



Supporters of Nuclear Energy

Newsletter

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A NEW TREASURER NEEDED FOR A NEW ERA

At the end of the February Newsletter I let it be known that I would be standing down as SONE's Secretary at this year's annual general meeting in October and that I would also relinquish my membership of the Committee. This is therefore my final Newsletter and I hope you won't find it too self-indulgent or proselytising.

In case you had forgotten I was leaving, Wade Allison, the sole candidate as my successor, reminded you that I was leaving in his first Newsletter last month. The Newsletter took the form of a prospectus setting out Wade's plans for radical change if he was elected Secretary at the annual meeting. Incidentally, I will be supporting Wade's election at that meeting and wish him well with his challenging agenda.

What has not been announced until now is that Terry Westmoreland, who has been our Treasurer for the past nine years, would be calling it a day at the same time as me. We are therefore seeking a successor for him and there is some urgency about the matter, which is why this Newsletter is being distributed earlier than usual. If anyone is interested please let me know or get in touch with Terry on 0208 651 0089.

SONE has much to thank Terry Westmoreland for. He became involved in SONE's affairs purely out of his friendship and regard for my predecessor as Secretary, Sir Bernard Ingham. Terry is an accountant, a useful qualification for the Treasurer role, and has no direct involvement in the nuclear energy industry.

Nevertheless, his enthusiasm for the nuclear cause and his determination to ensure that SONE remains viable as an organisation through the careful management of its financial affairs means that SONE can go forward with some confidence in its future.

Anyone considering applying for the Treasurer post - and I hope there will be competition for it - should be aware of what is involved and know something about SONE's legal status, structure and history. In the absence of much else

happening in the UK on the nuclear power front at the moment I decided to spend some time considering our current situation as an organisation and how we came to be what we are.

OUR BEGINNING

Supporters of Nuclear Energy Limited (SONE) was incorporated under the Companies Act 1985 as a private limited company on the 1st of June 1998 and from the outset it has had three officers - a Chairman, a Company Secretary and a Treasurer. The officers do not receive a salary.

Sir William McAlpine has been SONE's Chairman from the outset and you will be glad to know that unlike Terry and me he has no intention of standing down. The contribution Sir William makes within SONE and the respect in which he is held inside and outside the nuclear industry cannot be over-stated.

In law a private limited company must have at least one director and the directors **are legally responsible for running the company and making sure company accounts and reports are properly prepared.** I have emphasised this legal requirement because the need for the level of diligence which SONE has traditionally exercised has been questioned from time to time because some of this support is provided by external agencies and paid for.

In particular, assistance in the preparation of the annual report and accounts is provided by a private accountancy firm, the Sargeant Partnership. The need for this professional assistance has been challenged on occasion but after informed debate within the Committee the long-standing arrangement has always been maintained.

I think the structure we have in place should be maintained, but that will be for the Chairman, the new Secretary and the new Treasurer and the Committee as a whole to consider. In my view the suggestion that SONE needs no more from its Treasurer than might be provided by someone used to looking after the financial affairs of an allotment committee or a book club is extraordinary, not least because of the public's interest in anything nuclear.

Anyone thinking of volunteering for the Treasurer post may find Terry Westmoreland's description of what the job entails helpful:

- * Prepare annual invoices for members subscriptions (for printing and sending out to members by the Mullet Press) and deposit cheques received at the bank.
- * Pay all expenses.
- * Keep financial accounting records covering all transaction and present these to the Sargeant Partnership each year for review and preparation of

the Annual Accounts.

- * Keep the Committee apprised of the financial situation on an ongoing basis and draw attention to the requirement for future funding when necessary.
- * Maintain the membership records.

For completeness, the SONE committee (which the Treasurer should always attend if at all possible) meets quarterly and the dates of the planned meetings are notified to members at least six months in advance to make attendance easy to plan.

OUR ANNUAL MEETING SPEAKERS

It would be helpful if anyone interested in becoming SONE's Treasurer attended the next meeting of the Committee, which is on 5 September . This would provide a hand-over period which is important as the Secretary and Treasurer appointments will need to be confirmed at the annual general meeting, to be held at the Institution of Civil Engineers in London on Monday 23 October 2017.

The speakers at the AGM will be Wade Allison, probably supported by John Lindberg, whose name will be known to you from the March Newsletter, when we announced that we were considering inking up with Weinberg Next Nuclear, another organisation which supported nuclear energy from an independent standpoint. Weinberg had decided that it should move away from being a single issue lobbyist advocating the use of "next generation" thorium technology to a wider remit not that dissimilar to SONE's.

At the start of the year talks began on a possible merger or some other form of looser association between the two organisations, involving Sir William and myself, on behalf of SONE, and Wade Allison and John Lindberg on behalf of Weinberg. Both Wade and John are also members of SONE and Wade is already a member of the SONE committee and John is to become one.

It is fair to say that the Chairman and I were impressed by the ideas for a joint future which emerged from the discussion, some of which found their way into Wade's prospectus, but in the end nothing came of the talks. , There are several reasons for this but the illness and subsequent untimely death of Weinberg's Director, Stephen Tindale , a former Executive Director of Greenpeace UK who became convinced that the UK needed nuclear energy, certainly played a part. Weinberg Next Nuclear is now in the process of being wound up.

John Lindberg was Weinberg's Technology Officer. A young man in his early 20s with an impressive knowledge of the world-wide nuclear industry and broad Parliamentary and technical experience he has the sort of background and ability,

particularly as a communicator, which would serve SONE well at Committee level. With the Chairman's agreement he has been invited to join.

Wade is keen to involve John in SONE's affairs with specific tasks and this possibility will be explored further at the September committee meeting.

UK GOVERNMENT TALKS ON SMRs

Members of the committee will also be discussing the up-to-date situation in the UK with regard to nuclear energy. There are some indications of a possible revival of Government interest but nothing by way of a firm commitment or of the State investment in new build projects sought by SONE and others with an interest.

The best that could be managed by the Government, after the disappointment of there being no mention at all of nuclear energy in the Conservative manifesto was a recent assurance from the new Energy Minister, Richard Harrington, that new nuclear will have a key role to play in the years ahead.

He also went out of his way to discuss the Government's continuing interest in small modular reactors (SMRs) which some were beginning to doubt because of the suspicion that it was yet another idea which had been kicked into the long grass.

It is now 20 months since the Government of the day announced that there was to be a competition to identify the best value SMR design. The then Chancellor of the Exchequer promised £250 million over five years for a nuclear research and development programme, some of which would be spent on the competition. There was an initial flurry of interest and at the turn of the year it was announced that Government officials had met no fewer than 32 eligible partners for Phase One of the competition. Not much happened subsequently but the Daily Telegraph reported this month that the major industry players - among them NuScale, Rolls-Royce, Hitachi and Westinghouse had been summoned to meet Ministers to discuss their SMR plans.

It's something I suppose.

Harold Bolter CBE
SONE Secretary

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