



# Newsletter May 2021

## Wriggling out of it

The Leveller

When Hinkley C got the go ahead, all sorts of conditions were imposed to provide environmental protection. Among these was what amounts to an underwater loudspeaker. This 'Acoustic Fish Deterrent' (AFD) was to be placed in front of the pipes taking water from the sea to cool the power station. The idea was to stop fish swimming into the pipes and meeting an untimely end in the process.

Like all good developers, NNB Generation Company (HPC) Limited the company actually developing and building the nuclear power station for EdF, were perfectly happy at the time (2013). To the layman, it often appears that the general tactic with these largescale projects is "agree to everything - then contest it afterwards". Not unlike developers who agree that a percentage of a development can be set aside for affordable housing and then come back saying "terribly sorry, we can't afford it".

In 2019 Hinkley ran a consultation on the issue. They claim that while impact of the AFDs on the volume of fish taken in through



the pipes would be negligible, the AFDs posed a risk to divers who would have to maintain the system in waters which are notoriously treacherous. There is poor visibility in the water in this area and one of the highest tidal ranges in the world. In a statement to The Leveller an EdF spokesperson told us "Hinkley Point C is the first power station in the Severn Estuary to include fish protection measures in its design and the acoustic fish deterrent is just one of three planned measures to protect marine life. Studies from Government marine experts showed that removing it would have a negligible impact on local fish populations."

### Slippery behaviour

In short, HPC asked the Environment Agency to vary the permit they had to go with the planning permission, so that they did not have to install the AFD. The EA determines these applications in the first instance. With a pandemic raging, this was never going to be quick. However, having shared their initial findings with HPC, The EA were told that HPC considered it likely they would be refused. And in the absence of a final decision, but assuming it would not go in their favour, they appealed the case to The Secretary of State on 24 September.

Following that appeal, the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol was told to initiate a public inquiry into the issues around the request from HPC. This is a device that effectively bypasses the EA.

They are now reduced to submitting evidence to the Inquiry, but the decision will now be made by a Planning Inspector instead of the EA. The EdF spokesperson told us "The project remains committed to reducing the environmental impact from the construction of a power station which will play a key role in fighting climate change and boosting the Somerset economy."

The Inquiry will take place during the weeks starting 7 and 14 June 2021. The Planning Inspectorate has decided that the hearing will be held publicly, which means anyone is welcome to attend. It will be held online, but details of the platform to be used, the timings of sessions, or how to dial in are not available yet.

*The Leveller@ says: What price then the Government's environmental credentials? We receive almost daily updates in Parliament from Rebecca Pow and others at the Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs. Yet faced with a major developer seeking to cut costs on a project that is already significantly over budget, environmental enforcement is thrown under a bus and the issue reduced to planning regulations.*

<https://leveller.live/>

# Councils join fight against Hinkley C mud dump

23 April, Nation Cymru News

Two councils in Somerset are calling for a public inquiry to be held into plans by EDF Energy to dump sediment from the construction of the Hinkley Point C nuclear power station into the Bristol Channel.

EDF has applied for licenses to dump the mud in the Cardiff Grounds, two miles off the Welsh coast and a private disposal site off Portishead in Somerset.

In 2018 EDF were granted permission to dump waste at the Cardiff inshore disposal site despite fierce opposition and a debate in the Senedd.

In February 2020, EDF applied to National Resources Wales again for a licence to dump a further 800,000 tonnes of mud dredged as part of building work for the new plant being built on the site of the disused Hinkley Point A facility.

A petition against the latest proposals received over 10,000 signatures and triggered a debate in the Senedd last October.

In January EDF announced its intention to apply to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) for a license to dump at Portishead, while also making a further application to dump at the Cardiff site. No reason has been given by EDF for the Portishead proposal, but the company had previously insisted the grounds off Cardiff Bay was the only suitable site available in the Bristol Channel.

North Somerset Council and Portishead Town Council have now joined forces in opposing the plans and asked for the application for a dumping license to be referred to the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs and called for a public inquiry to be set up.

## 'Risks'

"It's really important that this opportunity is given to all concerned parties to learn more about the risks this poses to our coast and our residents," North Somerset Council executive member for climate emergency and environment Bridget Petty told the Bristol Post:

"So far we've only had information from EDF and our residents deserve to hear from the full range of experts especially as this is such a specialised subject area."

"We do not support this proposal," she added.

"The disposal site is close to Portbury Wharf Salt Marsh, a Site of Special Scientific Interest and part of the Severn Estuary Special Protection Area, with the potential for adverse impacts on ecology there.

"An inquiry will enable a full and independent evaluation of the issues – this dumping could

undermine attempts to attract inward investment and has the potential to harm the town's economic prospects and there is only limited information submitted around radioactivity and contamination issues."

Campaigners against the mud being dumped in Welsh waters also oppose the use of the Portishead site.

Super Furry Animals musician and campaigner Cian Ciaran said: "If indeed they do intend to switch sites nothing in our messaging or opposition changes and obviously, anything we can share with those on the English side of the channel in information and resources then we will."

"We don't see that the radiological aspect would be much altered and from the marine pollution science point of view, anywhere in the Bristol Channel is bad news.

"Due to residual water body movements anything that's in the water column on the English side is eventually going to contribute to the water column on the Welsh side."

EDF claim the sediment is "not radioactive under law", but campaigning groups on both sides of the channel point out that the UK Government's official radioactivity monitoring reports annually confirm the presence of human-made radioactivity, derived largely from over 50 years of discharges to sea from the Hinkley Point reactors, including Plutonium, Caesium 137, Tritium, Technetium 99 and Carbon 14.

<https://nation.cymru/news/news-in-brief-councils-join-fight-against-hinkley-c-mud-dump/>

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## Email contact

If you would like to receive the newsletter more quickly, in addition to other information, please let us have your email address by contacting [val@stophinkley.org](mailto:val@stophinkley.org). We can still send the newsletter to members by 'snail mail' as well if you prefer.

If you are already receiving the newsletter by email and don't need the postal version any more, please let Val know.

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## NEW WEBSITE

We have launched our new website. Same old address [www.stophinkley.org](http://www.stophinkley.org), but a very new look. Hope you like it.

The latest news will appear more quickly on the new site. Don't worry, all the old information is still available in the Archive section.

## **This is what would happen if there was a nuclear incident at Hinkley Point C**

SomersetLive, <https://www.somersetlive.co.uk> 19 March

A new report has revealed the plans in place in case there is an emergency incident at Hinkley Point C.

If there was a nuclear incident at the plant, the nearby population would be told to stop consuming vegetables, milk and water within 24 hours, according to the report.

Hinkley Point C in Bridgwater will be the first new nuclear power station built in the UK in more than 20 years.

The 230-acre plant is being constructed by the French energy company EDF and is expected to be operational for 60 years following its projected completion in 2023.

This latest report, compiled by the Hinkley Point C Stakeholders reference group for the Welsh government, has raised concerns around the plant's impact on fish species and water temperatures in the Severn estuary.

The report has identified a detailed emergency planning zone (DEPZ), which covers the area that would be affected by a potential nuclear incident.

The report has detailed a list of measures that would be taken within hours of an incident, should one ever occur.

The plans have been drawn up by Somerset County Council.

The report says: "The local population within a DEPZ will be contacted if there is an incident on site that might result in a release and informed as to what action to take (e.g. evacuation and to where)."

The report also detailed a further zone beyond the DEPZ, with a radius of 30km where food and water restrictions would be in place in the aftermath of an incident.

The presence of this wider zone is intended to "assist local authorities in planning for extremely unlikely but more severe events".

This wider radius covers Taunton, Bridgwater, Minehead, Bidgwater, Weston-super-Mare and Burnham-on-Sea.

A separate report by EDF in 2019 for Hinkley Point B states that: "It is recommended that advice be issued within 24 hours to restrict consumption of leafy green vegetables, milk and water from open sources or rain water in all sectors of the detailed emergency planning zone and downwind of the site to a distance of 43km".

The report states that a further report and emergency plan are needed for the Hinkley site before nuclear fuel is installed at Hinkley Point C.

## **Japan to release Fukushima nuclear plant water into sea despite fishermen's objection**

Japan will release more than a million tonnes of treated water from the stricken Fukushima nuclear plant into the ocean, triggering a furious regional reaction and fierce opposition from local fishing communities.

The process is not likely to begin for several years and could take decades to complete, but China quickly slammed the decision as "extremely irresponsible" and South Korea summoned the Japanese ambassador.

Japan's government argues the release is safe because the water is processed to remove almost all radioactive elements and will be diluted.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has endorsed the release, which it says is similar to the disposal of wastewater at nuclear plants elsewhere.

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga told a ministerial meeting that disposing of the water was an "inevitable task" in the decades-long process of decommissioning the nuclear plant. He said the release would happen only "after ensuring the safety levels of the water" and alongside measures to "prevent reputational damage".

Around 1.25 million tonnes of water have accumulated in tanks at the nuclear plant, which was crippled after going into meltdown following the 2011 tsunami.

It includes water used to cool the plant, as well as rain and groundwater that seeps in daily.

An extensive pumping and filtration system extracts tonnes of newly contaminated water each day and filters out most radioactive elements.

But local fishing communities fear releasing the water will undermine years of work to restore confidence in their seafood. "Releasing the water into the ocean will return to haunt us," they said.

"They told us that they wouldn't release the water into the sea without the support of fishermen," said Kanji Tachiya, who heads a local fisheries cooperative in Fukushima.

"We can't back this move to break that promise and release the water into the sea unilaterally."

Plant operator TEPCO will "take thorough measures to prevent bad rumours", said its president Tomoaki Kobayakawa.

**Find all the latest news here:**

<http://stophinkley.org/category/news/>

## LETTER: Roll on Hinkley B decommissioning

Sedgemoor Apple, March 27, 2021

FAR from celebrating the return to 'action' of Hinkley Point B ('Green light for Hinkley B to start producing power again'), we should be concerned and amazed.

Hinkley B is a hangover from the days when getting an old car through its MoT was a nerve-wracking business. For a start, there was that sharp intake of a mechanic's breathe when he cast eyes on the rusty old banger and started thinking about his bill.

Instead of querying whether the wad of dosh demanded by said mechanic was money well spent, EdeF just went ahead and splashed out £3m, as if it was somebody else's money. Which, of course, it is, as it'll be the French Government picking up the tab for HPB.

And if the mechanic had said that all that money would only keep the banger running for another six months, if you were lucky, surely you'd have paused for thought?

But no, on EdeF marches regardless, crossing its fingers that the captured regulator with its arm twisted will sign off another six months of HPB output, wait and see, and then put us all at risk by hitting the highway with the reactors in an even worse state. That's the concern part.

It's not as if we don't have other cars in the garage. In the case of electricity generation, more and more renewable generation coming on stream while HPB has festered. Or we could do without the car for a bit, in electricity's case making more homes energy efficient, like the new factory-built homes in Bridgwater. Just doing that would not only make HPB redundant but make HPC pointless as the electricity for 7% of homes would have been saved by energy efficiency.

In case you've not noticed, there was no need for the reboot as the lights never went off without them – both HPB reactors had been off-line for the best part of a year prior to this pointless restart.

Yes, there was a Lockdown and less industrial and commercial demand for electricity, but domestic use increased. That's the amazing part, that anyone thought there was a need to restart the dodgy reactors at all.

Our MP, who surely deserves to be on the EdeF PR payroll, predictably continues to roll out uncritical guff about how wonderful everything HPB is. Yes, it's been going a long time but it's a rusty old banger now and the time for its date with the crusher is now.

The workforce deserve credit for running the operational risks while EdeF creamed off the profits in the golden years and their payoffs and pensions will be deserved. Roll on HPB decommissioning!

Roy Pumfrey (Stop Hinkley Campaign)

<https://sedgemoorapple.co.uk>

## World Nuclear News snippet: 9 April

EDF said yesterday it expects to have the technical information required to make a decision in the next few months on the future of its Dungeness B nuclear power plant in Kent, England.

The plant last generated electricity in September 2018 and is currently forecast to return to service in August this year, but it has "a number of unique, significant and ongoing technical challenges that continue to make the future both difficult and uncertain",

EDF said. The current scheduled decommissioning date is 2028, but EDF is considering "a range of scenarios", including moving directly into the defuelling phase later this year.

## Events

### Stop Hinkley meetings

Our monthly campaign meetings are being held via Zoom for the time being. Please get in touch if you would like to be involved.

Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of the month. All members and non-members are very welcome to attend, though only members have voting rights.

Contact: [admin@stophinkley.org](mailto:admin@stophinkley.org)



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