



Press Release

15 May 2012

Stop Hinkley Calls for Halt to Nuclear Preparation Work

The Stop Hinkley campaign is calling for a halt to all preparatory work at the “Hinkley C” site following the reported decision by Electricite de France (EDF) to postpone major excavation works until next year.

The Guardian newspaper reported today (1) that EDF was delaying digging massive holes in the ground for the foundations of its proposed twin nuclear reactors at Hinkley Point until 2013. The work, involving removing enough soil and rocks to fill Wembley Stadium twice over, was originally scheduled to start this August. EDF, which says it needs to get on with this work as fast as possible, has refused to deny the claim.

“EDF should stop destroying more trees and hedges immediately,” said Stop Hinkley spokesman Crispin Aubrey, “giving nesting birds and other wildlife a chance to survive this summer. We have always said it was immoral to trash over 400 acres of Somerset countryside before the company even has permission to build the reactors. The company now has a chance to prove that its good neighbour policy stands up to scrutiny.”

The delay to Hinkley C comes as increasing doubts are being raised about the viability of new nuclear power stations. The cost of the project has already risen 40% to £14 billion, according to *The Times* (2), whilst energy company Centrica, which could take a 20% investment share, is reported to be having cold feet about whether the plans make economic sense (3).

The election of Francois Hollande as French President could also affect investment in Hinkley C if he decides to give preference to spending money on ageing nuclear power stations in France rather than new ones across the Channel.

“This delay in the excavation work is yet another sign that the UK’s dangerous nuclear enterprise is stumbling,” said Crispin Aubrey.

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Notes:

1. “Hinkley nuclear power station delay deals blow to government hopes”, *The Guardian*, 14 May 2012 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/may/14/hinkley-nuclear-power-station-delay/print>
2. “Soaring costs threaten Britain’s nuclear plans”, *The Times*, 7 May 2012 www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/business/industries/utilities/article3406852.ece
3. “Centrica threatens nuclear pull-out”, *Financial Times*, 20 April 2012 www.ft.com/cms/s/0/bb7f393c-8af0-11e1-912d-00144feab49a.html