NFLA holds its 2013 AGM in Cardiff

The NFLA held its AGM, Annual Policy Seminar and Steering Committee in Cardiff County Hall in early December.

Inclement weather had reduced attendance a little, but those who attended were able to approve all NFLA consultation responses and discuss wider nuclear policy within the Steering Committee.

At the NFLA AGM, members agreed to re-elect Councillor Mark Hackett as its Chair for 2014. It also approved its Budget and 2014/15 affiliation rates, its Service Plan and its Constitution.

NFLA members were joined by a number of NGO representatives for an informative afternoon Annual Policy Seminar – details of this are below.

In a media release sent out after the meetings, the NFLA Chair noted his desire for the NFLA to remain at the centre of the nuclear policy debate. A full overview of the meetings is on the NFLA website.

NFLA submits detailed response to radwaste consultation

The NFLA Secretariat has submitted its final response to the UK Government’s consultation on the siting of an underground radioactive waste facility.

The response adds further detail to its October advice note to NFLA members. There is consideration of what the effect of reducing the role of County Councils as a decision-making body may have on planning policy.

The central points of the response remain – deep concern over the centralising nature of the Government’s approach & its inconsistency with volunteerism, the need for a national geological screening exercise and the need to consider effective alternatives to deep underground radioactive waste storage.

The NFLA response was developed after its involvement in DECC workshops and liaison with other local government and NGO groups.

The response has been placed on the NFLA website as a Radioactive Waste Briefing.
The NFLA Welsh Forum hosted the 2013 Annual Policy Seminar in Cardiff.

The seminar considered nuclear security, nuclear proliferation and the lack of Parliamentary scrutiny.

David Lowry raised concerns around his view that UK nuclear security is under-regulated. He also raised deep misgivings around the Chinese involvement in new nuclear build.

Rebecca Johnson said that Governments and NGOs needed to take on new approaches to find ways to build an international nuclear weapons ban treaty.

Paul Flynn MP looked at the lack of quality debate in Parliament on nuclear issues and the need to challenge the current ‘pro-nuclear new build’ consensus there.

See the NFLA website for a seminar report.

The NFLA Steering Committee has tasked the NFLA Secretariat with developing a number of policy briefings to go out early in 2014.

These include providing an overview of progress with the new build debate in the UK and the discussion in the EU over whether to approve the subsidies given to EDF as legitimate state aid.

The NFLA Secretariat is also developing a Policy Briefing that will consider the increasing amount of Councils establishing new and innovative local ‘Energy Service Trusts’ to generate their own local energy needs.

A report and update on Fukushima and nuclear emergency planning is being developed.

A strategy paper on a UK & Ireland Mayors for Peace Chapter is also being developed – NFLA members are likely to be very interested in its results.

The NFLA AGM agreed to hold a special Organisation & Administration meeting after the NFLA Steering Committee in Manchester Town Hall on the 31st January 2014.

NFLA Scotland will be meeting in Glasgow in February.

A public meeting in North Wales is being planned with other groups and the NFLA Welsh Forum.

NFLA English and Irish meetings are also being developed for March 2014.
NFLA and KIMO co-operate for OSPAR RSC 2014

The Chairs and Officers of the NFLA and KIMO International met in Cardiff to consider renewing their co-operative agreement.

In past years NFLA staff has attended meetings of the OSPAR Intergovernmental Commission and its Radiation Substances Committee.

The OSPAR RSC will be meeting in the UK in 2014 and both NFLA and KIMO are looking to develop reports on joint concerns over radiation discharges into the Irish Sea, along with other pollution concerns.

NFLA and KIMO officers have also spoken at each others conferences and seminars on related matters and the aim will be to undertake this again in 2014.

NFLA greatly benefits from such co-operative partnerships and the NFLA AGM welcomed the renewing of this agreement with KIMO.

NFLA pays its tribute to Nelson Mandela’s disarmament role

The NFLA has paid tribute to the positive role Nelson Mandela played in the nuclear disarmament debate, following sad news of his death in early December, at the age of 95.

South Africa was the first country in the world to dismantle its nascent nuclear weapons capability in the early 1990s.

As President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela was instrumental in its Government playing a key role in disarmament talks at the United Nations. His speech to the 1998 UN General Assembly on the moral imperative to ban all nuclear weapons was published in a NFLA media release.

NFLA will work to fulfil his wishes with Mayors for Peace, ICAN-UK, CND-UK and all relevant disarmament groups.

The NFLA media release can be found on its website.

Forthcoming meetings of interest to NFLA members

**NFLA Steering Committee, 31st January, Town Hall, Manchester.**

**NFLA Organisation & Administration Committee, 31st January, Town Hall, Manchester**

**NFLA Scotland AGM & business meeting, City Chambers, Glasgow, February (final date to be confirmed).**

**Dates for NFLA English, Welsh and All Ireland Forum meetings will be communicated in the January NFLA newsletter.**