Newsletter February 2017

Stop Hinkley calls for Hinkley Point B to be shut down permanently

Stop Hinkley Press Release, 23 Jan 2017

A new report published by Green MSPs in the Scottish Parliament reveals that EDF Energy is asking the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) to relax safety standards by doubling the number of cracks allowed in the radioactive cores of ageing reactors like Hinkley Point B.

Prolonged radiation bombardment causes the thousands of graphite bricks that make up reactor cores to crack, threatening a safe shutdown. EDF wants the ONR, to permit an increase in the proportion of cracked bricks from 10 to 20 per cent.

Spokesperson for the Stop Hinkley Campaign, Roy Pumfrey, said: "Hinkley Point B is over 40 years old and well past its sell-by date; its ageing problems are now getting deeply worrying. It is time to shut it down – permanently."

"EDF is gambling with public safety, but this is a lottery we are not prepared to take part in. Despite the fact that cracks are beginning to appear in the graphite core of these reactors, increasing the risk for us all, we haven't been asked for once our opinion about extending their life."

The ONR says the periodic safety review for Hinkley Point B and its sister station in Scotland, Hunterston B, is due at the end of January.

"It is time for the ONR to get a grip and order these reactors to shut down before it's too late," said Pumfrey.

Notes:

Plant Life-Time Extensions for Scotland's Ageing Reactors the Lack of Public Participation in the Decision-Making Process A report for the Green MSPs by Pete Roche Published January 2017 **Click Here**

N.B. Virtually everything said about Hunterston B in this report also applies to Hinkley Point B.

See also

- **Scottish Sunday Herald 22 Jan 2017**
- **The Ferret 23 Jan 2017**

Stop Hinkley calls for all work at Hinkley Point C to be suspended

Stop Hinkley Press Release, 5 Jan 2017

Stop Hinkley is calling on EDF Energy to stop all work on Hinkley Point C at least until the French nuclear industry gets a clean bill of health from the French regulator and we know the outcome of the ongoing investigation into the use of poor quality steel at the reactor being built at Flamanville.

This is the same type as the ones proposed for Hinkley Point C.

The French nuclear regulator – ASN – has been investigating two aspects of a growing nuclear scandal in France. Firstly, some steel components made at Areva's Le Creusot factory for nuclear reactors in France and elsewhere, had excessive carbon levels which could make them vulnerable to cracking. Secondly, there is evidence that some of the quality-assurance documentation 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. Any significant problems with the reactor vessel could be catastrophic for EDF, however, as redoing 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.

Stop Hinkley spokesperson Roy Pumfrey said: "If a company building a footbridge was accused of manufacturing poor quality steel and of falsifying quality assurance documents, they would be thrown off the job, at least until they were exonerated. And yet EDF Energy continues to make preparations to build something potentially much more dangerous than a footbridge which

has been manufactured by a company accused of these very safety lapses".

In December it was reported that the French company – Engie – would like to abandon its 40% share of new reactors planned for Moorside near Sellafield in Cumbria and shift its focus to renewable energies. And nuclear power has turned into a financial quagmire for the other Moorside partner - 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. Meanwhile 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.

Pumfrey continued: "The writing is on the wall for Hinkley Point C; the sooner EDF Energy gives up, the sooner Somerset can move forward and join the rest of the world developing an energy strategy for tomorrow, and stop looking backwards to failed technology well past its sell-by date."

Hinkley C - not a site for sore eyes

Roy Pumfrey December 2016

Once a month EdeF lay on a visit to the HPC site for the general public. SH member Roy Pumfrey joined the December group.

There were supposed to be 13 of us but only eight braved a dismal morning. My bus pass was sufficient photo ID to get me on the Tour. In EdeF's Bridgwater office, it was like security at an airport. Had we got any guns, explosives, drugs, sharp implements? As if the site we're visiting, if completed, won't present more hazards than any we could possibly take there.

Before setting off, some background info. EdeF supplies 20% of UK electricity and, through its nuclear reactors and surprisingly extensive wind farms, half of the low carbon electricity. It has 15,000 UK employees.

Hinkley A took from 1957 - 65 to build, generated from 1965 - 2000 and will 'mostly' be decommissioned by 2026. Currently requires 430 staff.

Hinkley B was built from 1967 - 1975 and started generating on 5 February 1976. Potentially, it will keep going until 2023, long past its sell-by date. About 785 people work there.

No figures (these were old slides) for Hinkley C, apart from construction starting 2016, generating 7% of UK electricity, providing 25,000 jobs during construction with 900 to run the finished station. No one knows why the site is so big compared to B or A. There is no mention of the highly radioactive waste generated or that it will have to be stored on site.

The official Edef Guides are trained for visits to Hinkley B, so we were in the hands of our minibus driver. Small world that it is, I used to work with this guy! He takes lots of visitors to HPC - VIPs, MPs, and Councillors as well as lots of EdeF staff. Indeed, there is an EdeF guy in the back hitching a ride with a couple of other folk who talks to them at the same time as the driver is talking to us.

En route, the driver talks about Traffic Management of the thousand and more HGVs that will converge on the site on a daily basis. The roads are clogged now. HPC will be late simply because the lorries can't get there.

We go through more security to get onto the site. It is vast, the equivalent of 350 football pitches, and a sea of mud as far as the eye can see. It's hard to reconcile what's there today with the wooded site dotted with old farmsteads which SH members occupied back in 2012. A case of 'shock and awe'. Let's remember how the last 'shock and awe' turned out - a war in Iraq that created so many more problems than it solved.

The first thing to see was that the Asbestos Remediation (asbestos waste from Hinkley A dumped and covered for 50 years and now being removed to make way for HPC) is still not complete. A Planning Application made in 2011, overrunning by at least four years. A taste of things to come.

Our tour continues towards the beach. The driver points out the site of the water intakes/outfalls that will go up to 3.3 km into the Bristol Channel. Work has begun on the Decoupling Wall to protect the building of the new sea wall that will supposedly protect the site from sea level rises.

There is more to see around the Concrete Batching Plants at the end of where the jetty will

be. There are two and there will be two more. They will produce 'nuclear grade' concrete and have the capacity for 72 hour pours at peak. Continuous pouring is supposed to prevent the variable concrete quality that has bedevilled Olkiluoto in Finland. Surprisingly, the driver concurs that first concrete will be poured in Quarter 1 of 2017. This is what we've recently heard elsewhere from EdeF. It's hard to believe bearing in mind all that has to be done before any concrete is poured. Turns out this is only concrete to make the 'galleries', the miles of underground service tunnels carrying cabling etc

Supposedly, 80% of the aggregates required to make all the concrete will come by sea from the Port of Bristol at Avonmouth. Of course, they'll have to come by road from the Mendip quarries to get to Avonmouth and by road across Wales to get to ports on the Welsh coast. The first steps in making the jetty for unloading the sea-borne aggregates involve a 'Wave Walker' barge that can come up the beach to drive piles for the jetty.

Spray concrete is also required to support the sides of new structures and we see one of the batching plants for this.

We trundle past the 'Bat House', another token gesture of environmental concern, close to the Green Lane across the site. This ancient trackway will become the southern boundary of the HPC site, if it's ever completed. Everything south of it on EdeF's glossy pamphlet diagrams – site operations building, a welfare block and the massive hostel blocks – will be cleared and 'returned to original use'. One other punter asks what use it will have. The driver is unsure as 'farmland' seems highly unlikely. I express disappointment that all of the accommodation at the site and in Bridgwater will disappear when the project ends. The EdeF guy at the back of the bus chips in that it will be dismantled and used at Sizewell. Not much help in a locality, just like most places, short of housing.

My neighbour on the minibus turns out to be someone I know from Cannington. His surprise is the hilly nature of the site – he was expecting more of a plateau – and the work EdeF has to do to level it. The whole of the Holford Valley, after the brook there has been put in a culvert, will be filled in with more than five million cubic metres of earth cum spoil.

Water management is also a huge issue for the project and we see the site of the silt lagoons that will be used to separate water from soil.

We pass Doggetts Farm, just outside the site boundary. The driver tells us that the owners wouldn't sell but didn't want to stay, so EdeF are renting the property for the duration of the project. Other people in Shurton, the hamlet closest to the southern boundary bund, haven't fared so well. EdeF has bought 14 properties – some say at low valuations – and other residents are desperate to get away.

There are lots of 100 tonne dumpers building roadways for big Abnormal Indivisible Loads to get around the site with bridges over them for 'normal' vehicles. Still, there are hardly a lot of people in evidence. That's because, of the thousand people currently working at the site, at least half are office based.

The tour doesn't take long – less than an hour. It doesn't answer any of the fundamental questions about HPC. EdeF are busy building the bodywork of their hugely expensive 'car' before they've got the engine, the fiendishly complicated European Pressurised water Reactor, to work. Relatively speaking, it's been easy to start e project but may be impossible to finish. I'll put myself down for another visit in a year or so and we'll see how they're getting on.

Report on HPC Community Forum Meeting, 2 February 2017

Roy Pumfrey

The Community Forum (CF) is made up of representatives from any local body with an interest in HPC. Parish, Town, District and County Councils are well represented, along with a number of EdeF folk. The ONR stopped attending when it became clear that it would be a while before there was anything nuclear on site to deal with. The Agenda is set by EdeF.

Project Milestones:- David Eccles, EdeF
Earthworks are extending and will soon fill the Holford Valley
Two Batching Plants built, two more to build. Also an Aggregate Store.
Ongoing Concrete Process Trials
East Office Annex complete, more to come. 1500 workers on site, majority office based, will double at end of year, and double again in the next two years
20 piles have been quietly screwed into the seabed for initial Jetty foundations, will take a year to build jetty
De-Coupling Wall construction underway (protects sea wall excavations)
Spray Concrete Batcher on way
Haul-road bridge built (takes smaller vehicles over route of 100t diggers)

New for 2017
HPC on site Accommodation Campus
First safety-related concrete used in gallery (underground service tunnels)
Complete East Welfare building
Handover of civil works design studies for pumping station raft

Handover of civil works design studies for reactor pre-stressing gallery
Commence installation of seawater cooling pipes
Initial preparation work on Combwich Wharf has been brought forward from 2018 to mid- 2017, concerning local residents.
*in response to SH query: Wessex Water are installing a new freshwater pipe to the HPC site from Clatworthy Reservoir
*in response to SH query (Raised in anonymous letter to Stop Hinkley): new buses for ferrying workers from P&R sites will be built in China
*in response to SH query: Eccles can't comment on recent EdeF note to BEIS Select Committee on difficulties/delays likely if leaving EU causes freedom of worker movement restrictions

Worker Accommodation
HPC campus will be for 500 workers
Former Cellophane Sports & Social Club site on Bath Road in Bridgwater is for 986 single units in modules. All pre-fab, simply put into place and fixed together on site. Construction starts July 2017
Section 1 complete July '18, Section 2 October '18, works complete December '18. None of the accommodation will have any 'legacy value'. EdeF say it will be dismantled and transported to Sizewell to use there
In response to query from Wembdon Councillor, vast majority of male occupants anticipated

Park and Ride works to start April 2017. Cannington park and ride, out to tender in April, hoped to be built by July 2018. Extended from 250 up to 300 parking spaces.

New Bus Service:- SCC Councillor announced that EdeF will subsidise a free thrice daily (Monday to Friday) bus service from Minehead to/from Bridgwater. Not for Cannington folk, they've already got an hourly service and that's enough for them!

Eccles responded to SH queries:-
The Asbestos Remediation Planning Application, permission granted in January 2011 is still only 80% complete
HPC will take ten years to build and will be completed in 2025, irrespective of these figures not adding up
With more happening now on site, it was agreed to move from 3 Community Forum meetings per year to 4 meetings a year, and rearrange times of related forum meetings to work with this arrangement

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www.stophinkley.org

Fukushima

Ecowatch 5th Feb 2017

Nearly six years after the initial explosion caused a catastrophic meltdown at the Daiichi nuclear power plant in the Fukushima prefecture of Japan, the situation has suddenly taken a drastic turn for the worst. Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), the company which owns and operates the now defunct power plant, announced that radiation inside the containment vessel of one of the plant's failed reactors has now reached levels undetected since the disaster first occurred in 2011. Radiation inside the reactor has reached 530 sieverts per hour, a drastic increase from the previously recorded 73 sieverts per hour recorded in the aftermath of the meltdown. The level of radiation is so high that an official of the National Institute of Radiological Sciences told the Japan Times that medical professionals have never considered dealing with this level of radiation in their work.

Events

Stop Hinkley meetings
Mondays 20 March & 15 May at 7pm
West Bow House, Milton Place
Off West Street, Bridgwater TA6 7RT
NB April meeting cancelled.
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Green Nuclear Free Wales
A United Welsh Front Against Nuclear Power
At the National Library of Wales
Aberystwyth
Saturday 11th March 2017

Stop Hinkley members from Somerset are joining their Welsh friends in Aberystwyth in beautiful mid Wales,
Do come and join us to remember the Fukushima 6th anniversary. Contact Allan.

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