



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

information

MEDIA ADVISORY – for immediate release, 18th April 2011

Nuclear Free Local Authorities remembers the 25th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster with commemorative concert and candlelit vigil

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) will be formally remembering the victims of the world's worst nuclear disaster - Chernobyl - with a commemorative concert and candlelit vigil in Manchester on Easter Monday (1). Many other events are taking place across England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland but the Manchester concert will be the official way that the NFLA will commemorate the 25th anniversary of the disaster. The concert will be formally opened by the Lord Mayor of Manchester, Vice President of Mayors for Peace. The concert is being co-organised by NFLA, the Chernobyl Children's Project UK and Greater Manchester CND (2).

The concert will take place in St Ann's Church, Manchester city centre from 6.50pm on Monday 25th April and it coincides with similar events taking place across the world and in other large European cities such as London, Paris, Berlin, Rome, Vienna, Moscow and Minsk.

As the world now looks on with great concern at the events taking place at the Fukushima nuclear power plant in Japan, the 25th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster comes at a very important time. Late on the night of April 25th and through April 26th, 1986, a major test of the turbine system at Reactor Number 4 went drastically wrong leading to a huge explosion and the spread of a highly radioactive cloud travelling across Belarus, northern Scandinavia and even affecting parts of the British Isles.

Hundreds of emergency workers were killed or heavily radiated by the disaster. Over the last 25 years childhood cancers and immune system deficiencies have also been much higher in Belarus, where 90% of the radiation fell. For over 20 years many UK-based Chernobyl charities, including the Chernobyl Children's Project, have helped the children and the communities most affected by organising recuperative holidays in the UK or clean parts of Belarus for thousands of children, along with valuable work at improving facilities for disabled children, orphanages and hospitals in the affected area. The NFLA fully supports this work and has supported many of the annual Chernobyl charities conferences and the work of local groups in the UK and Ireland.

The commemorative concert includes a mix of classical music, folk music, choir singing, traditional Belarusian music and poetry. Following the concert a candlelit vigil in St Ann's Square highlighting '25' will be created and photographed by professional photographer Richard Searle, mirroring similar measures across European cities.

NFLA Chair and Bailie of Dundee, George Regan, comments:

"The Chernobyl disaster was a fundamental turning point for public perceptions of nuclear power, as the world's worst nuclear disaster killed emergency workers and blighted generations of children in Belarus for the past quarter of a century. We are proud to be co-organising this commemorative concert and candlelit vigil to 'Remember Chernobyl', just as we 'Remember Hiroshima', 'Remember Nagasaki' and I am now sure we will soon be 'Remembering Fukushima'. Chernobyl was a highly preventable disaster, and now we are speculating if Fukushima was as well. This concert allows for solemn reflection and I encourage all of us to take some time out on April 25th and April 26th to truly 'Remember Chernobyl'."

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES



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Ends

Notes for editors:

**(1) 'Chernobyl 25' commemorative concert and candlelit vigil.
St Ann's Church, St Ann's Street, Manchester City Centre.
Easter Monday, 25th April 2011.**

Itinerary (all times are approximate):

6.50pm	Introduction by the Vicar of St Ann's Church, Revd Nigel Ashworth.
6.55pm	Opening address by the Lord Mayor of Manchester, Councillor Mark Hackett.
7.00pm	What happened at Chernobyl and the work of CCP-UK, Executive Director of Chernobyl Children's Project UK, Linda Walker MBE.
7.05pm	Performances by the Balalaika Children's Band and the Thorncliff Trio play Shotstakovich.
7.50pm	Interval and refreshments.
8.10pm	Performances by the Beech Band, the Clarion Choir and poet Mark Abraham.
9.00pm	Procession out to St Ann's Square for candlelit vigil and '25' will be shown and photographed.

Tickets are available at £10 and £7.50 by ringing 0161 273 8283.

(2) Further information on the Chernobyl disaster and Chernobyl Children's Project:
<http://www.chernobyl-children.org.uk>

Further information on the work of the Nuclear Free Local Authorities:
<http://www.nuclearpolicy.info>

Further information on Greater Manchester & District CND:
<http://www.gmdcnd.org.uk>

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