

PRESS RELEASE – (For Immediate release)

COMMUNITIES AGAINST NUCLEAR EXPANSION (CANE) ARE DELIGHTED AT THE REPOSE TO THEIR PUBLIC MEETING.

CANE is delighted at the response to their public meeting held at Leiston Film Theatre on 10th October 2008 at 7.30 pm.

Over 100 members of the public attended to hear “Why Nuclear power is not the answer to climate change, energy security or future demand and why no new stations should be built.”

CANE spokesperson Mike Taylor said “We are pleased that so many people gave up their time to attend the meeting. One of our major objectives was to achieve a better understanding of what the impacts would be of a third nuclear power station at Sizewell and the approval process for any new build. We believe that only one side of the story has been shown so far, and the public has a right to hear both sides. Our panel of four distinguished speakers helped us achieve this and presented a compelling case for allowing concerns of people to be openly discussed in a democratic way. ”

In what can only be described as a shocking start to the expert evidence, Dr. Ian Fairlie, a former adviser to MAFF and the Food Standards Agency, reported on the health risks of living near nuclear power stations. He brought to our attention the German Government sponsored KiKK report on cancer clusters in Germany, published in January this year. This report showed that the nearer a child lives to a nuclear power station, the greater the likelihood of that child developing cancer, especially leukaemia. Occurrences increase by 2.2 times for leukaemia and 1.6 times increase in solid cancers. Dr Fairlie posed a possible reason why the cancers may be happening, with the release of radioactivity into the atmosphere at the times of refuelling possibly being to blame. When challenged to show why such evidence cannot be convincingly reproduced in the UK, Dr Fairlie stated that the lower population density near to nuclear power stations in the UK mean that it is difficult to produce results which are statistically significant, however stressing that this did not mean that the results did not equally apply. He believed that there was a need for far greater study of causes and risk and that new health advice was paramount. The audience expressed their shock that such strong evidence for a link between cancer and nuclear power has received so little coverage in the UK media.

Professor Andy Blowers OBE, former member of CoRWM and chairman of Bradwell Against New Nuclear Group, (BANNG), was clear there was no need for the headlong expansion of nuclear power, and this would risk setting in a place an inflexible and irreversible policy using as yet unproven technology. The most optimistic timescales would mean that new nuclear stations would not be completed for around ten years. The lack of a proven technology for the deep level of disposal of radioactive waste would condemn all sites to have the most dangerous waste; that from used fuel, stored at the station, on fragile coastlines, liable to inundation, for 100 years or more.

He pointed out that if nuclear power was so safe, why was one of the criteria for the location of new stations was that they could not be built near centres of high population?

Logically they should be near the points of highest need, where the excess heat produced could be used locally and where losses on the transmission grid would be minimised.

Dr. Dave Elliot, an expert in the field of renewable energy technology, believed nuclear power was not a suitable option because of insecurity of fuel supply, risks from accidents, proliferation and terrorism. Instead renewables, energy efficiency and conservation offered a faster, cleaner, no waste solution using “free” fuel. Investment costs of the various renewable options would reduce further over time, making them even more competitive. He pointed out that there were currently huge inefficiencies in conventional coal, gas and nuclear stations with only 30% of the heat produced used for generation, and even in the most efficient gas fired power stations only 50%. Using this “waste heat” in Combined Heat and Power stations, it is possible to increase this to 80%. This was commonplace in cities across the world and the government has been far too slow in promoting alternatives.

Pete Wilkinson is a former member CoRWM. He stated that whilst CoRWM had worked up plans for legacy waste, there were categorically no recommendations for any new waste from any programme of new build. New stations would also be waste dumps with all the risks. Radioactivity from new build would rise from 78 million units to 400 million units whilst only increasing volumes by 10%, due to use of “hotter” fuel. When asked why French people were content with nuclear power, Mr Wilkinson said that this was far from true and there were concerns in many French regions about new waste dumps there. There was no operating experience of the type of reactors which would be built in the UK and NII were therefore under pressure to authorise unproven plant. Also, the Environment Agency is currently unable to authorise a disposal route for waste.

Andy Blowers was supported by all on the panel when he stressed the need for an “open and democratic process” to take place here in Suffolk allowing local people the opportunity to get answers to their questions. Colchester Borough Council are in the process of carrying out a thorough scrutiny of the issues and CANE will be pressing for similar public engagement in our community. Pete Wilkinson was clear that “The genuine concerns of people should be taken into consideration and be openly discussed.” by Government and Local Authorities.

Feedback from the audience was generally very positive. Charles Barnett said “It was informative, instructive and what was needed in Leiston for local people who are opposed to have a voice”.

We would like to express our thanks to all speakers, CANE members, Film Theatre staff who made the event possible, and not least our thanks go to the people who gave up their time to attend.

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. CANE is an organisation opposed to the building of new nuclear power stations in Suffolk and the rest of the UK. Our purpose is to protect both people and the environment, now and in the future, from the risks and dangers of radioactivity by preventing any further development of nuclear activity in our communities. CANE will

campaign in a legal and honest way to ensure that new nuclear power stations are not built in Suffolk or elsewhere in the UK. More details about CANE and its campaign can be found on the organisation's web site, www.suffolkcane.org.uk

2. The new nuclear power stations which it is proposed will be built in the UK are based upon three designs, none of which are yet operational.

3. CANE are aware that health risks will have to be addressed when reviewing the criteria by which suitable sites for nuclear power stations will be assessed, but we need to be sure that local data will be made available. This was a recommendation of the Layfield enquiry and is required by European Law. We are also uncertain how the siting criteria will be assessed and the level of public involvement and consultation during that process. CANE will be following Dr Fairlie's advice and asking for a substantial in depth evidence investigation of levels of the isotopes most implicated in childhood cancers, Tritium and Carbon14, in the local area.

4. CANE is keen to ensure that the recently agreed takeover of British Energy by the French company EdF will not result in any dilution of the government's commitment that nuclear power stations will only be built if the industry bears the full cost of electricity production, including the decommissioning of power stations at the end of their useful life and the cost of handling nuclear waste. CANE believes that contributions to the fund to pay for these costs should take into account the massive escalation in decommissioning costs that has occurred with the existing reactors. The newer AGR reactors will cost five times the cost of MAGNOX reactors to decommission. We regard the industry promises that the newer generation of unproven reactors will take less long to build and decommission as optimistic. Costs overruns and delays in the building of the new reactors at Olkiluoto, Finland show how poor the industry is at estimating its costs and timescales and consider that the government would be wise to have such costs independently reviewed.

5. The guest speakers at the meeting were well regarded experts in the field of nuclear technology and the environment.

Ian Fairlie is an independent consultant on radioactivity in the environment. He has degrees in chemistry from the University of Western Ontario in Canada, and in radiation biology from Bart's Medical College in London. His doctoral studies at Imperial College examined dosimetric impacts of nuclide discharges at Sellafield and la Hague. He was secretary to the Committee Examining Radiation Risks of Internal Emitters, a government body set up by Michael Meacher, MP.

David Elliott is Professor of Technology Policy. He has been involved with the production of a range of OU courses in Design and Innovation, with an emphasis on how

the process can be steered towards the development of socially and environmentally appropriate technologies. His main research interests relate to the development of sustainable energy technologies, and in particular renewable energy based systems. He is co-Director of the Energy and Environment Research Unit, which is based in the Department of Design and Innovation, and he is editor of its journal 'Renew'.

Pete Wilkinson is a veteran environmental campaigner who co-founded both Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace UK in the 70s. After fifteen years at Greenpeace where he ran what one journalist called 'some of the most successful and important environmental campaigns of the 80s', he set up his own agency in 1992 and concentrated on developing processes by which solutions could be developed to important environmental issues. He has worked with government, including the DTI and DEFRA, as well as with industry and was appointed to the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management in 2003. He is now a stakeholder development consultant to Golder Associates.

Andy Blowers OBE is a professor of Social Sciences at the Open University, member of the Government's first Committee on Radioactive Waste Management and is the Chair of the Blackwater Against New Nuclear Group (BANNG).

6. For further information contact CANE spokesperson Mike Taylor, by e mail c.a.n.e@fsmail.net or 01728 830965.

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