



Supporters of Nuclear Energy

Newsletter

No 249

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Communicating The Nuclear Message in a Changing Landscape

It had been our intention to issue a Press Release at the time of the Annual General Meeting, urging the Government to increase investment in nuclear power. However, methods of communication change and reaching the Government – or anybody else who is not listening – have become increasingly challenging. We should agree that modern communication media are revolutionary in finding and delivering what you want to know. Unfortunately, in supplying this cornucopia of information, they suppress messages that you might not want to hear. In this way they frustrate attempts to communicate any message to third parties beyond the boundaries of the faithful. To achieve its objective SONE needs to break out of this echo chamber and reach those who are simply unaware. It is not the antis that we need to reach – they are few and incorrigible.

Few people now deny that greenhouse gas emissions are driving climate change. It is possible, but unlikely, that this is untrue. Either way, nobody knows how far climate change will go in the decades and centuries to come. As a precaution the world has agreed to decarbonise emissions as soon as possible, and this is indeed sensible given that there is one well-established scientific way to do the job – nuclear power. However, the world remains apprehensive of nuclear and thinks that mediaeval “horse and cart” solutions can be used instead. These are weak, intermittent and damaging to the environment, as the costly *Energiewende* experiment in Germany has demonstrated. In short they fail to do the job. Blackouts and social dislocation will result from this policy.

So the message is that nuclear power in one or more of its various technological realisations is the only longterm solution. To spread this message, issuing a Press Release was not the answer, nor, I’m afraid to say, was the play *Yellow Cake* staged by the WhyTheatre group whose hopes

I promoted in News Letter 247. After the initial showing at UCL on 19 October there was discussion between the playwrights and the audience who were largely sympathetic. The upshot will be a serious rethink, I expect. The message was more successfully delivered to a small conference at the Sheffield University School of Management on the sustainability of energy supplies, called “Energy Security and Renewables”, the IAEA conference in Vienna (see AGM Minutes) and the Westminster Energy Environment and Transport Forum on 15th October. In each case useful new contacts outside the immediate circle were established. Then on 20 October a call was received to take part in a worldwide “Nuclear Pride” demonstration ‘online sitin’! Instead, I opted to contribute to an 11-hour online worldwide sit-in on that day (my talk begins about 10 mins in) <https://www.facebook.com/generationatomic/videos/2610672998990093/UzpfSTUxOTk1MTg1NTpWSzoyNDI2MjQ1MzQ3NDg5Njky/> It was refreshing to see the contributors’ youthful enthusiasm for nuclear energy, especially in places that are officially still anti-nuclear, like Australia and Denmark. These people are not about to give in to anti-nuclear propaganda but they welcome further knowledge. Another broadening exercise is to listen to some of the 212 interviews on this website <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/titans-nuclear-interviewing-world-experts-on-nuclear/id1331598443> There are many Americans there but lots of familiar UK names too.

24 October: Late news from Brussels of a ruling accepting the legality of payments for the UK capacity market. This market involves commitments by electricity generators to provide extra power whenever needed. This stand-by service ensures the lights stay on when demand is high and/or renewable sources including wind and solar are unable to provide the power required. Generators that have won contracts under this capacity market scheme include coal, gas and nuclear plants.

Wade Allison, Honorary Secretary
Oxford, 24 October 2019

**MINUTES OF SONE
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019**

SUPPORTERS OF NUCLEAR ENERGY

Held at the Institute of Civil Engineers, One Great George Street, London SW1P 3AA on Monday October 21, 2019 at 2 pm

Present: Neville Chamberlain, Wade Allison, Ian McFarlane, John Assheton, Jack Simmons, Stephen Redburn, Ken Durrands, Jack Lambert, Charlotte Assheton, Andrew Harris, Angus Ross, Christopher Cockcroft, Clive Elsworth, Ian Scott (speaker, by invitation)

1. **Apologies** for absence were received from Sir Christopher Audland, Damon de Laszlo, John Edmonds, Sir Bernard Ingham, George Nissen. Douglas McDevitte, Lord Vinson of Roddam Dene, John Haddon, Terry Wynn, Robin Smith, Barrie Yates, Bill Williamson, Lord Hunt of Wirral, Derek Shaw, Ian Currie, John Hook, Michael Payton, Mrs Marie Zabell, Sir Robert Malpas, Paul Spare
2. **Minutes** of the previous meeting held on October 22, 2018 (and circulated with the agenda) were accepted with a correction: it should be recorded that Terry Wynn had given his apologies.
3. There were no **Matters Arising**
4. Neville Chamberlain was elected **Chairman of SONE** and a Director (nem con)
5. Wade Allison was re-elected **Honorary Secretary** and a Director, and Ian McFarlane was re-elected **Honorary Treasurer** and a Director.
6. The following were re-elected to the **Committee** for the year 2019/20: Neville Chamberlain, Wade Allison, Ian McFarlane, John Assheton, Adrian Bull, Gerald Clark, Damon de Laszlo, Jack Simmons, Robin Smith, Paul Spare, Bill Wilkinson and Anton van der Merwe.
7. The Directors' **Report and Accounts** for 2018/9 had been circulated to all members with the Agenda and were discussed.
 - The Treasurer thanked Robert Maclachlan for his help in preparing the new shorter form of the Accounts following his suggestion at the 2018 AGM. This had provided an important cost saving.
 - Robert Maclachlan suggested that SONE should make further significant

cost savings by changing its website provider. This idea met with widespread support. It was agreed that the Committee should consider this suggestion.

- The Treasurer reported that further savings were planned by holding alternate Committee Meetings online, thereby saving both personal travel and room hire.

The Report and Accounts were then passed by a show of hands.

8. Membership changes. The Treasurer reported that a number of people had joined so that membership remained stable.

9. The Secretary exhibited a poster that he had presented at the recent IAEA Conference on Climate Change and Nuclear Power. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336275666> UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE OF NUCLEAR IN THE SCIENCE OF ENERGY That meeting successfully brought Climate Change, Nuclear Power and many educated young people from around the world together for the first time. However, the message of the poster showed how much further the international community has to go unequivocally to embrace nuclear power as the essential response to Climate Change.

10. The **invited speaker** was Dr Ian Scott, *Co-Founder and Chief Technology Officer, Moltex Energy Ltd.* <https://www.moltexenergy.com/> He gave a very positive account of the Moltex Molten Salt Reactor, its principles, prospects and challenges. He emphasised the open-door policy and encouragement that the project has received in Canada and indeed in USA. However, in the UK the lack of Government interest and the missed opportunities were disappointing. He emphasised that it remains essential to reach and inform Government Ministers. Those present expressed great interest in what he had to say and there was much lively discussion.

The Chairman thanked Dr Scott warmly for his presentation. In the absence of any other business the Meeting closed at 4.30 pm.