



West Midlands

CAMPAIGN FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Mailing

July – August 2022

WM Pension Fund – disinvest from nuclear weapons!

At our recent WMCND zoom meeting, Paul McGowan told us about the campaign coordinated now for over a decade by the Coventry Justice and Peace group. **This is the campaign to persuade West Midlands councils to disinvest their pension funds from nuclear weapons firms.**

The West Midlands Pensions Fund covers seven district councils – Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell., Solihull, Walsall, Wolverhampton. It invests in companies involved not only in the arms trade but in the nuclear industry. In Coventry, the group engaged with the Council against the background of Coventry as a “City of Peace and Reconciliation” and also a “City of Sanctuary” but found that what we think are clearly bad and reprehensible activities are not always seen that way by the committee. Recent information shows investments in BAE Systems (missiles), General Dynamics (submarines), Honeywell (warheads) and Northrop Grumman (Trident), among others.



Six of the seven councils have one representative on the Pensions Committee; Wolverhampton, the administering authority, has ten. Unite, Unison and GMB also send observers to the meetings. In the past, the Coventry campaign group had some success (after a few years) in persuading councils to disinvest in cluster munitions when the Committee, after deciding that they had exhausted all procedures for attempting to persuade the firm to change its practices, decided to pull out of these investments.

WMCND can help put pressure on the Pensions Committee in regard to companies known to be involved in the production of nuclear weapons. 2019 figures show that WM Pension Fund invested over £100 million in such companies. There is a “moral and ethical” clause within the Pension Fund’s constitution which we could refer to in our campaigning.

We hope that WMCND members will take this up Letters can be sent not just to committee members but to the whole council and to ward councillors. We can write as Council Tax payers even if we are not in receipt of Council pensions, referring to the lack of accountability between the Council and the representative on the Pensions Fund. **Please ask your representative to provide you with the most recent Annual Statement of Equity Holdings.**

For details of committee membership, have a look at <https://www.wmpfonline.com/pensionscommittee> . For information about which companies are involved in nuclear weapons production, go to <https://www.dontbankonthebomb.com/> and for information about the Coventry group’s campaigning work, contact Paul McGowan at pbmcgowan@hotmail.com .

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BITS FROM ABROAD

LATEST FROM TPNW

Action plan adopted at the first Meeting of States Parties on 23rd June. Learn more here: <https://bit.ly/3QHNF21>

Russia has announced its withdrawal from a nuclear safety program in the Arctic region, furthering concerns experts have raised about a new period of heightened nuclear risks. Representatives of Russian state nuclear agency Rosatom said Norway would no longer be welcome to participate in radiation safety projects the Nordic country had helped fund. The move closes nearly three decades of a bilateral partnership to deal with nuclear safety in the aftermath of the Cold War.

Newsweek 2nd June 2022

<https://bit.ly/3O7BOYT>

South Korea: North Korea's growing nuclear capabilities and doubts over US defence commitments are raising support for the South to have its own atomic weapon.

Al Jazeera, 3rd June 2022

<https://bit.ly/3QhQF4U>

The headlines like this one from The Wall Street Journal are ominous - U.N. Says **Iran** Has Enough Uranium to Produce Nuclear Weapon - and it comes as negotiators continue to struggle to restart the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the nuclear deal that was struck with Iran in 2015 and which the Trump administration pulled out of three years later.

NPR 4th June 2022

<https://n.pr/3Qdt7OB>

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities have joined with campaign groups opposed to nuclear weapons in calling on the British Foreign Secretary to ensure that the UK is represented at the forthcoming nuclear treaty ban conference to be held later this month in Vienna. Sixty-one member states of the United Nations have so far signed and ratified the **UN Treaty** on the Prevention of Nuclear Weapons.

NFLA 8th June 2022

<https://bit.ly/3tueoVZ>

FROM THE MEDIA

Among the diplomats and parliamentarians travelling to Vienna for the First meeting of States Party (FMSP) to discuss the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), is SNP MSP Bill Kidd.

The National 14th June 2022

<https://bit.ly/3xYxRrX>

The global nuclear arsenal is expected to grow in the coming years for the first time since the cold war, and the risk of such weapons being used is the greatest in decades, a leading conflict and armaments thinktank says. Russia's invasion of Ukraine and western support for Kyiv has heightened tensions among the world's nine nuclear-armed states, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sipri) thinktank said in a new set of research. While the number of nuclear weapons fell slightly between January 2021 and January 2022, Sipri said that unless immediate action was taken by the nuclear powers, global inventories of warheads could soon begin rising for the first time in decades.

Guardian 13th June 2022

<https://bit.ly/39GKQxr>

Iran is "dangerously" close to finishing its nuclear weapons programme and will soon get its hand on a bomb unless the West stands up to the regime, Israel's prime minister has told The Telegraph. As Israeli officials said Western allies were "waking up" to the threat of Iran becoming a nuclear power, Naftali Bennett called on Britain to keep up the pressure on Tehran's leaders. "Iran is enriching uranium at an unprecedented rate and moving dangerously close to getting their hands on nuclear weapons," Mr Bennett told The Telegraph this week.

Telegraph 11th June 2022

<https://bit.ly/3y0fxao>

China to be KICKED OUT of UK nuclear project in £20bn deal to 'protect national security'.

Express 15th June 2022

<https://bit.ly/3OoMWAV>

TRIDENT AND RELATED NEWS

Voters in Scotland want to retain the Trident nuclear deterrent on the Clyde if the country votes for independence, a poll has found. Removing the weapons has been a key argument for Scotland leaving the UK, with slogans such as "bairns not bombs" in SNP campaign literature. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has brought a renewed focus on defence and security, and research by YouGov for The Times found that 45 % of people are in favour of keeping the submarines in the event of a "yes" vote, with 34% opposed and 21% undecided.

Times 26th May 2022

<https://bit.ly/3QAbEAm>

Police have arrested three people during a human blockade protest outside the Clyde UK nuclear weapons base in Scotland. Demonstrators refused to move after lying on the road as anti-nuclear activists stepped up a protest near RNAD Coulport.

The Herald, 13th June 2022

<https://bit.ly/3tLlhSS>

(From Barrow and Furness MP Simon Fell): Dreadnought is now laid up in Rosyth for decommissioning while her successor in name is being put together in the shipyard, entering service in the early 2030s. Many people have put it to me over the last few months that Barrow should have a lasting monument to its boat-building heritage in town. I can't say that I disagree. So I've recently spoken to the Defence Secretary and also the Chief Executive of the Submarine Delivery Agency about liberating HMS Dreadnought from Rosyth and floating her back to her home in Barrow. Neither objected and so, while there are many hurdles to overcome, I hope that we might have taken the first step towards bringing Dreadnought home for the community to enjoy.

NE Evening Mail 6th June 2022

<https://bit.ly/3QpniOI>

Read the latest CND national magazine here:

<https://bit.ly/3N866dc>

NUCLEAR POWER

A Highland councillor from Caithness has resigned from the local authority's independent group – citing the SNP's opposition to nuclear power as his main reason for doing so. Matthew Reiss, an independent member of Highland Council since 2013 and re-elected this month, says he disagrees profoundly with local MSP Maree Todd's stance on Dounreay. Ms Todd has said that Scotland must look to "safe, sustainable and cost-effective" renewable sources rather than nuclear for its future energy supply.

John O'Groat Journal 25th May 2022

<https://bit.ly/3N43vRq>

Anti-nuclear power campaigners have criticised the government for not providing more financial information about how Sizewell C could be funded. The government said applying a new funding model to the firm behind the plant in Suffolk was "significant". It said private investors could be attracted by getting a return up front. Stop Sizewell C said it was impossible to know if it represented value for money.

BBC 15th June 2022

<https://bbc.in/3Qtgsaz>

Concerns have been raised over the reactors at EDF's Hinkley Point C nuclear power station in Somerset, after cracks were detected in some of the company's reactors in France. A new report has now warned that the cracks could cause "nuclear accidents".

New Civil Engineer 16th June 2022

<https://bit.ly/3zOxEkS>

A West Cumbrian firm is working with a pioneering global robotics company to develop technology for sorting nuclear waste safely. Egremont-based systems integrator Delkia is working on the project with world-renowned Japanese company Kawasaki. The contract involves the development, integration and testing of software to control a robotic arm used in nuclear waste categorisation.

Cumbria Crack 6th June 2022

<https://bit.ly/3QyqvLy>

What's On

July – August 2022

The next **Mailing** is due to be sent out at the end of August.

The next ACG meeting will be held by Zoom on Wednesday 13th July at 7 pm. Please e-mail wmcndall@gmail.com for the zoom link.

Regular Events in the Midlands (to the best of our knowledge). Please let us know if there is anything you would like to be included here.

Hereford Peace Council –second Monday of the month, 11.00 – 12.30 at Friends House, King Street, Hereford. Please note:

AGM, Monday July 25th at 11.

Malvern Churches Justice and Peace group Prayers for Peace, 12 noon on 2nd and 4th Monday of the month (except Bank Holidays), Lyttleton Well Prayer Room, Church Street, Great Malvern.

Hiroshima Day

Saturday 6th August 11.00
St Philip's Churchyard
for our annual commemoration
with readings and music



Latest from the Global Network
against Weapons and Nuclear
Power in Space

The Growing Problem of space Junk

<https://bit.ly/3N4KWwL>

Noticeboard

Peace Posters

Hereford Peace Council produces monthly posters on peace topics, to be displayed as widely as possible. The posters are not dated.

The current posters say:

Goodness is disarming - *Arsenale de la Pace*

The answer to nuclear anxiety is to get rid of nuclear weapons. - Elizabeth Renzetti

If you think you could put one up, please contact Jenny, jennywmcnd@gn.apc.org

7pm Tuesday 5th July 7

Stop the War in Ukraine

The Warehouse 54-57 Allison St Bham
B5 5TH

Speakers include Kate Hudson, general secretary of CND, Lindsey German, convenor of StWC, Pete Jackson PCS and a Kashmiri speaker.

For zoom:

Meeting ID number 818 7871 9260
password 223028.

New report from ICAN

For the new report, “**Squandered: 2021 Global Nuclear Weapons**

Spending,” ICAN dug through thousands of pages of contracts and annual reports to show that not just governments are responsible for squandering resources on weapons of mass destruction.

Companies, lobbyists and think tanks are all part of a vicious cycle of spending, lobbying, and more spending on nuclear weapons in 2021.

Read the report here:

<https://bit.ly/3xB0yIK>



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