



Stop Hinkley Press Release

22nd February 2012

Jonathon Porritt to join anti-nuclear protest at Hinkley Point on eve of Fukushima anniversary Saturday March 10th 2012

Leading environmentalist Jonathon Porritt will join demonstrators at Hinkley Point nuclear power station in Somerset to mark the first anniversary of the Fukushima disaster - and to call for a halt to the development of Hinkley C.

Community groups from all over the UK will be forming a symbolic chain around the EDF Energy-owned power station on Saturday 10th March. The chain will represent their battle to stop the expansion of Hinkley Point and to halt the government's push for seven other new nuclear power stations around the UK.

The event will be followed by a 24-hour blockade of Hinkley Point's main entrance.

Allied protests will also be taking place against new nuclear power stations at Wylfa in North Wales and Heysham in Lancashire. Demonstrations calling for an end to nuclear power are also expected in Japan, Germany, France and the US.

Speaking before the event, Jonathon Porritt said nuclear is not necessary to combat climate change. "We can achieve everything we need in terms of secure, low-carbon energy primarily from energy efficiency, renewables and modern technologies like Combined Heat and Power. I believe that we can still persuade UK citizens that 'new nuclear' is the wrong thing for us to be doing.'

A Japanese couple who fled their home after the Fukushima disaster will be speaking at the Hinkley protest to explain what it is like to live through the ongoing nightmare that thousands of Japanese people are enduring.

Zoe Smith, spokesperson for South West Against Nuclear, said it is important for communities in the South West to understand how vulnerable they are to a Fukushima-style accident. "Bristol, Exeter, Taunton and Yeovil are all within the 50 mile evacuation zone recommended by the US and France. The threat from a leakage of radiation or a full-blown disaster is very real,' she added.

EU-funded research shows that the health risks posed by high-level nuclear waste from the new EPR reactors is up to seven times greater than waste from existing reactors. For this reason, it will have to be stored on site for over

160 years before it can be moved. Zoe added: “This is a huge risk to employees at the proposed plants and to the communities living around them.”

Anti-nuclear campaigners say local authorities should focus on developing green jobs in the region. ‘A green economy could produce many more jobs than Hinkley C; the construction of Hinkley C will bring massive disruption to the community and, in the longer term, will put many people at risk from radiation contamination. We want a future, not a disaster.’

Andreas Speck, spokesperson for the Stop New Nuclear alliance, organisers of the demonstration, said the push for a nuclear renaissance is already driving up electricity bills. “The carbon floor price has been artificially elevated by the UK government to make nuclear power more attractive to investors. This means that the public is having to pay more for their energy at a time when a record number of people are locked in fuel poverty.’

A raft of hidden government subsidies has also been brought in through the back door. Speck added: “In the long-term this will have a big impact on public funds because history has shown us that nuclear is not viable without state support.”

A new independent report entitled, 'A Corruption of governance?', has revealed that data presented to ministers was skewed in favour of the nuclear option and that correct figures show that nuclear power is unnecessary to keep the lights on. The report concludes that the errors were, ‘Either a monumental series of mistakes or the ‘nuclear lobby’ has got control of the Whitehall machine’.

Katy Attwater, spokesperson for Stop Hinkley, added that the German government recently introduced a new energy policy that sets out a blueprint for a nuclear-free future. “Germany is paving the way by creating an energy infrastructure that is not only nuclear-free but safe and affordable. The question is, if Germany can do it, why can’t we?”

Zoe Smith, spokesperson from South West Against Nuclear said a nuclear renaissance would take the UK in the wrong direction. “Our protest at Hinkley is a wake-up call. We have to take a new approach to energy provision. Nuclear power only reinforces the notion that we can carry on consuming energy in ever-increasing amounts.”

She continued: “The reality is that we have to start reducing our energy consumption and making modern life more energy-efficient. We then need to spent the £60bn earmarked for ‘new nuclear’ on creating jobs in truly renewable forms of energy and research into more efficient forms of energy storage. Nuclear will simply lock us into the ‘business as usual scenario’ that got us into this mess in the first place.”

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Notes to the editor:

The demonstration at Hinkley Point is organised by the Stop New Nuclear alliance. The alliance includes the Stop Hinkley, CND and Shut Down Sizewell campaign groups.

The human chain or 'surround' will take place from 1pm to 3.30pm on Saturday 10th March. During this event, Hinkley Point's perimeter fence will be decorated with anti-nuclear slogans and Japanese peace cranes.

At an allotted time, there will be a one minute 'noise wave'. Whistle, sirens and musical instruments will be sounded as a demonstration that anti-nuclear activists will not be silenced.

A corruption of governance? This report was launched in January at the House of Commons by Unlock Democracy and The Association for the Conservation of Energy. It is supported by MPs Caroline Lucas and Tessa Munt.

The EPR nuclear reactor: a dangerous waste of time and money is a new report by Greenpeace International that summarises the huge cost and safety concerns surrounding the new European Pressurised Water Reactors.

The Future's Green: Jobs and the UK low-carbon transition, a report by the Institute for Public Policy Research outlines the key changes needed to create growth in green employment.

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