



Newsletter

February 2013

“Worst ever week for Hinkley C”

4 February 2013

Theo Simon, a spokesperson for the Stop Hinkley campaign group in Somerset, has hailed the past 7 days as “the worst ever” for EDF's delayed new nuclear plans.

"This has to be one of the worst weeks for EDF since they began their Hinkley C project. Cumbria has rejected hosting an underground dump for their nuclear waste, the true public cost of storing our existing waste - £67.5 billion - has just come to light and now EDF's major investment partner Centrica has pulled out. In what is also the anniversary week of a near meltdown at Fukushima, it's reasonable for anyone to question whether the government should ever have started along this route."

And he rejected EDF's statement that momentum behind Hinkley C "remains strong", saying "In reality they are ready to pull out if the government doesn't fix them a favourable price to guarantee their profits, with taxpayers and consumers covering the hidden subsidies. On top of this, it's now clear that future generations of taxpayers are expected to pick up the tab for managing the 10,000 year waste pile they will leave behind in West Somerset – there is nowhere else to put it. If the Secretary of State gives Hinkley C the go-ahead in March it will be a national disgrace, which I'm sure will be challenged in the courts, even if our politicians are too spineless to make a stand."

Cumbria sticks it to the nuclear dump lobby – despite all the carrots on offer

The Guardian, 31 January 2013

Cumbria county council's decision to "dump the dump" by voting against a nuclear waste repository close to the Lake District has drilled a nasty great hole in the middle of the government's wider nuclear strategy.

Ministers had made clear that part of the agreement with the public over a new generation of atomic power stations would involve finding a safe and permanent home for the high-level waste created by the old ones.

Cumbria's decision is a body blow for government because though it may not necessarily have been

the most geologically suitable spot, it certainly was the most politically suitable.

Even a secretarial job there can pay £10 an hour, and to win votes in the local constituency you need to pin your nuclear colour – yellow – to the mast, as the MP for Copeland, Jamie Reed, and his predecessor, "Neutron Jack" Cunningham, have done.

The Unite union, representing many Sellafield workers, can also be relied upon to bang the nuclear drum on a national level, and was quick to condemn the county council's decision on Wednesday.

The government had dangled all kinds of carrots in front of Cumbria's local and regional councils, including the prospect that up to 1,000 jobs could be created from the proposed £12bn underground project. It made some headway when Copeland and Allerdale councils voted in favour of further dialogue, but that was not enough without the county council.

Now, if an area steeped in a nuclear culture is not prepared to countenance a waste dump, then who will?

The difficulties were highlighted when Shepway local council in Kent took it upon itself to start a consultation on whether residents wanted to find out more about building an underground storage facility on Romney Marshes.

The councillors were worried about unemployment prospects as the reactors at the local atomic power station at Dungeness approach the end of their lives and face decommissioning. But the proposal was shelved almost as soon as it was made public as a massive political and public backlash got underway.

Who else is going to step up to the plate? It is hard enough to build a tried-and-tested, relatively small gas-fired power station, never mind a high-speed rail link or a radioactive waste dump.

The energy secretary, Ed Davey, knows this as he sets out on a heroic sales job to try to save the repository and potentially a new nuclear power programme beset with delays and rows over subsidy levels. There will now be enormous pressure on those unco-operative Cumbrian county councillors.

Sellafield management sharply criticised by Commons committee

The Guardian, 4 February 2013

The reputation of the nuclear industry faces further damage this week with the publication of a highly critical report on the management of the Sellafield plant in Cumbria, days before a court action over the illegal dumping of nuclear waste.

The moves follow Cumbria county council's refusal to pursue plans to build a storage facility for radioactive materials needed, many believe, if Britain is to build new atomic power stations.

The Commons public accounts committee report claims that Nuclear Management Partners (NMP), the private consortium managing Sellafield, has failed to stem rising costs and delays in dealing with waste and the decommissioning of facilities.

Margaret Hodge MP, the committee's chair, said: "Taxpayers are not getting a good deal from the NDA arrangement with NMP.

"Last year the consortium was rewarded with £54m in fees despite only two out of 14 major projects being on track.

"It is unclear how long it will take to deal with hazardous radioactive waste at Sellafield or how much it will cost the taxpayer. Of the 14 current major projects, 12 were behind schedule in the last year and five of those were over budget. Furthermore, now that Cumbria county council has ruled out West Cumbria as the site of the proposed geological disposal facility, a solution to the problem of long-term storage of the waste is as far away as ever."

The report, Nuclear Decommissioning Authority: Managing Risk at Sellafield, points out that about £1.6bn is being spent annually at the site, where a variety of hazardous materials – including 82 tonnes of plutonium – are kept.

The total lifetime cost of dealing with this has continued to rise each year and has now reached £67.5bn.

The MPs' committee is suspicious that the NDA does not have a tight enough rein on NMP – a consortium made up of Amec of Britain, Areva of France and the US firm URS – to properly control costs.

Further criticism will be heaped on those managing Sellafield when a court case opens on Thursday that will look into claims the nuclear operator breached environmental permits in 2010 by dumping four bags of radioactive waste in a landfill at nearby Lillyhall without authorisation.

Workington magistrates court, Cumbria, will consider nine charges, although the law has since changed to make it easier for Sellafield to dispose of certain low-level waste materials at Lillyhall.

Centrica withdraws from new UK nuclear projects

The Guardian, 4 February 2013

Centrica has abandoned its plans for building new nuclear reactors in the UK, blaming rising costs and construction delays

The move is a blow to the government's aspirations to build the most ambitious fleet of new reactors in Europe, and comes on the day MPs severely criticised the management of nuclear waste at Sellafield and after Cumbria county council rejected proposals for a deep burial site to permanently dispose of the waste.

Centrica will forfeit its 20% option on four new nuclear plants planned by EDF in Somerset and Suffolk, writing down £200m in the process. EDF has been in talks with the state-owned China Guangdong Nuclear Power Corporation, which may pick up Centrica's option.

Centrica's exit means no major UK company remains involved in plans for new nuclear reactors in the UK, but Centrica retains its 20% stake in eight existing nuclear power stations.

Sam Laidlaw, chief executive of Centrica, said: "We believe that nuclear generation has a valuable role to play in a balanced UK energy mix. However, since our initial investment [in 2008], the anticipated project costs in new nuclear have increased and the construction timetable has extended by a number of years." In particular, Laidlaw blamed the very large 1.6GW units planned for Hinkley Point in Somerset for making the project more expensive, and design modifications imposed after the Fukushima disaster for adding to delays.

EDF said it understood that the profile and scale of the investment in new nuclear plants did not meet Centrica's shareholders' expectations but said momentum behind the "shovel-ready" Hinkley Point project remained strong.

Tom Burke, at thinktank E3G and a former special adviser to three Conservative environment secretaries, said: "The really important question now is what does Centrica know that DECC does not?"

Analysts at Deutsche Bank said: "The decision to give cash back to shareholders rather than invest in new nuclear will be an embarrassment for the coalition government." But George Borovas, head of international nuclear projects at law firm Pillsbury, said: "Centrica's exit underscores the challenges that new build projects will continue to face in the UK as well as globally. However, new investors will quickly move to take Centrica's position and the government's hard work to attract foreign investment will probably pay off in this case."

Nuclear Waste in Bridgwater Station

Report from Wanda

Since January I have been moved to start attending the rail head in Rosebery Avenue, Bridgwater where Spent Fuel Rods from Hinkley B Nuclear Power Station are being loaded onto trains in the middle of town - a highly residential area - and right next to Eastover Primary School.



The school can be seen behind our heads and often the sound of children can be heard playing in the background as the gantry moves the waste from truck to train.

It has been very interesting talking to and making connections with people living and working around the railhead and with surprised passengers waiting on the platform. Many are not aware what is taking place here and it feels like the time is right to start reaching out to more folk and to widen a response to what is taking place here.



When loading is finished, the waste is reversed into Bridgwater Railway Station before it makes its way through Bristol and up country to Sellafield.

Members of SWAN (South West Against Nuclear) <http://southwestagainstnuclear.wordpress.com> in Bristol are notified when the waste is on its way and they have started making the good people of Bristol aware of what is travelling through their midst.

I am starting a telephone tree to notify anyone who's interested and might be able to join me when the train appears at Bridgwater rail head.

This is often on a Wednesday, but has also been on a Thursday or Friday, and sometimes both. The train usually appears around 7am in the morning and is usually there until 12.30ish, so there are a good few hours for folk to turn up.

Please get in touch if you would like to support, or if you might be able to help with future actions.

Email Wanda wanda@stophinkley.org or phone 07874 819608

Next Big Action Day

Stop Hinkley are supporting the Fukushima Commemoration Event in London on **Saturday 9th March**. Coaches will be leaving different areas and seats are £12 each [£6 unwaged]. We are subsidising the cost of the coach, so any additional donation you can make would be very much appreciated. Payment by cheque to Stop Hinkley, The Cottage, Ward Lane, Chedzoy, Bridgwater TA7 8RN or via PayPal at www.stophinkley.org/CoachTickets.htm

Do let us know if you would like to join us: email Jo Smoldon josephine.smoldon@virgin.net or phone her on 01278 459099. You can look forward to joining with local people from all areas of the country to take the Stop Hinkley message to London.

If you would like to be kept up to date on daily news regarding nuclear issues, as well as renewable energy, sign up to receive free daily email updates from www.no2nuclearpower.org.uk

PETITIONS

There are several online anti-nuclear petitions that you can support. Here are a couple of them:

- End Nuclear Insanity NOW - Veto Construction of Hinkley C Nuclear Power Station. We call upon David Cameron, Nick Clegg and Edward Davey, to stop the construction of Hinkley C Nuclear Power Station:
http://www.avaz.org/en/petition/End_Nuclear_Insanity_NOW_Ban_Construction_of_Hinkley_C_Nuclear_Power_Station/?fPKymab&pv=6
- Petition to Bristol City Council to resume its Nuclear Free Local Authority status in view of the recent catastrophic accident at Fukushima, and the Government's decision to press ahead with a new generation of nuclear power stations:
http://epetitions.bristol.gov.uk/epetition_core/community/petition/2009

See the new Petitions page at <http://www.stophinkley.org/PETITION.htm>

Another U-Turn! This time from environmental journalist George Monbiot

George Monbiot has been one of the thorns in the side of our anti-nuclear movement. Now, even he has had to publicly re-evaluate his support for the U.K.'s nuclear new build programme. His column in the Guardian on the 5th February begins with the by-line. "Nuclear Power seems to have stalled. So what happens now?" He continues with "Is this the end? According to the Green MP, Caroline Lucas, new nuclear power in this country has been completely derailed. She may not be wrong."

With all the bad news in the last few weeks which culminated in last week's 'Worst ever week for Hinkley C', Monbiot continues that all this news "adds weight to the claims of those who maintain that atomic energy is finished in the U.K. As I've spent much of the past two years defending it, this is a hard admission to make."

He further hammers the nail into the argument by writing "No one has made atomic energy harder to love than the industry that supplies it", citing corner cutting, incompetence, cover-ups and basic project management failings.

He's not saying anything new from what we, in the anti-nuclear movement, have been shouting all along. The impetus of this is significant in that Monbiot, who counts himself as a green environmental journalist, is widely read and influential in the public debate. It is great news when these kinds of u-turns work in our favour.

Full article:

<http://www.monbiot.com/2013/02/04/out-of-steam/>

At the end of January Jo Smoldon and a contingent from Stop Hinkley joined 300 people who braved the snow and ice on the narrow roads of the Lake District to object to the continuation to the next stage of testing for the proposed development of Ennerdale as a nuclear waste repository.

Stop Hinkley members took radioactive waste barrel costumes to the protest walk and could be clearly seen from the aerial photos. The group saw success the following week as Cumbria council refused the application to pursue a waste repository in the County. [see front page]

A couple of SH supporters went to Taunton last month to do a street stall with a difference - this one wasn't on the street but inside the Lush store. Lush have given a lot of financial support to anti-nuclear campaigns over the last year and so it was really good to be able to go and hang up our 'Nuclear Power No Thanks' and 'Remember Fukushima' flags in their windows right on the high street.

We were invited in because Lush have been promoting a campaign with Vivienne Westwood to create a renewables revolution. The staff were lovely and very eager to learn more about the campaign, as were most of the customers. We all agreed that we'd like to do it again in the very near future! What a Lush day!

"Hinkley C? Somerset Says No" Window Stickers

Circular vinyl car/window stickers, 10 cm diameter. If you would like one (or more), please send a SAE to Suki Lilienthal, Parsonage Farm, Over Stowey, Bridgwater TA5 1HA.

She also has small metal badges with same image.

There is no charge for these, though donations are always welcome!

The most important goal is to get them out and about on cars and

windows... so please get in touch. Any queries 01278 733237 or email Suki at

suki@parsonfarm.co.uk.



Events

Stop Hinkley business meetings Mondays
11th March & 8th April at 7.30pm
West Bow House, Milton Place
(behind the Squibb pub)
West Street, Bridgwater

Fukushima Commemoration March
9th March [see page 3]

Stop Hinkley Future Strategy Meeting
Saturday 6th April. Location TBA
Details will be sent out by email when confirmed or check website

Witch Watch
25th February, 26th March and 25th April
last lay-by before the gates of Hinkley Point
Email Wanda wanda@stophinkley.org
or phone 07874 819608

Contacts

Press & Spokespersons:

Theo Simon: theo@seizetheday.org

01749 860767 or 07805 666239

Nikki Clark: nikki@stophinkley.org 07736 930 069

Local Information:

Allan Jeffery
ajjeffery@talktalk.net 01278 425451

Street Stalls:

Jo Smoldon:
josephine.smoldon@virgin.net 01278 459 099

Membership/Treasurer/Website:

Val Davey: val@stophinkley.org

www.stophinkley.org