

STOP HINKLEY EXPANSION

Newsletter

Sept/Oct 1990

BARNES REPORT SAYS "YES" TO HINKLEY C

The report by Inspector Michael Barnes on the 14 month long Hinkley C Public Inquiry concludes that the new nuclear power station should be built. But the government, in agreeing with Barnes' conclusions, says there will be no money for construction before the 1994 review of the "prospects for nuclear power".

This extraordinary situation leaves the project in limbo, with what amounts to outline planning permission on the table, but no investor prepared to back the scheme. As the Western Daily Press put it: "Energy Secretary John Wakeham's decision... is the worst of all worlds". It leaves a blight hanging over the area for at least another four years.

Opinions now differ on whether the prospects for Hinkley C have been improved by the result of the inquiry. On the one hand, it's argued that the economics of nuclear power are so bad that there is no chance that the project could be revived, even in a few years' time. Other generation options (like the renewables and cleaner fossil fuel burning) also have a chance to prove themselves in the meantime. There could also be a change of government, with the Labour Party committed (at present) to stopping Hinkley C.

On the other hand, without a change of government, the present administration will be keen to pursue nuclear power for its own reasons. These include a continued hedge against militant miners, the greenhouse effect argument and the vested interests of a large industry. They will therefore fudge the economics in 1994.

The Barnes Report

After all the heated arguments, and the raised expectations of the Inspector's demand for proper costings on nuclear versus coal and his visit to Chernobyl, Barnes has proved himself an excellent mouthpiece for the government's pro-nuclear policy. His 3,300-page long report comes down all along the line in favour of the CEGB, now Nuclear Electric.

Barnes' main conclusions run like this. There is a need for new generating capacity by the the turn of the century. Nuclear power could supply some of it. He accepts that Hinkley C would be more expensive than other options at the moment. However, any extra cost would be counterbalanced by other factors: the contribution of nuclear power to combatting the greenhouse effect and the aim of having a diversity away from dependence on fossil fuels. At the same time, there are no over-riding safety or local issues which should stop permission being given. >>>>

POLLUTE ELECTRIC?

ELECTRICITY PRIVATISATION & THE ENVIRONMENT

Speaker: Michael Harper (Energy Campaign, Friends of the Earth)

Wednesday October 3rd, 1990

7.30pm

Bridgwater Arts Centre, Castle Street, Bridgwater

Organised by Stop Hinkley Expansion. Come and meet other supporters in the informal atmosphere of the Arts Centre



In accepting Barnes' conclusions, the government makes it clear that Hinkley C still has to pass the hurdle of the 1994 review. But Energy Secretary Wakeham says that any design adaptations needed then could be dealt with by discussions with the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate or by government approval. There is no suggestion that a new public inquiry might be called. To help the project along, Wakeham has extended the duration of the planning permission from Barnes' suggested five to seven years.

Apart from the 1994 review, Nuclear Electric would also have to start again on the acquisition of land for the station. The compulsory purchase of almost 200 acres of farmland for the construction camp has not been approved.

It has been impossible at this stage to study the full text of the report. SHE is still awaiting its copy. However, it is clear that Barnes does not accept many of the objectors' points on safety issues. He says, for example, that the risk of a serious accident is extremely low and that a causal link between nuclear installations and childhood leukaemia is "improbable". On local issues, however, Barnes says on balance that there would be disadvantages, especially from the visual effect of the development.

Barnes makes a number of specific recommendations, most of which are accepted by the government. These include that regular reports should be published on decommissioning costs, that more detailed figures should be produced on plutonium stockpiles, and that a series of improvements should be considered to the emergency arrangements. However, none of these amounts to anything like a hindrance to the power station's construction.

We understand that every statutory objector has been sent a copy of Barnes' main conclusions, together with Wakeham's letter accepting these and giving permission. Objectors are asked to write to the Department of Energy within 28 days if they want a copy of the full report. Please request one if you haven't already: someone else may find it useful. Owners of spare copies should contact SHE.

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NO!



Telepoll verdict to halt Hinkley

NO 1,594
YES 555

By Jonathan Shorney

WESTERN Daily Press readers have voted a resounding No to a third nuclear power station at Hinkley Point near Bridgwater.

PWR approved — but there's no cash to build it

Report by **KIRSTY SENIOR**
ENERGY Secretary **John Wakeham** announced a



with some which have been given clearance for nuclear power stations but without the "cash". It is not clear how they could be financed, he said. He also noted the same concerns over a Hinkley Point.

"The statements are not good," he said. "It would not make sense to build it."

"But what this means for people living in the area is a shadow hanging over them because the commission will always be there."

COLA is prepared to go to

We'll keep up fight to block N-station bid

CAMPAIGN PLEDGE ON HINKLEY

By Tim Jones

ANTI nuclear groups will keep up their long fight to block a third nuclear power station at Hinkley Point in Somerset. The director of the anti Hinkley C lobby, Michael Barnes, said he would be in the area for the next few days to help organise the campaign.

GOOD NEWS AMID THE GLOOM: The headline on the left shows the result of a Western Daily Press poll about Hinkley C. For several days after the inquiry result was published, readers were asked to phone in their votes. The tally was a convincing victory for the opponents, despite one report that details of the poll were even posted up on the notice board at Sellafield! Other headlines (above) reflect the uncertainty and SHE's pledge to keep fighting.

The Reaction

The Barnes Report and Wakeham's announcement of permission for Hinkley C were published together on the first day of the special parliamentary session on Iraq, Thursday September 6th. There was very little advance warning. Even to the most cynical, the blanket approval for the power station came as a shock.

The following day, SHE organised a press conference in the former Inquiry hall at Cannington College at which objectors from around Hinkley Point and others expressed their disbelief that Barnes could have come to such a biased conclusion.

Now that disbelief has become anger, we must make sure:

1. That in the "breathing space" before 1994, all the other options, from energy efficiency to the renewables to cleaner fossil fuel, are pushed hard.
2. That we do our best to influence the national and regional political climate away from the nuclear option.
3. That we continue to protest locally over Hinkley C, and demand that a full inquiry is held if the project is revived after 1994.

What do you think of the Inspector's conclusions? Write a letter to your local paper expressing your disgust. Any further thoughts on the Barnes Report and its implications (brief and to the point) would also be appreciated for the next newsletter.

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SIXTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LOW LEVEL RADIATION & HEALTH

Held in Bangor, North Wales, this was a unique chance for campaigners to meet scientists and professionals working in the field. SHE was represented by Coordinator Danielle Grunberg.

The past year has seen publication of three key reports: the fifth US BEIR (Biological Effects of Ionising Radiation) report, the draft recommendations to the ICRP (International Commission on Radiological Protection), and the Gardner report on Sellafield leukaemias.

Dr. Bogus Zaba (Bangor University), told the conference that radiation doses from Sellafield discharges may be much higher than previously thought. Post-Chernobyl models of the movement of Caesium in the soil were also wrong, casting doubt on other environmental models.

Patricia Sheehan, who works with Downs Syndrome children in Ireland, explained her discovery that several girls in a Dundalk school had been exposed to radiation from the 1957 Sellafield fire. Her evidence, collected over 8 years, points to a connection between the Downs Syndrome cases and the fire.

Dr. David Sumner, from the department of nuclear medicine at Glasgow's Stobhill general hospital, talked about medical exposure to radiation. He suggested that many X-rays were unnecessary, and that improved equipment and techniques could substantially lower exposure.

In addition to the talks, there were numerous workshops. The radiation monitoring network workshop will be followed by a further meeting in Newcastle later this month (September).

Next year's conference will be in Bristol. If you are interested in helping with this, please contact the organising group via Jill Sutcliffe (0243 603705).

IDEAL ENERGY EXHIBITION - PROGRESS REPORT

The reaction from visitors during the Ideal Energy Exhibition's five week summer tour of Suffolk and Essex was "overwhelmingly positive", according to our exhibition coordinator Alan Palmer. The caravan visited Norwich, Lowestoft, Colchester, Southend and the Sizewell nuclear power station, among other places. The Suffolk tour was superbly organised by Charles Barnett of the Shut Down Sizewell Campaign, and Alan received excellent support and hospitality everywhere he went.

During August the exhibition toured the Bristol area, including the Bristol Flower Show, visited the Taunton and Dunster agricultural shows, and appeared at the Hinkley Point Open Day - by "special invitation" of Nuclear Electric.

If you would like further information, or to book the exhibition, please call Claire Dorling on 0454 418596.

EXHIBITION LAUNCH IN TAUNTON

The Ideal Energy Exhibition will be officially launched in Somerset with a special press opening on Friday September 28th in Taunton High Street (pedestrian shopping area). The launch is presently due to be at 11.00 am, but please check first.

The exhibition will be parked in the High Street all day on both Friday 28th and Saturday 29th. If you haven't yet visited it, please come along and bring your friends.

We also need people who can spare an hour or two to help the coordinator Alan Palmer on either of the days. If you can help, please call Danielle on 0278 422632.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

The Ukraine, battered by the aftermath of the Chernobyl accident, is investigating the possibility of wind power. A delegation from the Soviet Academy of Sciences in Kiev visited Denmark recently, including a tour of wind farms. The republic's energy minister has now asked for a quote on buying 100 large 450 kilowatt turbines. The Danish based Centre for Alternative Energy has also been touring an "energy bus" round Eastern Europe to promote renewable ideas.

Meanwhile, in Czechoslovakia, the new democratic government headed by Vaclav Havel has its own energy policy dilemma. Faced with the appalling pollution caused by burning "brown coal" in power stations, and ecological opposition to large hydroelectric schemes, it has fallen back on what it sees as the least unpleasant of its existing options - nuclear power. Czechoslovakia had one of the largest nuclear expansion programmes in Eastern Europe, and West European companies, hit by the current slowdown in domestic orders, are keen to get the business. Maybe the Danes could help out? (Info. from Guardian 25 & 27.8.90)

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———— DATES FOR YOUR DIARY ————

September	28-29	Taunton	Ideal Energy Exhibition in High Street pedestrian area all day.
October	3	Bridgwater	"Pollute Electric? Electricity Privatisation and the Environment" - SHE meeting with Mike Harper, Friends of the Earth, B'water Arts Centre, 7.30pm.

