day and support act Rushlight at Bridgwater Arts Centre on 25 March. £377 was raised for Stop Hinkley and Sedgemoor & West Somerset Green Party.

### Donations

The campaign has donated £500 to Chris Busby of Green Audit to enable the purchase of more sensitive radiation monitoring equipment and £1,000 to support the legal challenge by Rory Walker of Heysham Anti-Nuclear Alliance to the government's justification decision on nuclear power. Rory and his legal advisers are currently planning

to appeal against an initial rejection of their application for judicial review.

-o0o-

## Hinkley C News

Following requests from West Somerset Council, EDF has issued a raft of further documents in relation to its application to carry out "preliminary works" on the Hinkley C site. They can be viewed through [www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/hinkleypoint](http://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/hinkleypoint) The deadline for responses is 31st May

EDF has also responded to criticisms of its overall plans for constructing the new power station, saying that most people welcome the investment and that it is planting some trees to screen the new plant. See [www.edfenergyconsultation.info](http://www.edfenergyconsultation.info)

There has been little fresh activity at the construction site, however, and the company is still waiting for the government to agree a package of subsidies to make its plans financially viable.

The Sunday Times (1 May) reported that "industry insiders are now factoring in a delay of two years or more to EDF's plans", mainly because of the Fukushima accident.

## Events

The next Stop Hinkley 'business' meetings will be on Mondays at 7.30pm  
**June 13<sup>th</sup> (including AGM) and July 11<sup>th</sup>**  
at West Bow House, Milton Place (behind Squib pub) West Street, Bridgwater,  
-----

### Stop Hinkley Social evenings

Mondays 7.30pm **June 6<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>**  
Unity House, Dampiet Street, Bridgwater

## Contacts

**Crispin Aubrey**, Press Officer/Newsletter:  
[crispin@stophinkley.org](mailto:crispin@stophinkley.org) 01278 732921

**Katy Attwater**, Press and general enquiries:  
[attyhoops@hotmail.com](mailto:attyhoops@hotmail.com) 0798 073 1896

**Allan Jeffery**, Assistant Coordinator:  
[ajjeffery@talktalk.net](mailto:ajjeffery@talktalk.net) 01278 425451

**Val Davey**, Membership, Treasurer, Website Manager: [val@stophinkley.org](mailto:val@stophinkley.org)

[www.stophinkley.org](http://www.stophinkley.org)