



Welcome to the summer issue of TUSNE's newsletter.

In this edition we concentrate on two key issues facing the nuclear energy industry at present: The future of the UK's nuclear fuel manufacturing capability at Springfields, and continued government inaction on nuclear new build.

We hope you enjoy reading – please get in touch if you have any comments or questions by email to [info@tusne.org](mailto:info@tusne.org).



## Springfields: don't let this national asset slip away!

### TUSNE says it's time for the Government to support this unique plant

After decades of manufacturing fuel for the UK's power stations, workers at Springfields fear the plant's life is coming to an end. Located in Lancashire, it has a rich heritage that workers and the local community are proud of and keen to maintain. It has made a huge contribution to the UK's energy needs during the past six decades by producing over 12 million fuel elements, and the plant has consistently provided the fuel for upwards of 15% of the UK's electricity generation—fuel that has helped the UK drive down its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Springfields has gained a reputation as a world leader in safety, quality, environmental and technological standards. It is well and truly a unique plant that will be raring to go once the next generation of nuclear reactors are ready to be fired up - high quality manufacturing where precision is paramount!

But the earlier than expected closure of UK's Advanced Gas-cooled Reactor fleet, and the continually delayed progress of decisions on the next generation of nuclear stations, will leave a huge production gap, which workers fear will eventually lead to the closure of the plant. Without Springfields the UK will be dependent on importing its nuclear fuel.

Why is Springfields unique? It's the only facility in the UK that can manufacture nuclear fuel and one of the few in the world. But, because of the uncertainty, the plant's owners have recently announced 120 jobs losses. Workers fear that this measure is only the tip of the iceberg and that the plant will have no future unless there is intervention soon.

### The Workers' View

"We should be looking forward to a really rosy future but instead we have this huge cloud of uncertainty hanging over us. We want people to realise that Springfields has something special to offer. We have technology that can match any in the world. We have enviable productivity levels. We have a highly skilled and flexible workforce, many of whom were trained as apprentices on the site. And we are supported by a well-established supply chain that provides many skilled and specialist jobs and equipment, giving immense value to Lancashire and the North West. As we aim for net zero by 2050 the conditions for fuel manufacturing are nigh on perfect.

"The loss of the plant will inevitably mean a loss of talent in the industry and to the community. It's provided a pipeline of skilled employees through our highly esteemed apprenticeship scheme—2000 plus over the years. It will deprive the UK of a domestic source of nuclear fuel production leaving us completely at the mercy of overseas suppliers in an increasingly uncertain global trading environment.

"Our message is clear—the security and resilience of the UK's energy supply is being put at severe risk and a strong component of our high-value manufacturing base could be lost. We need help and support and we need it now!"

Glyn Russell, Prospect rep at Springfields

### What is Needed?

TUSNE urges the UK Government to give its support to the three-point plan of the Springfields workers:

1. Engage proactively with a nuclear fuels working group, with all relevant stakeholders including the recognised unions, to consider ways in which to secure the future of Springfields Fuels Ltd and the high-quality jobs that it supports.
2. Provide urgent clarity on the future of new build nuclear in the UK, especially the introduction of a feasible funding model, and give tangible commitment to replace and expand nuclear generation.
3. Ensure any future UK nuclear power stations commit to sourcing their fuel from Springfields.

We also urge the UK government to give assurance that the ability to manufacture our own nuclear fuel is a sovereign capability that must be protected. To achieve this end, urgent action is needed to ensure that Springfields remains open.

"It is vital we maintain a full nuclear fuel manufacturing plant at Springfields. It gives us energy security for the future, especially during a time we are aiming for net zero. We must maintain the skills base we have here at Springfields. Without our world-leading highly-skilled workforce, and the huge supply network which support them, we will be reliant on other nations to provide our nuclear fuel. The Government must commit to a new generation of nuclear power stations to provide extra capacity and replace ageing reactors. And we must commit to ensuring those new nuclear power stations source their fuel from Springfields."

Mark Menzies MP, Member for Fylde

## Our Message

The Prime Minister in his *Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution* talks about "a green recovery—with high-skilled high-paid jobs that offer the extra satisfaction of helping make our nation cleaner, greener and more beautiful." Our message is clear—workers at Springfields have been doing that since the 1960s. Let's not throw that valuable resource away now!

**To all parliamentarians of all parties: help us support Springfields to keep control of nuclear fuel manufacturing in the UK—don't let a major source of low carbon fuel slip away from these shores.**

**Stop Press: Westminster Hall debate on UK nuclear fuel manufacturing, Tuesday 7 September 14:30**

## No New Nuclear, No Net Zero

### The Government agrees that new nuclear is needed - so when it comes to the crunch why do they exclude it?

The Prime Minister's *Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution* and last year's *Energy White Paper* contain warm words for nuclear energy, but we are yet to see concrete action to back this up.

TUSNE wrote to Boris Johnson in February explaining our plan and asking him for a meeting to put our case forward, but he is yet to respond. Since then, and more worryingly, the Chancellor has excluded nuclear power from his recent Green Financing Framework. The Framework details how finances will be available to industries that help tackle climate change, biodiversity loss, and other environmental challenges, while at the same time creating green jobs across the UK. No doubt this will have given a real confidence boost to any industry listed. Yet astonishingly, Rishi Sunak has excluded one of the most jobs-rich and environmentally friendly sources of energy with a proven track record—nuclear!

This came as no big surprise to us. Our members and local nuclear communities will tell you that nuclear has never got the credit its deserved for driving down carbon emissions, providing quality employment and keeping the UK's lights on.

TUSNE believes it's crucial that this decision must be reversed **now!** We also think that nuclear must also be included in the UK's upcoming Green Taxonomy which paves the way for the transition to a sustainable economy, creating green jobs and give support to the UK's environmental goals. And furthermore, TUSNE believes the UK should be proud to herald nuclear globally at every opportunity ahead of COP26.

As the Nuclear APPG recently highlighted in its publication *Net Zero Needs Nuclear: A Roadmap to 2024*, we need concrete action soon or the hope of meeting net zero will fast become a pipe dream. As the clock ticks away and nuclear stations start to close, let there be no doubt—before long the energy gap will widen to such an extent it cannot be bridged.

**If the Government is serious about a green recovery, and we dearly hope it is, it needs to take action now! Give nuclear the credit it deserves by securing the investment it needs - to secure thousands of skilled jobs and help provide a green future for generations to come!**

**No nuclear means no net zero!**

## About tusne

We are a campaign group of trade unions that represent many thousands of workers in the civil nuclear sector. We unite around a single aim: the wellbeing of the nuclear industry and its employees. To achieve our goal we work with the industry and politicians of all parties to ensure there is a contribution from nuclear in a low carbon balanced energy mix.

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