

**Public Meeting to discuss the Government's Green Paper
on its Radioactive Waste Management Policy, with special reference to Milton Landfill Site,
on Monday October 24th 1994 in Milton Community Centre at 7.30pm.**

Present: Councillor C. Bradford - Chairman of the County Council who chaired the meeting and approximately 250 people.

Apologies: J. Paice MP.

1. Cllr. Jane Coston opened the meeting by thanking Milton Parish Council for its support, also those who helped deliver notices. Petitions were to be circulated.

2. Introduction

Cllr. Bradford introduced the main speakers. The intention of the meeting was to inform.

3. Steven Brown Department of Environment.

The Government last reviewed the disposal of radioactive waste in the early 1980's. 95% of all radio active waste came from the nuclear fuel cycle. The review process which was looking at criteria for safe disposal started in early 1994. Responses were now being considered and decisions would be made based on these responses. Landfill sites were authorised to take waste from small users such as hospitals, universities and industry. These sites were monitored by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution (HMIP). He described the types of nuclear radioactive waste, stored at Sellafield, and Drigg ... "further down the scale, certain (university and hospital) radioactive wastes have been and continue to be disposed of in local landfill sites, under the authorisation of HMIP, and one of these sites is in this locality. Under the current legislation waste producers cannot be forced to dispose of waste at any particular location nor can landfill site operators be forced to accept this" (waste).

Dr. David Jolley (HMIP)

Users and holders of radioactive sources must hold certificates under the Radioactive Substances Act of 1993. The HMIP ensured that companies such as East Waste Ltd. played its part properly and did not harm the environment. A rigid set of international guidelines must be followed. The main user at Milton was Cambridge University.

Mike Tassell Managing Director East Waste Ltd.

East Waste operated as a private company wholly owned by the County Council who hold all the shares. Annual running costs amounted to approximately one million pounds. M.T. first knew of any suggestion that Milton would take nuclear waste (ie waste from nuclear power stations) when he read the Observer of October the 9th. East Waste had not been consulted on the issue of nuclear waste disposal. There were, however, no such plans to dispose of nuclear waste at Milton. "I want to make it totally plain and beyond any scintilla of doubt that East Waste does not, has not and will not consider disposal of wastes from nuclear power stations at Milton. We are not a local authority and are not therefore subject to Section 18 of the Radioactive Substances Act, 1993... and so are not obliged to take nuclear radioactive waste."

Since 1986 Milton site had taken a third of a ton of low level radioactive waste fortnightly from Cambridge University. This was delivered in a dedicated vehicle, buried under supervision and monitored by HMIP.

The Board of Directors, comprising 5, would decide what the site will receive. East Waste was not obliged to take radioactive waste.

Waste Regulation Officer Keith Stonell County Council

The County Council were responsible for the disposal of household, industrial and commercial waste. The Milton site with a depth of 16 to 18 metres of clay was considered a safe site. Boreholes were used to monitor the site. There was no evidence of any pollution. HMIP monitored radio active waste annually and published the results. Section 18 of the RSA refers to sites provided by the local authority. "I am glad that the government will not ... say that this is a local authority site, so we must take it" (nuclear waste).

Ann Barrett Friends of the Earth.

The greatest problem facing the world today was the disposal of nuclear waste. A.B. expressed concern about possible leukaemias and cancers caused by radiation from nuclear waste. All levels of radioactive waste were dangerous. She urged people to write to the Department of Environment.

Dr. Richard Vialles Greenpeace

Nirex were failing to observe the regulations at Drigg in Cumbria. Dr. Vialles showed a video to illustrate this point and concluded that if a government industry could not follow the correct safety procedures at Drigg what chance would there be in approximately 30 other sites around the country.

4. Question and answer session

M. Tassell gave a 100% assurance that East Waste would not take nuclear waste. East Waste had the licence to manage Milton Landfill site and that licence would remain with his company as long as the company existed.

Concern was expressed about methods of guaranteeing the present level of radioactive waste received.

S. Brown knew of no proposals to relax the standards or change the definitions relating to the different levels of radioactive waste.

The Department of Environment and HMIP knew of no proposal to take nuclear waste at Milton.

In response to a question about how the government "encourage landfill site operators to take radioactive waste" S. Brown pointed out that the Government would listen to people's views. East Waste as a private company and not a local authority operator could not be forced to take nuclear waste.

S. Brown could not explain why Cambs. County Council were not consulted about the Green Paper.

M. Tassell explained that the proposals to take radioactive waste in 1986 were discussed at County, District and Parish levels. Forty six bore holes around the site were used to monitor leakage. No evidence of contamination had been found. Phase three of the site would begin shortly with a life expectancy of about 10 years.

S. Brown assured the meeting that the Government was conducting a genuine consultation exercise and that Drigg's capacity would last until the year 2050.

Residents expressed their concerns about the present level of radioactive waste, the standards of its monitoring and the apparent lack of consultation in 1985/6. Councillor Bradford promised an immediate inquiry.

He thanked all those who asked and answered questions, reminded residents of the petitions circulating and urged those with strong views to write to the Department of the Environment. Meeting ended at 9.45pm.