



Newsletter

October 2016

Hinkley Point: ministers sign go-ahead for nuclear power plant

The Guardian, 29 September

The UK has signed its £18bn contract with France and China to build the Hinkley Point C nuclear power station, giving the final go-ahead for construction at the site in Somerset.

The deal was finalised at a low-key ceremony in London, just two months after Theresa May alarmed her French and Chinese counterparts by putting the entire project under review.

The project finally got approval this month, after Greg Clark, the business secretary, announced there would be some new restrictions on future investments in critical infrastructure if there were national security concerns.

Clark attended the signing ceremony on behalf of the UK, alongside Jean-Bernard Lévy, the chairman of EDF, and He Yu, chair of China General Nuclear.

The business secretary said it was a “crucial moment in the UK’s first new nuclear power station for a generation and follows new measures put in place by government to strengthen security and ownership”. The event was also attended by Jean-Marc Ayrault, the French foreign minister, and Nur Bekri, a senior official at the National Energy Administration of China.

He Yu said it signifies “CGN’s commitment to the UK as one of the world’s leading developers and operators of nuclear power. This flagship programme is a triple win for China, Britain, and France and is a culmination of years of cooperation between the three countries. CGN looks forward to providing UK consumers with safe, reliable and sustainable energy and maximising opportunities for UK suppliers and the UK workforce.”

Unions welcomed the development, saying thousands of skilled jobs would now be created, benefiting firms across the UK. It is expected to produce 7GW of electricity when fully operational, enough to power 6m homes and provide 7% of Britain’s electricity needs for 60 years.

However, Greenpeace said it was “no wonder the UK government has opted for a ‘champagne-free’ signing ceremony away from public view”.

The environmental group said: “With a stroke of the pen ministers are signing away billions of pounds of billpayers’ money to a project they know is plagued by legal, financial and technical problems. In the unlikely event Hinkley is working some time in the second half of the next decade, renewable energy will be much cheaper, yet British consumers will still be forced to pay over the odds for nuclear power. It’ll be like being locked into an expensive fixed-rate mortgage as interest rates plummet.”

Under the new controls, EDF will not be able to sell on its stake in Hinkley without permission. For future projects, the UK government will own a “special share” that means it will have a veto over owners if there are national security concerns.

In a sign the new requirements do not appear to be overly stringent, both EDF and CGN said they were delighted by the approval, which they claimed would let them proceed with Hinkley and their wider plans for nuclear construction in the UK in future.

The government published documents detailing the contractual obligations it has entered into, including a “value for money assessment” that allowed ministers to make the decision to proceed with the project. According to the documents, UK-based businesses would benefit from more than 60% of the cost of the project and 26,000 jobs and apprenticeships would be created during construction and after its opening.

Justin Bowden, the GMB union’s national secretary for energy, said: “With collective sighs of relief all round, it is fantastic news that the Hinkley deal is finally signed and work can start on this vital piece of UK infrastructure.

“The formal go-ahead for Hinkley is the first serious sign that UK plc is open for business post-Brexit and holding a secret ceremony did not do justice to such a historic event. Attention must now straight away shift to Bradwell B and Sizewell C.”

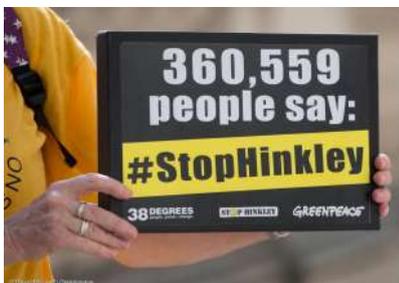
Over 300,000 people called for Hinkley to be scrapped

Stop Hinkley Campaigners joined Greenpeace on Thursday 15th September to hand in a petition at No.10 Downing Street.



This follows on from a public opinion poll commissioned by Greenpeace which showed that support amongst the general public for Hinkley Point C has fallen to a new low of only 25%, whilst nearly half (44%) oppose it.

The petition calls on Theresa May to drop the eye watering expensive Hinkley and invest in renewable power instead.



Stop Hinkley spokesperson Sue Aubrey said: "Virtually all major national newspapers and commentators have been

calling for Hinkley to be cancelled for months. This petition and recent opinion polls show that the public agrees with them and supports Stop Hinkley's view that there is no widespread support for new nuclear, particularly at Hinkley Point. Consumers can tell that the project may be unconstructable, requires vast subsidies and would generate electricity too expensive to use."

Aubrey continued: "The Government's nuclear delusions are trying to put the brakes on a renewable energy revolution taking place around the world. They can't bring themselves to admit that smart, efficient and renewable energy systems are sounding the death-knell for nuclear power and are standing in the way of the West of England joining this energy revolution – they really do make King Canute look like an amateur. It's time that Somerset was given the opportunity to join the future."

Videos: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dkkxFmTu-aY>

Flamanville Demo 1st October

By Allan Jeffery

I've just recovered from an amazing weekend camping in Normandy where I represented Stop Hinkley to join SWAN members taking part in the massive French anti-nuclear demonstration at Siouville, near Flamanville, the problem EPR reactor which must start generating before Hinkley C can be built.



The French certainly know how to organise, camp, demonstrate and party!

Nikki, Zoe, Christine, Caroline and I camped in a field of clover, a very green vegan camp, attended discussion groups and a press conference and marched with estimates of between two and three thousand members of the French collectives along the beautiful coast line (similar to Cornwall) to the EPR reactor at Flamanville. It was an eventful weekend where we met many lovely, passionate French activists as well as the French Gendarmerie. A tiring but exciting weekend.



More Info here:

<http://stophinkley.org/EventsReports.htm#Flamanville2016>

Tsunamis in the Severn Estuary: past and future warnings for Hinkley.

It seems a simple matter of sanity that no decision should be made until one of these EDF reactors can be demonstrated to work, but there are other relevant matters such as the danger of Tsunami in the Bristol Channel, whose funnel-shape would magnify the wave.



There was a salutary warning on a recent Coast programme on BBC TV, when an eminent geologist revealed that the great Somerset flood of 1606 [which was recorded in a contemporary woodcut] could not have been caused by a storm-surge in the Bristol Channel, as the weather was calm that day in January.

Latest research has discovered an ancient fault-line under the sea, south of Ireland, which produced an earthquake of magnitude 4 on the Richter scale as recently as ten years ago.

Remembering that the tsunami of 1606 reached as high as 25 feet, lasted for 20 minutes, and travelled at almost 40 miles an hour, makes it clear that to build more nuclear power stations there would be a disastrous folly, leading to a Fukushima-type accident, which would make large areas uninhabitable for at least 50 years.

The other recent news, of tuna on the west coast of the USA having radioactive caesium in their bodies from Fukushima, is another warning of the dangers of nuclear power.

The levels of radiation were described as 'within legal limits' for human consumption; but we already know that there is no such thing as a 'safe' level of radiation, from the work of Dr Alice Stewart, who established 55 years ago that one X-ray of a pregnant woman doubles the risk of cancer for her baby.

She also calculated that 'background radiation' has doubled since 1945, thanks to atom bomb explosions and nuclear accidents, so cannot be described as 'natural' any more. She pointed out that these new man-made isotopes are much more dangerous to life, and we know from recent scientific research that the regular emissions from nuclear power stations severely increase cancer-

rates for those living downwind. Nuclear Power is the most dangerous form of energy production ever invented: Albert Einstein himself said warningly, "It's a hell of a way to boil water!"

Only about 900 permanent jobs would be created at Hinkley, whereas the clean forms of energy production, such as solar, wind, tidal turbines, and insulation would produce many thousands of permanent jobs. There has never been anything clean or green about nuclear power, whose toxic waste needs to be safely stored for at least 100,000 years, so now is the time to abandon this absurdly expensive technology, whose pollution can damage the genetic integrity of life on our fragile planet.

For the sake of future life on this planet, we do not need any increase in unnatural radiation levels.

For more info see sites of Dr Helen Caldicott, Fairewinds, ENENews and Jonathan Porritt.

Richard Carder [Bath Friends of the Earth]

Massive Attack concert

Much to our surprise the well-known Bristol group, Massive Attack, invited Stop Hinkley to speak at their concert on the Downs in Bristol on Saturday September 3rd and to run a Stop Hinkley stall. As they are a band that headlines at Glastonbury Festival, we could not miss this opportunity! They have strong political views and the concert programme had a whole page about the Stop Hinkley campaign and a piece about our speaker Allan Jeffery. There were also pictures of Allan around the site advertising his talk!

Allan talked about how our campaign publicises our message and five reasons why Hinkley C should not go ahead: risk to national security, too expensive, technology not fit for purpose, unresolved waste problems and the reasons why the lights will not go out. This was backed by a brilliant set of pictures on the screen of our demos, actions, marches and camps.

We were very busy on our stall from 1pm until 7pm and we had some really interesting discussions. The discussions had a different tone than in the past. It seemed that as a result of Teresa May halting the decisions on Hinkley C, this allowed more open discussions. Hinkley workers and those who were openly pronuclear were freely discussing their concerns about the Hinkley deal. Our last visitor cried "I can't believe this is still going on, my sister was campaigning against Hinkley C 30 years ago!"

Thanks to the valiant group who ran the stall; Allan & Andrew Jeffery, Laura Ruddock, Chinks Grylls and Sue Aubrey as well as Jane Creagh-Osborne from SWAN. We were very lucky to be under cover as it rained most of the day.

Austrian Visit to Hinkley Point

By Allan Jeffery

On the bank holiday in August a few members of Stop Hinkley met with a visiting group of Austrians.

Rudi Anschober, a Green Regional Environment minister from Upper Austria with members of his staff and journalists from four Austrian national newspapers visited UK to find out how Hinkley C was progressing and meet some Stop Hinkley members.

Myself, Peter Smith and Barbara and Helen Grant met the mini bus in Bridgwater bringing the group from Heathrow. We led the visitors to the Hinkley site and walked around the entrance and security fence, explaining about the stations history and developments. It was a hot day and the site was dead quiet, not even a few lorries or diggers as it was a bank holiday, just a few nuclear police officers observing our actions. I had met the officers the day before, so they knew of our visit.



Peter was able to give personal experience from having worked in the A and B stations. Helen and I were able to explain about the history and local reactions to the project. The journalists asked questions and took some site photos, including us with our banner. With only a few hours available before they had to return to London, further questions could be answered in a more relaxed way over a meal, so we took the group through the picturesque local villages of Shurton and Burton and along Somerset country lanes to the Cottage Inn, where they could question us more, over some British food at a quaint Somerset Pub. This went down well.

The visit gave Rudi a feel for the area and progress at the Hinkley site and we supplied the staff and each of the journalists with a full collection of Stop Hinkley leaflets to take with them. A very friendly and informative visit, we have more good contacts, and the Austrian challenge to the Hinkley C deal financing is progressing through the EU commission courts! We wished them a good journey back to London. The next day they were meeting Molly Scott Cato, David Lowry and Steve Thomas. Thanks to Peter, Barbara and Helen representing us.

Events

Stop Hinkley meetings
Mondays Nov 21 & Dec 19 at 7pm
West Bow House, Milton Place
Off West Street, Bridgwater TA6 7RT

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The Atom: A Love Affair

A free test screening of a new documentary on the history and politics of the nuclear industry. Monday 31st October at the Engine Room, 50 High Street, Bridgwater TA6 3BL.

Stop Hinkley have supported film makers Dartmouth Films to produce this soon to be released film that charts the politics and history of the nuclear industry. We encourage you to attend the test screening. The film-makers from Dartmouth films will be providing a Q and A following the screening and welcome your feedback on the film. Please book you place http://www.somersetfilm.com/diary/?action=evrplusegister&event_id=107 or phone 01278 433187.

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FREE Talk: Is Nuclear the Answer? **25th October at Salt Café, Bristol**

Nikki Jones, researcher/writer on global energy, will answer the question of why the UK government is intent on a nuclear energy strategy at the Salt Cafe on St George's Road, near Jacob's Wells roundabout, BS1 5UJ. She will explain the UK energy context and how renewables and other technologies could offer a viable alternative. There will be opportunities for questions throughout.

Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/free-talk-is-nuclear-the-answer-25th-october-salt-cafe-tickets-26969272821>

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