New Secretary takes up role and meets NFLA members

In late November, Richard Outram took up his new post as NFLA Secretary.

Richard met with the NFLA Steering Committee in early December to begin identifying the key workstreams which members wished to focus on in the 2022 Work Plan.

These included a membership drive; hosting hybrid meetings, once COVID-19 regulations permit; holding themed regional meetings; challenging the ‘nuclear is zero carbon’ myth; nuclear transportation; engaging with trades unions and the Just Transition movement; and more focus on renewable technologies. A report of the SC meeting is on the NFLA website.

The revised Work Plan will be discussed at the forthcoming AGM in early 2022.

Richard is now busy meeting with our partners across the UK and Europe and Forum members.

NFLA seeks halt at Hinkley whilst Taishan investigated

The Chair of the NFLA Steering Committee has written to the Energy Minister and the head of the ONR seeking an indefinite halt to work on Hinkley Point C whilst investigations continue into the Taishan-1 accident, which led to a leak of radioactive gas in June.

Taishan-1 has finally been taken off-line after Chinese authorities tried to cover up the incident.

The NFLA is gravely concerned that the accident has revealed a fatal design flaw that would also be common to the Hinkley Point and Sizewell projects in the UK. Both would, like Taishan-1, be equipped with EPRs (European Pressurised Reactors).

SC Chair, Councillor David Blackburn, said: “Work should be halted at Hinkley Point C until the danger can be fully assessed. Without the full facts, it would be foolhardy to go ahead with such a dangerous reactor design for the UK.”
NFLA says public safety must come before profits on fusion

The NFLA has just responded to a government consultation on the regulation of future fusion reactors by demanding that there should be no watering down of the licensing and regulation regime applicable to fusion reactors, with the same rigorous checks that apply to fission plants. To help the private sector, the government seems intent upon waiving the requirement to obtain an operators’ license from the Office of Nuclear Regulation and to instead allow fusion reactors to be treated like other non-nuclear industrial premises when it comes to health and safety.

The NFLA position is clear. A fusion reactor should be classed as a ‘nuclear installation’ under the 1965 NIA and we must always put public safety before operators’ profits.

EDF case to continue with AGRs ‘cracking up’ with reactors

French nuclear utility company EDF has recently announced the early closure of Torness and Heysham 2 power plants in the latest blow to the company’s AGR (Advanced Gas-cooled Reactor) fleet.

Both plants will close two years ahead of schedule, in 2028 instead of 2030, following recent inspections. Hunterston B will also close in the early new year.

A 2017 NFLA report highlighted an issue of growing concern about AGR plants. AGRs have been operating for much longer than their original 30-year planned lifespan and with time their graphic cores, which help moderate the reaction, are beginning to crack, compromising safety.

The ONR has already increased tolerances to permit AGRs to continue operating for far longer than they should.

Joint webinar to kickstart new effort on nuke convoys

At the December steering committee, members agreed to prioritise action against the transport of nuclear warheads and waste through their towns and on nearby motorways and railways. The NFLA Secretariat is hosting a joint webinar with our partners in CND and Nukewatch to raise elected members and public awareness about this issue, and to encourage further action against the convoys.

Chaired by Dr Kate Hudson, the webinar will be held on Thursday 3 March 6.30-7.30pm.

The link to register is shown on the left.
**NFLA welcomes new guidelines on community consultation**

The NFLA has welcomed the recent publication by the Nuclear Young Professionals’ Group of suggested new guidance on best practice in conducting community consultation in the nuclear industry.

Communities hosting civil nuclear or military nuclear facilities are consulted via Site Stakeholder Groups or Local Liaison Committees.

An NFLA report published in 2017 identified that many of these bodies were unfit for purpose, being far from accountable, democratic, or transparent.

In our response to the consultation conducted by the NDA over the guidelines, the NFLA wants a truly independent chair for each board, and the greater inclusion of local community groups and activists, rather than more players from the nuclear industry.

**Shocking: NFLA says no nuclear ‘tax’ on electricity customers**

The NFLA has reacted with dismay to government plans to force customers to pay a surcharge to finance new nuclear projects.

The Nuclear Energy Financing Bill which had its second reading in Parliament on 3 November could cost customers around £1 a month extra each during the full construction phase of Hinkley Point C, and more still if Sizewell C goes ahead.

Despite the opposition of the devolved Scottish government to new nuclear, Scottish customers will also be hit with the charge with a British Government Minister claiming that they will benefit from a ‘more resilient’ electricity supply.

Responding to the news, Scottish NFLA Chair, Councillor Feargal Dalton said: "Renewables met 97% of Scotland’s electricity demands in 2020. With wind and solar now the cheapest forms of electricity, Scottish consumers shouldn’t have to pay for the Tories’ failed energy policies.”

**Forthcoming dates or meetings of interest to NFLA members**

- **NFLA Steering Committee AGM** – Online at end January or in early February – tbc – (NFLA members are asked to respond to the Secretary with preferred dates).
- **Online Conference about the experience of British nuclear test veterans** – ‘The 70-year old Hurricane: Time to End the Storm’ – Sat 19 February, 9.30am – 5pm (Details tbc and to follow)
- **Webinar** – ‘Did you know that nuclear warheads could be driving through your town?’ – Thursday 3 March, 6.30-7.30pm (NFLA / M4P members are urged to attend. Please see details on page 2).