

## County Councillors Letter for June 2016

In the wake of the cataclysmic unexpected result of the Referendum everything is now for the foreseeable future uncertain and unpredictable except for the only certainty that EDF will not now be the contractor for the Hinkley Point C nuclear power station. This vote has effectively relieved them of a very difficult decision, and the French Government who is the residual owners of the firm will also be delighted. The resignation indication of the Prime Minister and doubts concerning the future of the Chancellor have thrown the whole structure of this current administration into turmoil, and effectively for the next three months there will be internecine warfare in both the major political Parties to find an acceptable leader and form some level of a focussed cohesive team. It is to be hoped that there is not a two thirds majority in the House of Commons for a motion to hold a new election because this would run contrary to the demands of the 27 remaining states in the EU that the Article 50 letter stating our intention to leave is submitted immediately to trigger the negotiations and conditions over the next 2 years expediting our withdrawal. Initial indications are that these will be very difficult and in some cases punitive, as it has already been stated that an example has to be made of the UK in order to prevent further defections. There are bound to be major changes in departmental cabinet ministers, probably including the Chancellor whose threats of financial disaster and emergency budgets, though mainly now being proved correct, failed to create support for the Remain movement. The enormous majority for "Leave" in Sunderland of over 70%, which pushed the Leave total over the unassailable level of 52%, might well have been better mitigated had the benefits and monies allocated to that area and other parts of the Country from EU funds been highlighted instead. The other huge danger that has inevitably emerged is the very serious threat of another Independence referendum in Scotland, and given the anger in the EU it is very likely that the negotiations now being triggered by Nicola Sturgeon with the Commission will be looked on very favourably and given priority as a desirable revenge on a departing member and the standing ovation given to the Scottish MEP in the EU parliament today would seem to emphasise this possibility. It remains to be seen if the EU's Financial, currency and economic factors will be adequate and favourable enough to justify this referendum, and if they are, the fairly narrow victory for the Stay vote on the last occasion may not be sustained. I think that many that spoke for that position last time may not be doing so in future as it is likely if not certain they voted for the Remain option. It is now vital that there is no drift in decision making, and that the new formations are speedily agreed while the existing Prime Minister works out his notice. The current hiatus must not be allowed to continue as it is fundamentally damaging the credibility of the UK and our perceived financial viability. However on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June one of the front runners to replace David Cameron and leader of the Brexit campaign has indicated that the negotiations will not start for the interregnum period and that the aim is to gain access rights to the Common Market while negotiating methods to restrict the EU rules on immigration. If this is the case then it will put this Country in the same position as Norway

who is already in this arrangement and in return has to accept all the legislation including the freedom of movement of EU citizens, controls and judgements of the EU and pay for that privilege. If this is the final planned outcome then the whole consultative exercise of the Referendum and it's democratically arrived at decision has been a complete waste of money and time, and caused totally unnecessary enormous damage to our internal relationships and international financial and commercial reputations. I think that over the next three months there will have to be a total revision of the whole current administrative programme by the incoming Prime Minister and his new Cabinet. The continuance with hugely expensive but now financially unaffordable projects,, i.e. HS2 , the major road improvement undertakings, airport improvements and to a certain extent our foreign aid budget among others will have to come under serious scrutiny and reconsideration to buttress our available reserves against the inevitable activities of external corporate speculators . It is certain that a very large part of the governmental administration machine will become fully entrained with EU negotiations over the next two years and coping with the widening of our trading partners, including Europe, and very importantly increasing positive market assessments of the nation's financial stability. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of June the three main credit agencies of Standard and Pauls, Moody and Fitch downgraded their assurance assessment of the UK by two grades from the highest AAA via AA+ to AA grade in the light of our £1.7 trillion corporate debt and £1.8 billion unsupported credit card liability. The effect of this is to make potential lenders more dubious to underwrite our current borrowing and /or to increase the interest level they will require for lending, with all the ongoing ramifications for our internal governmental and private monetary stability.

The whole underlying bedrock of our future success in manufacturing, commercial enterprise and infrastructure, is the continuance of our own fully comprehensive integral power supplies with adequate over capacity. A major portion of our present electricity is supplied by France across the Channel link and it is likely that the price of this may well be increased and could in fact cease to be guaranteed as constant input. All our coal powered stations worthy of note have now been closed down in compliance with EU regulations to adhere to the carbon reduction targets and the cancellation of the government's Carbon Capture Project. Now that the die is cast, and the EU embargo on supporting local infrastructure and enterprises through Government funds is effectively dead, a speedy decision is needed in weeks not months, to fund the creation of new nuclear power supplies providing at least up to 30 % of our total national electrical requirement. The first should be Hinkley C where up to £1 billion has already been spent. To this end immediate action has to be taken to recover our past expertise in this field and the now combined Somerset College of Art and Technology (SCAT) and the Bridgwater College have these specialist courses in place and students are being taught now all the relevant subjects including nuclear engineering and specialist concrete construction techniques.

I remain hopeful that if this happens that the workforce that is recruited will be opportunistically now able to employ all ex armed forces personnel that need a job and who are capable of doing it notwithstanding their disabilities. In the interim period the subsidies for electricity created by Energy from Waste (EfW) have to be brought back up to previous levels to encourage investment in these facilities as our residual waste output increases rapidly with population growth. Other methods such as installing area groups of rotating pillar tidal turbine generators in high ebb and flow tidal sites, such as the Severn Estuary and the Bristol Channel, must be considered and funded to cover the shortfall in our current capacity until at the earliest Hinkley C comes on stream in 2028.

This has been the most difficult and worrying monthly letter that I ever written and this is the 5<sup>th</sup> iteration of it. It has not got lots of dates and figures about various future and present care, devolution programmes and other initiatives in the pipeline, because all that pales into total insignificance against the dangers and uncertainties facing this Country now. It is absolutely vital that the rhetoric and recriminations on both sides of the recent campaign should be discarded, and action and firm decisions are taken now before we get into the morass of EU negotiations. The focus has to be on how we can use to maximum advantage what bodes to be at least a month of decisional desert while elected members circle each other for occupancy of number 10 and or leadership offices in Parliament. The last thing we want or need is another General Election though I am sure there will be calls for that too. Above all we do not have the luxury of time to indulge in political semantics , the best brains of all parties must be used to see our way out the maze before us so that the referendum decision is best implemented

Yours

Derek Yeomans

County Councillor for Curry Rivel and Langport.  
District Councillor for Burrow Hill