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1. Paul Hipwell, chair of <http://www.no-moor-pylons.co.uk/>, announces a key rally on Sunday 24 June at Crook Peak, Somerset, in opposition to the proposed NG 400kV powerline from Hinkley Point. Following NG withdrawing plans for 400kV lines in rural Lincolnshire and volunteering 8km of undergrounding in Suffolk, campaigners in Somerset may be more hopeful, provided people show their objections.

2. A rather sinister prospect of suspending environmental standards in order to hasten new grid extensions is reported in the German WIK newsletter 81 of 20 June:

German Bundestag: Topical debate on the energy network development plan

On 14.06.2012, the transmission system operator's network development plan was discussed in a question-and answer-time in the German Parliament. The Federal Minister of Economics Philipp Rösler (FDP) invited citizens affected by the network expansion to participate in decisions on transmission routes of the new high-voltage power lines. Yet the Minister claimed that, if these decisions are definite, it should not result in a flood of lawsuits. In order to extend the energy network expansion more quickly, Rösler wants to limit the body of legal proceedings to one court (the German Federal Administrative Court) and abrogate environment standards for a certain period of time. He claims that the German Federal Government wants to discuss this temporary environmental laws suspension with the EU Commission.

<http://www.bundestag.de/Mediathek/> (in German)

3. John Smith sends a further update on EON's buy out of his former home near Wolverhampton under their 132kV powerline which appeared to be in breach of ESQCR safety regulations. "Demolition work has just started on our old neighbours' house [No. 39]. I believe they are going to parcel its land with our old property [No. 41]." No.39 was the worst affected, with the conductors within about 2m of the chimney. [See also news252, 257, 266, 279, 300.]

4. Andrew Hope draws attention to the Renewables Grid Initiative Declaration signed this week by National Grid and other ENTSO members. "It appears to encompass strategic, social and environmental issues in a new and progressive way in order to secure better public awareness and understanding of the need for new "integrated" transmission between remote renewable sites throughout the EU.

renewables-grid.eu/uploads/media/EU_Grid_Decl_signed_June_2012.pdf

or to examine mission statement etc www.renewables-grid.eu then go to documents and declaration is top right."

5. The above Grid Declaration is an important European document signed June 2012 by 10 leading NGOs, 9 Transmission System Operators (TSOs, including National

Grid) and 5 Supporters. The document presents a strategic approach to addressing climate change objectives with their implied extension of electricity grids, while seeking to minimise the impact of such grids. This approach follows a “nature conservation” theme. The Declaration includes: “*Visual amenity (landscape) and human health issues are important concerns, but are beyond the scope of this Declaration. Further similar work is likely to cover such aspects.*”

6. The Grid Declaration also calls for building trust through transparency and for regulators to recognise and allocate costs of environmental measures for new grid development. The document sets out a hierarchy of priorities in which the first priority is “*building only infrastructure that is needed to ensure a reliable power system*”. Later there is “*Solutions such as undergrounding transmission lines should be examined thoroughly on a case-by-case basis*” and “*Only after the efforts above have been applied, unavoidable impacts should be compensated for, once recognised within the legal, regulatory and consenting framework*”. Many fine words, very much echoing what Revolt has long advocated. As with NG’s new Approach to undergrounding, the proof of the pudding is yet to come, but these are good signs (NB news353).

7. In April this year the consultation on ENTSO’s Ten Year Network Development Plan (TYNDP, see news351). Andrew Hope draws attention to feedback at <http://tinyurl.com/tyndpfeedback2012>

The Renewables Grid Initiative (RGI, a coalition of NGOs and TSOs) promotes both process and content aims for TYNDP, with more transparency and stakeholder engagement on the one hand and more attention to social and environmental concerns on the other hand.

8. Andrew Hope suggests: “*the strategic implications of connecting some ONSHORE renewables into the proposed integrated peripheral hvdc system should be examined now. In other words the energy is EXPORTED out of remote areas into a system best able to cope with it (non reactive, switchable, modular, expandable etc). The ONSHORE renewable sites should be part of (and designed for) the externalised integrated system.*” Andrew notes that two very pro wind experts propose such solutions for Wales.