



**BANNG**  
Blackwater Against New Nuclear Group



# BANNG UP TO DATE

## June, 2016

*An occasional newsletter for supporters of the  
Blackwater Against New Nuclear Group (BANNG)*

*Edited by Andy Blowers (Chair of BANNG)*

### Main Features

1. *The China Syndrome – Professor Andy Blowers and Professor Barry Jones give their views on the prospects and dangers of Chinese new nuclear reactors on the Bradwell site.* *p. 2*
2. *The Continuing Problems of Bradwell ‘A’ – the dangers of radioactivity from the former power station and its role as a regional nuclear dump.* *p. 6*

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### **BANNG Secretary, Varrie Blowers, writes:**

The past few months have been exceptionally busy both with the possible Chinese reactors at Bradwell and the ongoing problems with the former power station. If I am sometimes tardy in answering queries, it is because I am so busy. Please re-send these!

BANNG continues to lead the opposition to new nuclear at Bradwell and we have been encouraged in the campaign by your support. Thanks to all of you. Please renew your support by paying your 2016 subscription, if you have not already done so (see item 5 at the end of this newsletter). Thanks to those who have paid.

BANNG is very grateful to Jade Bolton and Ben Pentney of Voice Communications for formatting the newsletter.

# 1. The China Syndrome – New Nuclear Comes to the Blackwater

*BANNG Up To Date* devotes its opinion pieces in this issue to the challenges posed by the proposals for new nuclear reactors at Bradwell to be funded and built mainly by the Chinese state-owned company, China General Nuclear Power Corporation (CNG). The first piece, by BANNG's Chair, Andy Blowers, explores the various factors why it may or may not happen, including BANNG's role. The second, by Barry Jones, contemplates the security issues that are posed specifically by Chinese involvement.

## 1.1 China's Blackwater Experiment - It's Getting Closer – Or Is It?

By Andy Blowers

The high point of last Autumn's visit to the UK by the Chinese President Xi Jinping was the announcement that the Chinese would invest in the British nuclear renaissance. In return for helping to shore up the faltering French project at Hinkley Point in Somerset, the Chinese were offered the prize of the Bradwell site for development of their own reactors. This experiment on the Blackwater, if it comes to pass, will offer the Chinese much vaunted UK regulatory endorsement to use as a springboard for the promotion and development of their reactors world-wide. In the fanfare of publicity that greeted this Chinese coup there was little concern about the security risks, environmental damage and radioactivity that would be inflicted on local communities for generations to come.

Since then a rather eerie silence has settled over the Chinese project, at least in terms of any public pronouncements. But, silence should not be taken for inactivity, it is just that it is difficult to know what is going on. In the immediate aftermath of the announcement, it seemed that, contrary to expectations, the Chinese developer, CNG, and their French partners, Electricité de France (EDF), would be more forthcoming about their plans. In an apparent appeal to openness and engagement the joint project leaders sent a letter to every household around the Blackwater indicating they would keep people informed and inviting questions.

### Openness – but not yet

Naturally BANNG responded to this pointing out all the reasons why building at Bradwell was a thoroughly bad idea, that new nuclear was heavily opposed by the local communities and expressing our surprise that they intended to press ahead with such a project. We asked for a meeting with them so that they might explain and justify their proposals and we might indicate why we found them unacceptable. Eventually they replied in a long letter setting out what we already knew: that the public would be consulted at various formal stages in a long permitting process. But, matters were 'at a very early stage' and 'no plans have yet been produced and it will take several years to progress any detailed proposals'.

BANNG replied expressing disappointment that CGN/EDF were not prepared to meet with us to gain mutual understanding of the proposals and impacts and to provide a chance for the proposals to be dropped before they became locked into an inexorable development process.

We pointed out that confidence could not be secured in an atmosphere of rumour and obfuscation. Once again, the reply was polite but firm in its evasion of an early meeting.

## Proceeding by stealth

Rumours are already rife. Among these are that the Chinese are quietly approaching schools on the Dengie Peninsula, softening up local decision makers, seeking opportunity to present a favourable image of the plans and especially the prospect for jobs. There is talk of two, perhaps even three, mega reactors on the site with a generating capacity of possibly more than 3GW, powered by the Hualong 1 Chinese reactor. In order to try to overcome the problem of cooling water in such a shallow estuary the proposals are said to incorporate cooling towers. But, nothing definite is known, no announcements have been made public. It is little short of scandalous that nuclear developers, accountable to foreign powers, are given the scope to take fundamental decisions and to begin settling in without any public information or discussion about their intentions and the effects they may have on the wider community.

The first opportunity for any public input will be when the Generic Design Assessment (GDA) begins, it is thought, sometime this year. But, this is a long, technical and fragmented process which tends to lead, incrementally but inevitably, towards acceptance of the reactor design once safety features and mitigation measures have been agreed in dialogue between developer and regulator. It would take a combination of a clearly unworkable design and totally unacceptable environmental impact to halt progress. Both these circumstances may be the case with an untried and untested reactor and the massive environmental insult on a low-lying coast and complex and delicate marine ecology in a shallow estuary. You would think the idea of new nuclear power on such a site would be unthinkable and unimaginable. It is - but it isn't. It is our job to make it so.

## Will it or won't it?

So, the question is, 'Will the Chinese reactors come to Bradwell?'. For an answer we should, perhaps, turn to Hinkley Point, that much troubled plant unloved by all but the British and some members of the French Governments it would seem. Over the past months the future of Hinkley has been put in doubt. For EDF, its main investors, it is proving a disaster. Costs have escalated, totalling now a cool £18 - £24.5BN making it the most expensive power station on earth. EDF are in financial free-fall clinging desperately to their Chinese lifeline, support from the French government and a highly favourable deal subsidising cost and price ultimately at the expense of British taxpayers and electricity consumers in the future. Hinkley has been described as 'unacceptably costly' and 'all but unbuildable' and similar projects in Finland and France are way over budget and encountering intractable technical problems. Nevertheless, still it proceeds based on inertia, massive political investment and fear of the consequences if the project fails, i.e. loss of face for the political backers.

If Hinkley is eventually built, however late and however costly, it paves the way for the other new nuclear projects in the pipeline at Wylfa (Wales), Moorside (Cumbria), Sizewell (Suffolk) and possibly Oldbury (Gloucs.) as well as Bradwell. None of these projects is certain and much will depend on the financial deal that can be struck on a future electricity price with the UK

Government, on the ability of the developers to raise the investment costs and the state of the energy market and competition (renewables are growing rapidly and gas is cheap at present). Bradwell might look a more promising bet than others given CNG is state-owned and has the enthusiasm of the Chinese for British regulatory endorsement.

On the other hand, if Hinkley falls then the whole programme might be in difficulty. The Hinkley site might be transferred to another operator and the Chinese, already a partner with EDF at Hinkley, might switch their interest to a site, which has already gained necessary permits and some infrastructure development. As long as Hinkley hangs in the balance, all is uncertain. Whatever happens to Hinkley, Bradwell will remain a prospective development, imminent or distant.

Bradwell's future must not depend on the vagaries of nuclear politics and economics. To build a nuclear plant and radioactive waste stores (including spent fuel) on such a precarious site would be an unmitigated environmental disaster, inflicted on the Blackwater communities far into the future. Such a project is difficult enough to justify on grounds of energy security, it would be a financial liability but, above all, it would be built on a site, which is wholly unsuitable. It must be stopped dead in its tracks and BANNG will fight it at every stage.

## **1.2 Doubts and Dangers: China and the dangers of conflict and war**

By Barry Jones, Emeritus Professor of Politics and International Relations, University of Reading, reflects on the challenges, which a Chinese presence on the Blackwater would bring. (Barry is a member of the BANNG Core Group)

Throughout history there have been many causes of conflicts between peoples and states. These conflicts have involved control of resources and territory, ethnic or cultural antagonisms, religious and ideological conflicts, conflicts over trade as well as conflicts over regime change arising from internal divisions or external interference. Certain notable patterns have been observed with periods of relative peace and stability under a dominant regime followed by periods of rising tension as the world order is disrupted by the emergence of a rising challenger. We may have reached such a moment when the prevailing stability is under challenge.

### **China the Challenger**

China is now emerging as a potential challenger to the prevailing international status quo. She has a range of intensifying territorial disputes with her neighbours in the Far East and South China Sea through, for example, her building of strategic islands in international waters. She is developing a blue-water fleet, including ballistic missile-firing submarines, with considerable rapidity. Many of her regional disputes, moreover, bring China into direct, potential conflict with the United States of America, if the latter state maintains its security commitments to the region.

Moreover, China's potential disputes with the USA are not confined to the ramifications of regional confrontations. China has pursued a determinedly neo-mercantilist economic policy for some decades, in which it has deployed the entire gamut of state power to support a vigorous, export-led economic expansion, often at the expense of manufacturers in established, industrial countries, like the USA. China has also been accused, repeatedly, of unleashing a no-holds-barred campaign of cyber-warfare against Western states, their security systems and their

industries. China's economic progress is also coming under some threat and, with the prospects of faltering growth, the increased danger of domestic unrest.

## China's Challenge to the UK

The potential international problem with China is not, however, a matter of concern only to her regional neighbours or the United States of America. China's wider international challenge also includes economic challenges to the UK and her European neighbours. China's cyber-warfare against the West also embraces UK targets. The UK is also tightly engaged in a security relationship with the USA through NATO and a long history of collaboration on military and security issues. It will be extremely difficult for the UK to remain aloof from any armed disputes between China and the USA without damaging, possibly terminally, her security relations with the Americans.

The problems that the UK might face in any future China-USA conflict would be compounded by permitting Chinese, state-owned companies to build and operate nuclear power stations in the UK. The integrity of the computer software that will control the operation of such nuclear power stations, and their safety systems, will be impossible to guarantee. Even without the clear danger of a malfunctioning nuclear power station, maintaining commercial relations with a China that is embroiled in an armed conflict with the USA will be difficult, if not impossible. Being 'open for business' is no rhetorical substitute for approaching inward investments with care and caution in an uncertain, and potentially turbulent, world.

## Critical Problems of Chinese Nuclear Reactors at Bradwell

In summary, the prospect of Chinese companies playing a lead role in any new nuclear power station (at Bradwell) encounters a number of strategic critical problems. In the first place, the Chinese state plays a critical role in the country's economy and, specifically, in the activities of its leading companies, including nuclear companies like Chinese General Nuclear Power (CGN) the developer associated with the Bradwell project. Secondly, there are clearly dangers arising from China's growing challenges to the established international hierarchy, including, ultimately, the danger of military confrontation. The present developing territorial disputes in the Far East and South China Sea is a reason for concern. There is also the possibility that internal disorder

within an autocratic country will prompt externally aggressive action as a distraction from domestic problems. In terms of nuclear power development in the UK, there is also the intractable problem posed by potentially malevolent software in the control systems of Chinese built and operated nuclear power stations.

At a more global level there are the serious complications that difficulties with China will generate in the relations between the UK and her major ally – the United States of America. At the local level there would be the problem of defining appropriate and effective emergency responses in respect of nuclear power stations like Bradwell in the event of deteriorating relations with China.

## **2. The Problems of Bradwell A – a polluted estuary, a regional nuclear dump and no solution in sight**

BANNG was set up to fight a new nuclear power station on the Blackwater. That is still our major aim. But, over the past few years the old Bradwell A station, shut down in 2002 and due now to enter a phase of Care and Maintenance in 2019, has been beset with problems that are unlikely to be resolved any time soon. BANNG has focused its attention on the problems of Bradwell A and other groups have rallied to the cause. Unfortunately, our local politicians, with the exception of Bernard Jenkin, MP, and the Bradwell Local Communities Liaison Committee (the public watchdog on Bradwell) have been less vigilant and failed to show leadership on the Bradwell issue. BANNG has stepped in to try to prevent pollution and protect the Blackwater communities from risks to human health and the environment. We are currently working on three key issues: FED; transfer of intermediate-level radioactive waste; and the long-term management of the Bradwell site.

### **2.1 The on-going saga of FED**

A well known tactic for achieving something unpopular is to carry on persisting with it until people are bored out of their minds. Perhaps Magnox, and their masters, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), along with the regulators the Environment Agency, had hoped that people would forget about the radioactive discharges arising from the dissolution of fuel element debris (FED) into the Blackwater and the atmosphere. People would get fed up with the FED issue and eventually either ignore it, forget it or simply get used to it.

That has not been the case. Every step of the way BANNG has endeavoured to halt the troubled stop-start process. The dissolution process is basically a method of reducing the solid volumes of radioactive intermediate-level waste (FED is basically the metal casings stripped from the spent fuel before it was shipped to Sellafield for storage). Although volumes are reduced by a factor of 20 and can be stored in containers, some of the radioactivity in the

FED (around 15%), along with heavy metals, remains in the aqueous stream which is discharged directly into the Blackwater. It is this discharge into a shallow estuary with a very slow refresh rate (which means the radioactive particles remain in the estuary rather than being flushed out to sea) which has caused public alarm and the effort led by BANNG to stop the process.

Magnox (operators of the Bradwell site) put forward proposals for discharging which skilfully emphasised the minimal risks and substantial savings of using the dissolution process. The Environment Agency issued a permit (with a limit of 12 months for the heavy metal element of the discharges) at a certain rate of discharge. But things did not run smoothly. Shortly after operations began in June 2014, they ceased through technical problems although this was only made public as a result of leaked information to BANNG's Chair several months later.

**Secrecy, or at least grudging and gradual information release, seems par for the course with Magnox and even the EA, the primary regulator, it seems has sometimes been uninformed or misinformed as to what is really going on.**

## *The Disaster of Dissolution*

It is unclear when, whether and how often the discharges have taken place. BANNG and others have complained about the paucity of monitoring which reveals very little useful information about the distribution and levels of radioactivity and heavy metals in the estuary. So, with this dearth of information the public has no means of knowing the extent of the risks and are hardly reassured by the infrequent blandishments that the process presents no significant risk. How can anyone know? What is clear is that the process is unnecessary since storage of the FED is a perfectly feasible option and not subject to technical failure, and there is room in the Bradwell store (or would be if it were not intended for imported wastes - see item 2.2 below). The FED at the other Magnox sites will be packaged and stored.

Meanwhile, Magnox has run out of time and is asking for a 24 month extension of the heavy metal element of the discharge permit as this expired a year ago. This will not only defer the entry of the Bradwell site into its care and maintenance phase but cause the persistence of unnecessary risk from radioactive discharges into the estuary thereby continuing the uncertainty and anxiety of communities that use the estuary for sailing, water recreation, swimming, fishing and other forms of relaxation. And, it has become clear that the *raison d'être* for the process, namely as a prototype for eventual use elsewhere, has fallen since it is now clear that once the Bradwell discharges have concluded the process will be abandoned.

**Dissolution has proved a disaster for its operators, the Government and the local community. It is a failed technology, a waste of money and a potential danger to the public and the marine environment.**

## *Our Response*

BANNG has responded vigorously in several ways. We have held face-to-face meetings with the Environment Agency, we have joined in the highly visible public protests in Mersea and Tollesbury, we have raised awareness in the media and we have exchanged detailed correspondence with Magnox, the NDA and with the EA. We have held two very well-attended Public Meetings in West Mersea featuring Marine Ecologist, Tim Deere-Jones, and Marine Biologist, Professor Graham Underwood, focusing on the problems facing the estuary especially in a time of climate change. We are supportive of the legal challenge being considered by the Mersea Island Environmental Association (MIEA) and we have responded in detail to the consultation on the permit extension (see BANNG Paper No. 26 on the website).

There is also a BANNG e-Petition opposing the discharges into the environment of the Blackwater arising from dissolution of FED at Bradwell. The link to this is on the BANNG website (Home Page). If you have not done so already, **PLEASE SIGN IT**.

**Our aim is to find out what is really going on, to make sure that the truth is revealed and, above all, to stop the discharges before they do any more unnecessary damage to the Blackwater estuary. We urge all our supporters to keep in touch and to act when called upon.**

## 2.2 ILW at Bradwell – A Nuclear Dumping Ground?

In all the talk about the decommissioning of Bradwell's former nuclear station, two facts go relatively unnoticed. One is that, even when Bradwell does enter its 'care and maintenance' phase, it still remains a nuclear dump for intermediate-level nuclear waste and is likely to remain so, at least until the end of this century and almost certainly well beyond. The other is that, if new nuclear power reactors come to Bradwell with the blessing of the Chinese and British Governments (see the lead stories in this issue), they will come bearing the unwanted gifts of spent fuel stores which will make Bradwell into a high-level radioactive waste dump into the far future.

**Bradwell, then, is already a nuclear dumping ground and will remain so, perhaps indefinitely, into the far future as the condition of the wastes deteriorate in a deteriorating environment of rising sea levels, storm surges and inundation.**

Of immediate importance is the proposal by Magnox to Essex County Council for a change in planning permission to allow the Intermediate-Level Waste (ILW) Store to take ILW from other sites, namely Dungeness in Kent and Sizewell in Suffolk. From Magnox's point of view this would enable spare room in the Bradwell ILW store, created in part by the smaller volumes of Bradwell waste arising as a result of the FED dissolution process (see the first piece in this section), to be used for imported wastes, thus saving taxpayers' money by avoiding constructing stores at the other sites.

From the public's point of view, BANNG believes the proposal puts economy before safety and creates a dangerous precedent for expanding Bradwell into a regional store. As BANNG's Secretary, Varrie Blowers, puts it: 'The idea that this is saving money has to be set against the fact that we believe around £100M was sunk into the failed dissolution plant which was built to ensure Bradwell's wastes are managed locally. Paradoxically, it is this very dissolution process that has created the space in its dedicated ILW store which enables Bradwell to manage wastes from other sites, thereby becoming a regional rather than a self-sufficient nuclear waste dump'.

**The transfer of wastes from elsewhere would increase the radioactivity at the Bradwell site and increase risks arising from transportation and handling. Essex saw fit to place a planning restriction that the ILW store should be for Bradwell wastes alone and there seems no justification for the Council to change its mind. We need to reaffirm the policy that Bradwell should only manage its own wastes and not put out the welcome mat for other sites to dump their wastes here. This could be the start of a never-ending process.**

BANNG has formally objected to the proposed variation in the permission and thanks those of you who have also sent in letters of objection and signed the e-petition.



## ***BANNG e-Petition opposing the transfer of ILW to Bradwell***

This BANNG e-Petition can also be found on the BANNG website (Home Page). If you have not done so already, **PLEASE SIGN IT**.

### **2.3 Reactor Cores, Boilers and Concrete – Reasons Not To Be Passive About Passive Storage**

By far the most visible remains of the former Bradwell nuclear power station (nowadays dubbed Bradwell ‘A’ to distinguish it from the aspirant Chinese new build Bradwell ‘B’) are the massive twin blocks that house the remains of the reactors. In the past couple of years these formerly sinister looking grey buildings have been prettified with a grey-blue cladding in an attempt to replace menace with innocence. At least these formidable buildings chameleon-like adopt the changing colours, grey or blue of the vast East

Anglian sky. Which is just as well for they will remain there for decades to come.

The former power station has changed its profile in recent years. The turbine hall that once stood beside the reactor buildings has gone, completely demolished leaving no sign except a large shallow pit where its foundations once were. Gone, too, is the screeching sound of the massive turbines that powered the grid, a disturbing noise that could be heard far away in an otherwise calm landscape.

The reactor buildings could not be so suddenly removed. The cosmetic treatment of the external walls may improve their appearance but cannot disguise the dangers that lurk within. During decommissioning, the highly radioactive fuel was removed from the reactor cores, the fuel elements were stripped, the spent fuel sent to Sellafield and the casings (FED) retained at Bradwell for dissolution and storage (see item 2.1 above).

### ***A Silent Threat***

Each building housed one reactor. The graphite cores of the reactors encased in a cement shield remain in a condition of what is called ‘passive’ storage; in other words left as they are since it is both very expensive and also potentially very dangerous to move or disassemble them. Surrounding each reactor are the boilers, six for each reactor, each weighing 130 tonnes and, like the British engineering industry that made them, left in silent repose.

The buildings may be much less obtrusive than they once were but they represent a *folie de grandeur*. They are the unwanted product of a deceased industry, which must remain undisturbed for generations until they are dismantled and transferred to the Holy Grail of a deep disposal facility for the nation’s highly radioactive wastes. But, there are four problems with this soothing solution.

- First, is that nobody knows what or how the graphite can be dealt with. In truth, it is safer *in situ*, passively stored in a solid matrix, than if attempts were made to manage it actively with the attendant risk of releasing radioactive materials into the environment.

Although the idea is to remove the cores, there are no firm plans or timescales for its ultimate removal.

- Second, the buildings, reactor cores and boilers will inevitably deteriorate over time if left in their passive state. Already fears have been expressed of the concrete plinths, on which the boilers stand, cracking under the weight and the possibility of subsidence or even a seismic event (after all, the biggest recorded earthquake in Britain occurred nearby in 1884). A report in *Private Eye* records an Inspector from the Office of Nuclear Regulation claiming that leaving the boilers in place over decades to come ‘presents a risk of Bradwell’s boilers toppling, leading to release of contamination from other parts of the plant’. So, leaving everything in passive store effectively means leaving it to future generations to deal with a difficult problem.
- Third, the ultimate solution of a repository is nowhere in sight. Despite Government claims that it will be ready for opening by 2060 it is difficult to imagine how it might come to pass. There is no agreed concept yet nor any acceptable site in prospect. Even if it does happen, Bradwell’s reactor wastes will be low down in the queue, possibly below the spent fuel that might arise if Bradwell B was ever built.
- Fourth, although it is the default plan, the wastes cannot be left on the Bradwell sites indefinitely. Bradwell is a deteriorating site, increasingly subject to storm surge, sea level rise and coastal processes as climate change begins progressively to intensify its grip. At some point the wastes in store will need to be repackaged and encapsulated. The buildings, reactor cores and boilers will have to be taken down before they fall down or become engulfed by the ever-threatening sea.

**The Bradwell site is a radioactive tomb but one where long-term repose is threatened by internal decomposition and external attack. Yet, it is all being left to rot away and left to future generations to cope, if they can. We believe passive storage for the longer term is irresponsible, that the problem of dealing with the dangerous detritus of Bradwell must be faced and planned for now – before it is too late.**

### **3. What BANNG has been doing**

In fulfilling our mission to raise public awareness, oppose new nuclear development at Bradwell and ensure the clean-up and restoration of the Bradwell site, BANNG has been engaged at various levels. We have held Public Meetings, kept a strong media presence, responded to Government consultations, engaged with Government, MPs, and councils, maintained a continuing dialogue with Magnox, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and the Environment Agency and linked up with other groups in the local region. Here are some examples of our work over the past six months.

### 3.1 Public Meetings

Public meetings have been an important part of BANNG's efforts to raise awareness, provide information and generate support. Over the years we have had meetings covering such issues as: why the Bradwell site is entirely unsuitable for new nuclear power; how nuclear energy threatens the marine ecology of the Blackwater estuary; what is wrong with the government's nuclear policy; and why Bradwell is a threat to the safety and security of the Blackwater communities.

Public Meetings on these themes have been addressed by a range of experts including: Dr. Ian Fairlie, a Radiation Consultant, on radioactivity and health; Tim Deere-Jones, Marine Consultant, on radioactive discharges in the estuary; Graham Underwood, Professor of Marine and Freshwater Biology at Essex University, on future challenges to the Blackwater and Colne estuaries (meeting organised by the Mersea Island Society); and Professor David Elliott on why we should say 'no' to nuclear.

BANNG's most recent Public Meetings have been -

#### ***'A Chinese Experiment On The Blackwater'. West Mersea, 1 December, 2015.***

An audience of 200 packed the Mersea MICA centre to hear guest speaker, Professor Stephen Thomas of Greenwich University explain the background to the proposed investment by the Chinese in reactors at Bradwell. He pointed to the problems they faced as a result of delays at Hinkley Point and the technical issues in an untried reactor design. Bradwell had never been seen as a suitable site for a large reactor so 'will it pass detailed scrutiny now?'. He posed the bigger question: 'Can we afford to continue to waste time on an option that will yield so little when there are urgent climate change objectives to be met?'. BANNG's Chair, Andy Blowers, also spoke urging the local communities to continue the fight at every stage against the threat of new nuclear on the Blackwater.

#### ***'Say No To New Nuclear On The Blackwater'. Brightlingsea, 18 May, 2016 (Meeting organised by Tendring Green Party)***

A good turn-out listened to BANNG's Chair, Andy Bowers, and Vice-Chair, Barry Turner, explain that Brightlingsea, only eight miles from the Bradwell site, was in close range if there was a major incident. The Colne and Blackwater estuaries were suffering from radioactive discharges which would become far worse if there was a new Bradwell power station. Andy told the meeting: 'In scale the new nuclear plants planned for Bradwell would have at least ten times the generating capacity of the old Bradwell station and the demands for cooling water, and the levels of radioactivity on the site, would be way beyond the ability of the environment to cope posing an ever-present threat for generations to come'. The meeting was urged to support BANNG and carry the campaign into the Brightlingsea and the Tendring area.

#### ***'No To New Nuclear'. Tollesbury, 2 June, 2016***

Andy Blowers and Barry Jones were invited by Tollesbury Parish Council to address a public meeting in the village on 2 June. The meeting was chaired by Simon Plater, Chair of the Council, and attended by around 60 members of the public.

The main thrust of Andy's talk was that there was no need for new nuclear power and that the Bradwell site was totally unsuitable, especially into the far future. BANNG was fighting against new nuclear on behalf of the current and future generations of the Blackwater estuary.

Barry also questioned the need for new nuclear power and highlighted the potential security threat posed by allowing a Chinese developer to be involved in the UK's nuclear industry. He looked at the implications of the potential for conflict that could arise from China's aggressive stance in the South China Sea. Andy and Barry both stressed that while the risks from nuclear power were high, the risks from allowing a Chinese-state owned company to play a part in the UK's nuclear industry were higher.

## **3.2 Media and Publicity**

BANNG has managed to maintain a high profile in the local press and on local radio.

Social media increases BANNG's reach considerably and helps to reach a younger audience and other local groups.

We are very grateful to Jade, Megan and Jess of Voice Communications, Layer Marney, for their help in keeping the BANNG social media up-to-date.

### **Website**

The BANNG website has been re-built. We hope that you will find it clear, accessible and easy to navigate. The domain address remains the same (banng.info).

We are extremely grateful to Graham Stein of Lynx Graphic Design/Lynx Web Development for building the new website and to Pete Roche, Editor of No2Nuclear, for obtaining a grant from Lush, the handmade cosmetic company, to allow this to happen. We are also extremely grateful to Lush for awarding BANNG the grant.

A special thanks must go to Jade Bolton for all her invaluable help during the process of getting the new website active.

## **4. What BANNGERs are doing.**

### **4.1 On The National Scene**

Andy Blowers has been busy with a variety of national initiatives.

**NDA** Andy attended the Annual Stakeholder meeting hosted by the NDA in Manchester in January. The main issue for discussion was the NDA's new strategy, called Strategy 3. BANNG has responded to the consultation on this making various challenges (see BANNG Paper No. 28 and the relevant Press Release on the website). Among other issues debated at the NDA national meeting were progress with Sellafield clean-up and Government's plans for implementing geological disposal of nuclear wastes.

**Government/NGO Nuclear Forum** Andy continues to Co-Chair this national Forum which brings together anti-nuclear NGOs from across the country. Recent discussions have covered: geological disposal; review of national nuclear policy statements; generic design assessment (the Chinese Hualong 1 reactor will shortly be going through the GDA process); radiation and health and emergency planning.

***Geological Disposal DECC Community Representation Working Group*** Andy was a member of the Government's Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) an independent body which made recommendations which were accepted by the Government. Following the failure to get agreement on a site for a possible underground repository in West Cumbria, the policy process has been reviewed. Andy has been a member of the review which has refined the basic principles and reaffirmed a process of voluntary site selection based on local partnership. There will be a consultation on this during the Autumn to which, of course, BANNG will respond.

***Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR)*** Andy attended a meeting of stakeholders and the ONR in Manchester last Autumn. The ONR explained their approach to clean-up and regulation. Of particular interest was the revelation of recent changes in emphasis to the regulatory guidelines. Andy raised the concern that the culture of regulation appeared to have shifted, with emphasis on policy and facilitation of business growth, subsequently clouding ONR's independence. This is obviously concerning in relation to new build.

## **4.2 On The Regional Scene**

***Regional Coordinating Committee*** There have been efforts to establish greater cooperation among groups in the Eastern region. This has been initiated by Tony Seaman of the Green Party (and a BANNGer). Meetings have been held bringing together Bradwell (BANNG) and Sizewell (TASC) groups and regional organisations including Friends of the Earth and the Green Party. It is intended to increase the reach of local groups into the Eastern region and to help support the various local initiatives and actions that may be undertaken. Barry Turner, Barry Jones, Varrie Blowers and Andy Blowers have attended these meetings on behalf of BANNG.

## **4.3 On The Local Scene**

### **Bradwell Local Communities Liaison Council meeting on 1 June, 2016**

Andy Blowers, Barry Turner, Ian Clarke and Varrie Blowers attended the meeting. The proceedings will be the subject of a separate report to be circulated shortly.

### **Local Councils and MPs**

BANNG continues to lobby and consult local councils and MPs. We have submitted our objections to the proposed ILW transfer to Bradwell (see BANNG Paper No. 30 on the website) and urged Essex County Council to reject the application. We will also be handing over to the Council the e-Petition opposing the transfer of ILW in time for the planning meeting. Varrie Blowers is registered to speak and the meeting against the transfer.

Bernard Jenkin, MP for North Essex, has met with BANNG representatives and expressed his concerns about the impact of dissolution on the estuary and his concerns about the security implications of Chinese reactors on the Blackwater.

Colchester Borough Council, whose area includes Mersea Island and the nearby rural area, has reaffirmed its opposition to new nuclear at Bradwell and, following the recent elections, BANNG will be meeting with the Borough again.

## **Regulatory Bodies**

**Environment Agency (EA)** BANNG has held several meetings with the Environment Agency on the issue of discharges arising from the dissolution of FED. We have made objections to the proposed extension of the permit for discharges and continue to press for the discharges to be stopped while the permit is being considered (see BANNG Paper No. 26 on the website).

At the meeting of the Bradwell Local Communities Liaison Council, the EA representative said that those who had responded to the EA's consultation last September on issues relating to FED would now be contacted towards the end of June.

## **4.4 BANNG Responses To Consultations from 2015**

The following responses have been submitted:

**BANNG PAPER NO. 25** (2015) Manifestoes and Briefing documents on new nuclear build at Bradwell, FED dissolution and transfer of ILW to Bradwell from Dungeness and Sizewell (February);

**BANNG PAPER NO. 26** (2015) Application by Magnox for an extension to the timescale for the discharging of liquid effluent from the fuel element debris treatment process (FED) into the estuary from 12 months to a further 24 months; Application by Magnox for an option to switch the existing discharges to a new outfall structure when it becomes necessary due to blockages caused by siltation in the existing structure; A radioactive substances application to allow the switch to the new outfall structure when necessary, Response from the Blackwater Against New Nuclear Group (BANNG) (September);

**BANNG PAPER NO. 27** (2015) Call for Evidence – Implementing Geological Disposal: working with communities. Response from the Blackwater Against New Nuclear Group (BANNG) (September);

**BANNG PAPER NO. 28** (2016) NDA Draft Strategy January 2016. Response from the Blackwater Against New Nuclear Group (BANNG) (February);

**BANNG PAPER NO. 29** (2016) Draft Magnox Socio-Economic Plan, 2016 – 18. Response from the Blackwater Against New Nuclear Group (BANNG) (February);

**BANNG PAPER NO. 30** (2016) Planning Application Ref. No. ESS/15/16/MAL from Magnox (to vary condition 3 (restriction on importation) of planning permission ESS/43/12/MAL to temporarily suspend condition 3 to allow the importation of packaged intermediate-level waste from Magnox sites Sizewell A and Dungeness A into the Bradwell site's existing interim storage facility for the period up to 2023). Objections to the Planning Application from the Blackwater Against New Nuclear Group (BANNG).

## **5. SUBSCRIPTIONS**

If you have not yet paid your subscription (£10 per person if possible) for 2016, it would be much appreciated if you could do so.

Please send your subscription to the BANNG Treasurer, Lynn Hartley, Ray View, The Strood, Peldon, CO5 7QL.