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# Local Democracy Dumped!

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**As government ends flawed consultation on nuclear power, anti-nuclear power activists step up resistance and blockade Sizewell nuclear power station in Suffolk, England.**

**Since 6.40am the morning of 22 February 2010, anti-nuclear power activists from the 'People Power not Nuclear Power Coalition' [1] have been blockading Sizewell power station in protest against the flawed government consultation on nuclear new build, which ends today, and the dumping of local democracy.**

Sizewell is one of ten sites nominated for nuclear new build; and, together with Hinkley in Somerset, one of the two most likely sites for one of the first new nuclear reactors to be built by EDF Energy.

In preparation for new nuclear reactors, the government introduced the 2008 Planning Act [2] to limit the local planning procedure to relatively unimportant matters, and centralise siting and nuclear design decision on the national level. Today, the seriously flawed consultations end on the National Policy Statements for energy, including nuclear power, [3] designed to give the go ahead for ten new nuclear power stations in the UK.

"In order to build new nuclear power stations, government dumped local democracy", Mell Harrison, 38 from Geldeston and a campaigns worker for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) said.

"We are blockading Sizewell today, to show that the government will not achieve its aim to fast track nuclear power. If local democracy is dumped, then non violent direct action will be our answer. Any new build will be met with resistance, and this blockade today is just the beginning."

"The government and the nuclear industry present nuclear power as low carbon energy and a necessity to combat climate change; but nuclear power is dangerous, expensive and does not deliver any significant reductions in carbon emissions. It locks us into a centralised energy system, and is part of the problem of climate change, not part of the solution."

"Chipper", 44, a male activist from Stop Hinkley added:

"The government and the nuclear industry approach the problem of nuclear waste with wishful thinking, as the conclusion of the National Policy Statement for Nuclear Power Generation shows." [4]

Andreas Speck, 45, from London, originally from Germany, added:

"Just to wish away the problem of nuclear waste is highly irresponsible. Spent nuclear fuel is highly toxic and remains radioactive for tens of thousands of years. Here at Sizewell, a new dry storage facility is planned, to store spent fuel rods for more than 100 years in casks. However, how long these last is unknown, and problems with similar casks at Gorleben in Germany after only a few years show that this is no solution. There is no final safe storage [for high level radioactive waste] in existence anywhere in the world. The responsible thing to do is to shut down all nuclear power stations immediately and stop producing yet more nuclear waste." [5]

Notes:

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[1] The People Power not Nuclear Power Coalition is a non-hierarchical campaigning coalition of groups and individuals to promote and encourage visible and effective action against nuclear power in the UK and worldwide, to leave a nuclear-free, safe and healthy environment for future generations. More information at:

<http://stopnuclearpower.blogspot.com>

[2] The Planning Act 2008 introduced a new stream-lined system for decisions on applications to build nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs) in England and Wales. The new system for nationally significant infrastructure covers applications for major energy generation, railways, ports, major roads, airports and water and waste infrastructure. National policy will be set out by Ministers in a series of National Policy Statements (NPSs), thereby dumping local democracy.

For more information, see Friends of the Earth:

Planning Act removes democratic decision making,

[http://www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/fair\\_future/news/planningbill\\_law\\_17248.html](http://www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/fair_future/news/planningbill_law_17248.html)

[3] For more information, see Friends of the Earth press release from 22 January 2010: Legal warning to Government over energy policy statements,

[http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/press\\_releases/nps\\_22012010.html](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/press_releases/nps_22012010.html)

[4] See paragraph 3.8.20, page 25 of the Draft National Policy Statement for Nuclear Power Generation (EN-6), November 2009, <https://www.energynpsconsultation.decc.gov.uk/nuclear/nps/>

'Having considered this issue, the Government is satisfied that effective arrangements will exist to manage and dispose of the waste that will be produced from new nuclear power stations. As a result the IPC (Infrastructure Planning Commission) need not consider this question.'

[5] The existing storage facility for spent fuel at Sizewell will be full in 2015. In addition, a dry storage facility is to be built to create new storage capacity. In there, spent fuel rods will be stored in storage casks in a simple 110m storage hall with natural air cooling.

Similar storage casks in Germany showed problems with the monitoring of pressure after only a few years

Activists taking part in this morning's action include:

– Mell Harrison. 38 from Geldeston. Mell works for CND and is a member of Shut Down Sizewell and the Sizewell Blockaders. She was recently acquitted for aggravated trespass at Sizewell A and B for a blockade that took place in 2008.

– Andreas Speck, 45, from London. Andreas works for War Resisters' International. He was involved in the anti-nuclear power movement in Germany from the 1980s, until his move to London.

– "Chipper", 44, from Wiltshire. He is a member of Stop Hinkley and CND.

– "Ziggy", 39, an artist and historian from Ipswich, Suffolk. He is a member of CND and Shut Down Sizewell.

– Helen Swanston, 35, a milliner from Cromer. Helen is a member of Trident Ploughshares.

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- Justus, 23, a student from London. He is involved in the Camp for Climate Action.
- Irene Willis, 65, from Wales. Irene is a Sizewell Blockader and a member of Trident Ploughshares.
- Nicky, 39, an environment education worker from Bungay. She was also recently acquitted following the Sizewell Blockaders' action at Sizewell in 2008.