

Public Benefits for the Many instead of Private Profits for the Few

Suits, clip-boards and an occasional pair of high heels have been seen around town for the past few weeks...an unusual sight. In June 2013 several weeks before the first sightings, orange posters with 'NO' in black letters started appearing around town. By the start of July, windows on Fore Street were festooned with posters and T-shirts proclaiming '95% against IBA'¹ and 'No IBA Plant say 105 local businesses'. Are there really so many local enterprises?²



Buckfastleigh viewed from the allotments

This cesc dispatch consists of an *Idiots' Guide to Planning Inquiries*, book-ended between some facts and comment about the *Buckfastleigh Incinerator Bottom Ash (IBA) Plant Inquiry* and a suggestion about how rural towns like Buckfastleigh might respond to the sudden appearance of *Nasty No-Brainer Planning Applications* in their midst.

On the *IBA Plant* things have probably already gone too far for local comfort. Buckfastleigh now finds itself in a lottery with a one in three chance of losing, perhaps less, because there are three sites 'under planner scrutiny', and suspicions that the other two may be no more than decoys and Buckfastleigh the one the *Projectors* really want. But who knows what the future brings?³

Mr Gilpin is the pantomime villain. For years he has run the small *Whitecleave Quarry* under the motorway on the edge of town just inside the *Dartmoor National Park*. On the side he knocks down jerry-built houses before builders move in to replace them with an improved version...or so it is hoped. His last job in Buckfastleigh was next to the *Woodholme Car Park* where the buses turn around before heading for *Buckfast Abbey* on their way to Newton Abbot.

The *IBA Project* is way above Mr Gilpin's pay-grade, which suggests that he is just a front man...or patsy in conspiracy jargon...selected by *Shadowy Figures Unknown (SFUs)* and instructed to quit his *Q&D* (quarries and demolitions) business and go into *Waste Incinerators*. Whatever the offer, it was clearly something he could not refuse. But I doubt if his *SFU Fellow Travellers* were advised that local residents would 'go to the mattresses'.

The suits and heels are *Planners*...sent to the town to 'Do Democracy' by conducting a *Public Inquiry*. A year ago *Buckfastleigh Town Council* nodded through Gilpin's *Nasty No-Brainer Project (NNBP)*. But when the headmaster of the local junior school raised a storm, the council invited Mr Gilpin to a town meeting to explain himself to the local citizenry. The meeting was packed and went badly for Mr Gilpin. The council's 'nod' became a 'no'...and *Teignbridge District Council* was asked to conduct a poll.

¹ T is for Incinerator, 'B' is for Bottom and 'A' is for Ash. Not the sexiest name for a waste incinerator that burns landfill. Emissions can be scrubbed and effluent disposed of. The *Objectors* are making much of the twenty-nine health reasons for not having an *IBA Plant*. But in theory at least these can all be mitigated or eliminated.

² More of a worry is the transport needed to get toxic waste to and from the *IBA Plant*. To *Objectors* it seems just a little too convenient that the *Projectors* have chosen a location underneath the main trunk road (A38) into the South-West, with the *Buckfastleigh Steam Railway* ending just a one-mile spur line away and *Plymouth Docks* 20 miles away, ready willing and able to load and unload bulk carriers and container ships with waste bound for Buckfastleigh once the *Private Projectors* have obtained the necessary permissions to sign contracts, outsource operations and sell the *IBA Plant* to the highest bidder. It may be the thin end of a very thick wedge. Local people have very little faith in councils or regulators safeguarding their legitimate interests. Although *Teignbridge District Council*, *South Hams District Council*, *Dean Forge Parish Council* and *Devon County Council* are supporting the *Objectors*, notable by its absence is the *Dartmoor National Park Authority*, which has long permitted extensive military operations like firing ranges and military exercises within park limits. Is it paranoid to question the disposal of uranium-depleted shells and other assorted delights of modern warfare from *Purton Down* and elsewhere?

³ See *Limits to Models* by William Shepherd.

‘National needs must be met’, the local citizenry was told, yet the two local *Westminster Conservative MPs* (Mel Stride and Sarah Wollaston) support the *IBA Objectors* and *Devon County Council’s Waste Plan* doesn’t include *Whitecleave Quarry* in its list of appropriate sites for handling waste.



The fact is that some projects are too nasty to gain local consent and, in such cases, *Doing Democracy* bears all the hallmark of *Riding Roughshod*.

But ordinary folks are not stupid. In Buckfastleigh they soon figured out that any benefits would find their way into Mr Gilpin’s coffers and little, if any, would go to the town or its residents. They also suspected that ordinary townfolk would be on the receiving end of any negative impacts...and that there could be plenty of those. They have since listed 29 health hazards.

It is probably fifty years since people in Britain trusted governments...and the English, Scots, Welsh and Irish have a long tradition of resisting impositions from the (self-styled) ‘*Great and the Good*’...be their lordships spiritual or temporal. Strangled southern accents and their peculiar habits never impressed anyone north of Watford outside of a narrow cheer-leading class.

The answer to the question of what’s in it for them is ‘Not a lot!’...though *Projectors* out for a quick buck can’t be expected to be transparent about this.

In any democracy worth its name, *NNBPs* would be booted into touch. So it is not surprising that 95% of local residents voted against the *IBA Plant*.⁴ A short list of *NNBPs* unlikely to obtain consent by honest democratic deliberations would include nuclear plants, nuclear waste dumps, US military bases, gas storage tanks and wind farms. Ordinary people don’t choose to have *NNBPs* in

their own back yard...or upwind of it...on the say-so of city toffs, too arrogant to even devise a deal for locals to haggle over. *Nimbyism*...not in my back yard...is the rational response. So how is local opposition overcome? Two interesting questions arise.

Firstly, why did five percent of the town vote for the *IBA Plant*? What were they thinking? Secondly, how do *NNBPs* ever get consent? Part of the *Quaker* procedure for reaching consensus concerns itself with the first question. They worry about the odd man out...in case he knows something that others don’t. Consensus involves reaching agreement with a dissenting minority...perhaps to agree to differ and to step aside, thereby endorsing the legitimacy of the *Consent Process*.

Where waste incinerators are concerned, the five percent might be super-patriotic, masochistic or ultra-altruistic. But, as we will see later on in the differences between English and Swedish attitudes and approaches to waste incinerators, they might also have a legitimate point which, under further investigation, throws up some alternative (and exciting) possibilities.

However, in the absence of a Japanese-style ‘root-binding’ approach to consent, after much humbug about democracy and large dollops of hypocrisy about due process, *NNBPs* invariably get the go-ahead. Ordinary people have good reason for pessimism when licensed planners hit town. However relentless the local opposition, and in spite of the facts, *NNBPs* are regularly rejected by local residents...and then get built anyway. How is this possible?

One approach, adopted more often than is realized, is to sneak *NNBPs* through by stealth and osmosis...as in ‘out of sight out of mind’ (*OSMO*).⁵ In the case of *NNBPs* probably the best place to do stealth & osmosis (*Plan A*) is on land enclosed during wartime and then retained illegally after the cessation of hostilities.

In Britain there are many tracts of land held by a plethora of different legal bodies...the state, independent agencies of the state, non-government agencies (*NGO*), qua-NGOs, trusts, limited liability partnerships, private corporations, private ‘land-holder’. In the past thousand years this list has been extended far beyond anything the Norman kings could have conceived with their forest law and their legalistic overrides of *English Common Law*.⁶

Otherwise it’s *Plan B*, which takes longer and is fraught with imponderables. Nonetheless there are times when it is the only option available in this free country of ours where lip-service is paid to *Democracy* and it comes accompanied by much lying and cheating at the point of delivery. For *Plan B*, clever lawyers are *de rigor*, corrupt bureaucrats are needed to grease the wheels, and scruple-free businessmen seeking risk-free private gains, are the *sine qua non*.



⁴ These were the results of an official poll taken by *Teignbridge District Council* with a record turnout for the town of 52%.

⁵ Stealth...lying part way along a continuum between secrecy and transparency...is underestimated as a political means to achieve a desired end. Gordon Brown was much criticised by the *Tory Press* for his *Stealth Taxes*. But the tabloids were so busy frothing at the mouth they failed to notice that they were being blind-sided with *Stealth Benefits*. The beneficiaries wisely kept quiet.

⁶ Land in Britain is owned by *The Crown*. Real persons (and even the specially privileged judicial persons) merely ‘hold title’...and this is only held subject to terms and conditions of use on which they have no say.

Adam Smith remarked in *The Wealth of Nations* that it does not take long for a gathering of businessmen to turn into a conspiracy against the public. But this is no more than a special case. Vested interests come in many different shapes and sizes and are not limited to those bearing pound and euro labels. History is the story of competing conspiracies...which is why the charge of *Conspiracy Theorist* is run out (along with that of *Antisemitism*) whenever *Dissent* gets too close to *Truth* for the comfort of our ruling elites.



There are other loyalties: friendships, old-school ties, brotherhoods, sisterhoods, honours & favours, promises of advancement and good old-style back-scratching. Dupes and useful idiots (Lenin's term) are always available to help out.

If all else fails, you *Name 'n Shame*, helped by patriotism cloaked in the rhetoric of national necessity. 'Your consent is for the greater good'; 'You will enjoy the benefits'; 'You'll feel good about yourself'; 'Altruism is better than Selfishness'

All this is really no more than rather poor camouflage for the *Projectors'* real worry, which is to get their pre-contractual private costs picked up by the public purse and to raise enough funds to pay off both the winning and the losing *Projectors* for their trouble...with hundred percent plus bonuses all round.

Phase I: Preparations

To enter the game, you must find yourself a front man: a *Projector*. Don't complicate it. Bribery and corruption take many forms...some legal but most ethically suspect. If you're using decoys, erase any connections between *Projectors*. It looks bad if they all belong to the same Masonic lodge or golf club.

Projectors must expect to come under the scrutiny of *Objectors*. Think *Plausible Deniability* (much used by Ronald Regan). Coaching might be required. Keep

clear of investigative journalists. Hide from public view any hint of *Projectors* being engaged in a criminal conspiracy against the public to subvert the laws passed by *Parliament* to ensure local consent to planning proposals. Shock! Horror! The very thought!

Key to the conspiracy will be for the *Projectors* to reach agreement on front-loading the project with excess profits (called investments or contingencies). These are needed to repay the *Projectors'* pre-contractual expenses. A judicial person...offshore limited liability partnership or something of this ilk...might be set up for *Projectors* at this stage. But let the lawyers look after this. "If I may just have your signature, Sir...here...and here...and there...marked with a cross in pencil. Thank you, Sir" The accountants will move excess profits into this judicial shell operation and take out your brown envelope payment in crisp fifty-euro notes.⁷

Phase II: Planning Inquiry

Always go along to the *Public Inquiry* with some junk science and claim that three or four sites are 'scientifically' suitable for the project.⁸ This is for the record. At the hearing, do your best to cultivate the pretence of democratic consultation and scientific rigour. But don't forget you're a big picture sort of guy.

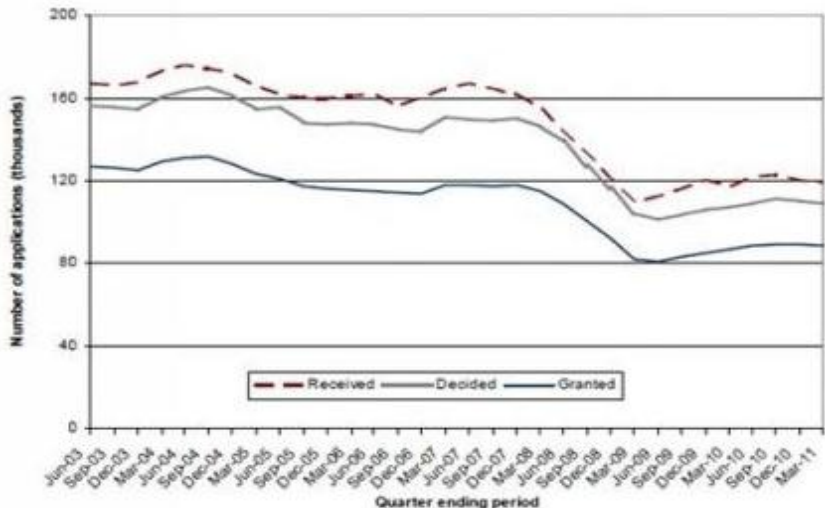
(Below: Planning applications received decided & granted by district authorities)

Leave the detail for the *Young Turks*: the *Best and the Brightest*. They'll be paid well for their efforts...more jobs for the boys...and just love the make-believe nature of the work.

You can fool some of the people all the time and all the people some of the time so there are plenty of potential dupes waiting in the wings, and useful idiots by the couch-load ready to line up in support of *NNBPs*.

Planning Inquiries are cut and dried things. There are two outcomes for *Projector* and *Objector* alike. You win (*Option A*) or lose (*Option B*). But it's not 50:50. but 'heads we win, tails you lose'...democratic at the point the coin is tossed but less so after that.

Option A: You win! Weak local opposition, poor presentation, lousy organization or low-quality professional support has meant that you win and *Objectors* have been given the bum's rush. Doubles all round! Make haste with your *NNBP*. Sink costs quickly to eliminate any possibility of the project being cancelled. Mustn't waste tax-payers' money!



⁷ Manipulating market prices is a popular trick used by *Frackers* and others. See *Wind Failures* by William Shepherd (end note 13).

⁸ The old car salesman's adage is to never ask a customer to buy a car, but to ask if she wants the red one or the blue one.



Option B: Sorry lads! The *Objectors* have won. You picked the short straw. Don't fight it. Yes, I know you have some friends in high places. But keep your powder dry. Draw a line in the sand and move on. Have the good grace to appear magnanimous.

While you're about it, get some consultants to prepare thick reports on each site option. Choose from approved lists of bean counters and wigs in velvet tights.

Let your friends in the press report this as a victory for people power. Leak if you have to. But whatever you do, don't mention that it's a Pyrrhic victory for the *Objectors* because the decision is 'subject to appeal'.

Phase III: The Appeal (Option B1)

Now might be a good time for some serious spending on expensive wigs-in-silk from the *Inns of Court*, because in the asymmetric process of English law you have the right to appeal, but you'll need good legal advice to do so successfully. The bigger the report, the more grounds for reversing any decision. Which of the three reports are you appealing? Are you clear about your site preferences? What are your grounds for appeal? Do you need to play off one expert or consultant against another?

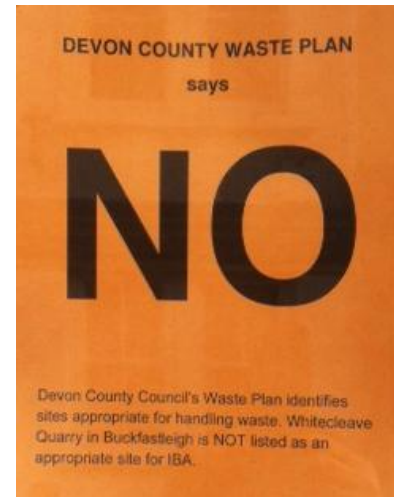
Cheap lawyers won't ask the right questions. They have little experience of strategy and tactics outside of golf club politics. You're going for double and quits from here on, which means you risk throwing good money after bad. Even Mr Gilpin's masters are above their pay grade. Get the right *Appeal Court Judge* and you can reasonably expect your appeal to be successful with objections overturned on appeal at your preferred site...assuming the other two are for decoy and distraction purposes.

Your *NNBP* has got the go-ahead. Make sure that *Counsel* has a private word with the *Judge* so that permission is refused for the *Objectors* to appeal the appeal...for which there is no shortage of legal precedents. Keep up the pressure. Don't slacken the pace. Start the works...its psychological...and grind the opponents into the dust before they get their second winds.

Phase IV: Whitehall Review (Option B2)⁹

So the *Projectors* have lost on appeal. Hmmm! Did you make the mistake of underestimating the *Objectors*? You might need to ask your friends in the police to infiltrate the opposition. On this they have form...illegal form, but form for all that. This is your last shot so make it third time lucky.

There are choices. You can agree to (a) drop the project (unlikely); (b) put the project in moth-balls until economic conditions improve (more likely but can save face); or (c) go for a *Whitehall Review*. The disadvantage of the third option is the cost in time and money. The advantage is that the result is a foregone conclusion. Know what you're doing and you win.



⁹ The 2008 *Planning Act* was introduced to bypass democratic local dis-consent by approving major new infrastructure projects like airports, roads, nuclear power plants and wind farms. It was one of a trilogy of disastrous laws introduced by *Brown's Labour Administration* 'to secure long-term prosperity and quality of life for all'. The *Climate Change Bill* and the *Energy Bill* were the others. In December 2010 *David Cameron's Conservative Administration* (aka as the Coalition) passed the 2010 *Localism Bill*, which pretended to reverse *Labour's Planning Bill*, but actually did little more than retain most of the flawed political principles while changing a few names. Centralization in Britain began under *Thatcher's Conservative Administration* and has gathered pace during the *Major, Blair, Brown & Cameron* years. In recent months the government has been sending signals that the planning laws permit developers to concrete over the countryside against the will of local residents and despite the spirit of the planning acts, provided there is clear political approval ...manifestos, white papers, ministerial directives etc. Hitler ruled Germany in like manner from 1933 to 1945. Typical of the 'legitimizing documentation' is the *National Planning Policy Framework* which 'requires' local councils to promote 'sustainable development'...an incoherent mess of contradictory buzz words which allows *Projectors* and *Zealots* to promote their own special pleadings and private prejudices under the sustainability label. Both the 2008 and 2010 planning acts override local consent. Though often ignored and on occasions overruled by force, for thousands of years, the *Good Old Law* in Britain has been based on common sense, consent and respect for (all) life...from the *Druids* to *Irish Brehon Law* and from the *Anglo-Saxon & Dane Law* to *English Common Law*. Legitimising theft and conquest as private property is an import from *Roman Law*, brought into England by *William the Bastard* in 1066 (probably on the insistence of his backers, the *Papacy* and *Sephardic Jews* expelled from Spain). The *Planning Inspectorate* of the *Major Infrastructure Planning Unit* is an affront to *Magna Carta*...and to the real democratic principles that men and women have been dying for since time immemorial.

As with a *Phase III* victory, there should be no slacking after emerging triumphant from *Phase IV*. Keep up the pressure and get something started. Never assume that the *Shorts & Pony-tails* are not every bit as smart as the *Suits & High Heels*. If your people can buy politicians, so can theirs. Can the opposition be bought off and persuaded to back away quietly? It might be worth a try. How much fight do they have left in them? They know in their hearts that whoever they vote for, the government always gets in.

Get on now! Work to be done! Euros to borrow from the *Banksters* now you have all your legal ducks lined up. Brown envelopes to fill. Business plans to write...and mergers, acquisitions and outsourcing reports to commission from people in London who know about these things. The bean counters and the wigs-in-silk tights will be happy to advise...at a price...theirs. Only taxmen negotiate.

Things Can Only Get Better



the few...at public expense with rewards for professionals.

In Buckfastleigh it would be sensible to build an *IBA Incinerator* with the capacity to service the town's heating and waste disposal needs. Don't assume the same capacity is needed by the two needs and don't make the mistake of seeing the market as the answer. Adopt *IMSES*¹³ design criteria, which minimize, instead of maximizing, *Production-for-Market*. In the 1930s this approach was referred to as *Production-for-Use* by the Americans, and was associated with the *Back to the Land* movement and the writings of the American economist Ralph Borsodi and others.

We have spent enough time on our *Projectors*. Now it's the turn of our poor outgunned *Objectors*. And it's not all doom and gloom.¹⁰ There are ways to fight *City Hall* and win.

To start with, change the rules, play on your terms, and engage the enemy at a place and time of your choosing. Attack can be the best form of defence and will put you in with a chance.¹¹

In Sweden waste incinerators are not seen as polluting monstrosities, as in England. There is a reason for the difference. Sweden uses its waste incinerators to fuel their district heating systems, so *Swedish IBA Plants* benefit local people.

In England private land holders are the beneficiaries. There is no incentive for local people...although *Projectors* trot out spurious claims of local jobs.¹²

The contrast hints at the possibility of designing an alternative project that delivers public benefits for the many instead of private profit for

¹⁰ There are stirrings of discontent. A former *Home Office* Minister, Nick Herbert, has complained that builders are putting in speculative applications hoping the inspectorate will uphold them. Former *Justice Minister*, Crispin Blunt, remarked that development is designed at the behest of a planning inspector rather than local people. Nicholas Soames has warned that the planning system is at risk of being corrupted by developers and their lobbyists. And Zac Goldsmith, former editor of the *Ecologist* (and now Conservative MP for Richmond), spoke in the *House of Commons* about saving green field sites because 'vast tracts of land are available for development but lying idle.' Mission creep is being allowed to run riot. The cry of 'major new infrastructure projects' is used to justify fast-tracking dubious projects in complete disregard and disrespect of the informed local opinion.

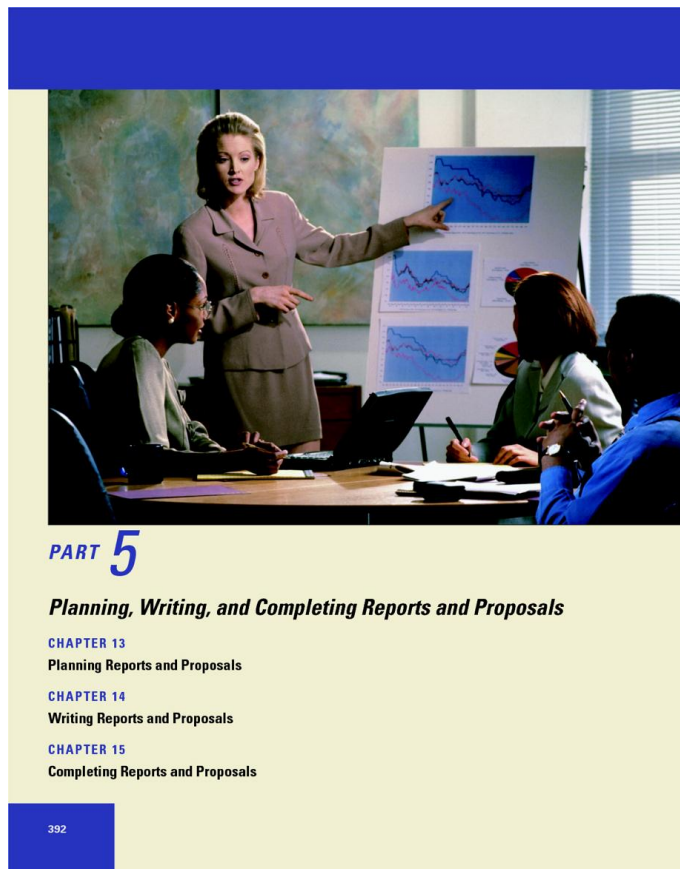
¹¹ During my birthday celebration dinner at the *Seven Stars* in Kingsbridge on 17th July 2013, discussion turned to the contrasting attitudes towards waste incinerators in England and Sweden. The conversation hinted at a possible project in Buckfastleigh.

¹² Wind turbine projectors do much the same by weighting subsidies and incentives towards paying the land-holder on whose hill the windmill is to be sited and the existing electricity suppliers. In England there is the added substantial subsidy when low-priced farm land without planning permission is converted into high-priced development land by the public issue of planning permits.

¹³ In 1981 I co-authored the *IMSES* project proposal with Dr James Sumrall of *Boston University*. We persuaded the Cambridge, Massachusetts based consultancy, *Technology & Economics*, to take our report to their contacts at the *US Energy Department of Energy*. We never heard about the project again so I assumed it had been suppressed by oil-based and grid-based vested interests. However the idea of *Integrated Modular Solar Energy Systems (IMSES)* was sound. The 'solar' in the title refers to sun-derived energy...a definition developed further for the July 2012 *Tesla Conference* in a paper entitled *Energy Sovereignty* (co-authored with Anton Pinschhof). Small towns and villages in New England would select from a range of solar technology modules and as this project was rolled out across the *New England Region*, the pace of infrastructure renewal would speed up. In 5-10 years the 19th century oil-based energy infrastructure would be replaced by a 22nd century infrastructure. Minimizing electricity transfers across town and county lines would be the public objective with transfer taxes becoming progressively harsher. Private businesses would supply the *IMSES* components to a confederation of public energy utilities owned and operated by the townships.

In our *IMSES* report we gave little attention to integrating energy supply with waste incineration, but this would have happened organically if hundreds of town meetings had been free to ponder their real needs and compare notes with their neighbours.¹⁴

The big idea is to recognize that household waste is too narrow a focus. In Sweden since the 1930s, the combustion of domestic waste has been integrated with the production of hot-water to feed into the country's district heating grids.



PART 5

Planning, Writing, and Completing Reports and Proposals

CHAPTER 13

Planning Reports and Proposals

CHAPTER 14

Writing Reports and Proposals

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Completing Reports and Proposals

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Buckfastleigh is compact enough that only short stretches of road would need to be dug up to install the lagged hot water mains for district heating. Disruption would be minimal.

Centrally located multi-dwelling properties would connect up first after being properly insulated and metered. Single dwellings would follow, connecting up when it made sense to owners, tenants and the local district heating utility...a public not-for-profit utility owned and operated by and for the people of Buckfastleigh. Scale is crucial.

In England a large combined power plant was mothballed recently because it couldn't get enough domestic waste to run the plant economically. In Sweden, recycling has been deemed 'too successful'. The result? Domestic waste was no longer economic to use as an incinerator fuel.¹⁵

To economic half-wits, this makes sense. They believe that perfect markets deliver perfect prices. Double half-wits go even further, claiming that if a corporation finds it profitable to do something at a particular price then this will be beneficial to society at large...a variation on the idea that what is good for *General Motors* is good for America.

Well, it isn't! The *Public Good* bears little resemblance to the interest of *GMs* shareholders, despite claims by their PR-people that pension funds are shareholders so dividends are good for all. The distribution of costs and benefits is crucial. Joy and sorrow are best shared fairly. Who? Whom?

Organizations have many stakeholders...individuals, family, community, nation etc. The real question is whether the *Value Added* goes to increase personal possessions of the many and the stock of common wealth used by real people;

or goes to reward improper holders¹⁶ when bankers doll out debt for them to create asset bubbles and speculate on exchange prices.¹⁷ In *Interest & Inflation Free Money*, Margrit Kennedy cites German studies to show that half of German water and energy bills go to pay interest on loans, because of the debt funding typically used by German utilities for long-term capital investment.

District heating tariffs could avoid this by usury-free pricing.¹⁸ Tariffs should also be based on *Blantyre Principles* so that prices reflect those prevailing in a district heating pricing system scaled to the levels of consumption of ordinary households.¹⁹

¹⁴ A few years ago my son replaced his oil-based domestic heating system in Gothenburg, Sweden with wood-pellets from the lumber and paper mills of Northern Sweden. Despite prices being set to the market price of oil instead of to the much lower costs of bagging & delivery sawmill waste, this made overall sense. He had first come across the system when, as a 4-year old, he visited his grandmother's brother in Pennsylvania. *The Society of Brothers* established themselves in Germany in the 1920s as an intentional community, living the *Sermon on the Mount* and bearing witness to Germans and Englishmen living in peace and harmony with each other. By the 1980s there were three communities in upstate New York and two in Pennsylvania. They earned their living in the world with *Community Playthings*, a thriving business that made high-quality wooden equipment for children's nurseries and care homes. The waste products from their workshops, glued together and made into wooden fuel pellets, were fed into their boilers. *The Joyful Community* took common charge of everybody's personal property and you didn't get it back when you left. It was in this way that the *Brothers (& Sisters)* came to own a *Chocolate Factory* on the MIT campus in Cambridge.

¹⁵ Because of its large efficient forestry and paper industrial sector, Sweden could top-up its district heating plants with pellets from sawmills in Northern Sweden. But Sweden's current right-wing *Reinfeldt Administration* which replaced the *Social Democrats* a decade ago...encouraged by Brussels...let loose the private sector on Sweden's 'energy market'. This resulted in waste incinerator fuel being shipped in from overseas. The Swedish waste incinerators were not designed to keep the holds of Chinese container ships and bulk carriers fully-laden on their return trips but to burn Swedish waste. See also *Cox & Robbers* by William Shepherd.

¹⁶ See *The Tawney Legacy* by Peter Etherden which discusses the distinction Professor Tawney drew between *Impropriety (Idle Capital)* and *Working Capital*. Tawney argued for the former to be taxed until the pips squeaked. See also the writings of Silvio Gesell in *The Natural Economic Order* on *Free Land* and *Free Money*.

¹⁷ See R.H.Tawney on the 16th century Tudor laws against usury. Similar laws introduced today would cut financial transactions in the *City of London* by four-fifths in less than a decade, allowing the emergence of a balanced 22nd century British economy.

It would be sensible to funnel the development through a publicly-owned *Buckfastleigh Town Bank*, grounded in the principles outlined by Ellen Brown in her articles about public banking and the *Bank of North Dakota*. Seven year public bonds could be issued by the bank...or the town revert to the tallies²⁰ used to finance cathedral building in the 12th century?

Private banks would have to be banned and local by-laws written to refuse trading licences to any private energy company seeking to sell (dump) electricity for space heating to locals paying a *District Water Tariff*...with boycotts should this bylaw get overturned.



If Buckfastleigh finds itself 'politically incapable' or 'democratically reluctant' to renew the town's energy infrastructure...and this is a real possibility...then Buckfastleigh's movers and shakers could look to outsourcing to meet their needs. There are many ways up a mountain.²¹

Perhaps, as with the *Dartington Estate* in the 1920s, an American heiress could be invited to become *Lady of the Manor of Buckfastleigh*. Or perhaps town development could be outsourced to *Transition Town Totnes*...with competing bids invited from successful Chinese and Brazilian town developers?

This kind of *Local Initiative* would result in towns like Buckfastleigh providing a diversity of models for urban and rural parishes all over the country. The Buckfastleigh Way is not for everyone...and even Buckfastleigh will need to carry out a feasibility study. But the philosophy is what matters, not the detailed design. Others might choose more solar voltaic and heat pump technology in their energy mix; others less. And so on.

Little of this will appeal to the *Centralisers*. The elite *One Percent* live in fear of the mob and will oppose any transfer of power away from the centre. For them there are no limits to the growth in the scale of the nexus of power. Their dream (my nightmare) is a world controlled from a single command post...and political strategy for this emanate from think-tanks on the *Left* and the *Right*.

But even if you don't like *Local Alternatives*, this doesn't mean giving up on *Democracy*. There are always choices. One of them would be a *Centralised Option* for a *National Waste Incinerator Programme*.²² Those who see only anarchy and havoc when subsidiarity holds sway might have a point, though it

invariably the wrong point. The failure of Britain's regulatory framework (in contrast to Germany's, for instance) is due to a poorly designed regulatory system, and not to any inadequacy on the part of local people.

As another example, in tackling the problem of city population growth in the 1930s, Sweden took a different approach²³ to Britain. In new suburbs like Vällingby and Hässelby, west of Stockholm, for instance, district hot water grids were an integral part of infrastructure planning. Similar principles could have been applied to infrastructure renewal in *London Docklands* in the 1980s; in *Sink Estates* all over the country in the 2000s; and west of London in the 2020s when Heathrow is shut down and replaced by a *Canvey Island* or *Thames Estuary Airport*. There are always choices. Big ideas are not the private preserve of big governments.

¹⁸ See *Letter from Wessex* and *Letter from Newgate* by William Franklin.

¹⁹ In 1974 I worked on a *World Bank Study* into the water needs of the *City of Blantyre* in Malawi. It didn't take long to discover that the tariff structure was killing the *Urban Poor* because they couldn't afford the high price for water from stand-pipes. Meanwhile watering gardens and washing beer bottles at the *Carlsberg* brewery...sold by the Danes as a going-concern...were heavily subsidized. As cities grow, the cheap water sources get used up first, so we proposed a new low-price tier for the *Urban Poor* that assumed all households used the same amount of water as stand-pipe users. This *Blantyre Principle* showed that stand-pipe prices were ten times too high. Our advice was ignored and a new pipeline built...powered by electricity from *ESCOM* in South Africa.

²⁰ See *Escape from Pottersville* by Ellen Brown and *Letter from Sherwood Forest* by William Franklin.

²¹ The *European Directive* behind waste recycling probably needs to be challenged. Unlike the rest of Europe, the UK doesn't need to import the European idea of burning domestic waste because it has adequate landfill capacity. With German and Scandinavian levels of recycling...and not by fiddling the recycling figures by sending *Maersk* container ships back to China with our rubbish...our residential waste could be compacted and stored underground in salt- and coal-mines. There are four thousand holes in Blackburn, Lancashire. So now that we know how many holes it takes to fill the Albert Hall there is little excuse.

²² In the 1930s Sweden had a declining population. Fearing that this might be a long-term trend, the government introduced legislation to increase the birth-rate. It also had an immigration problem...from the northern regions and from the countryside into the three southern city regions of Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. The solution Sweden's people's party, the *Social Democrats*, came up with was very different to the top-down *Garden Cities* approach adopted in the South-East of England. The Swedes focussed on upgrading the standard of Swedish housing. The political slogan was *Det Svenska Hemmet* (the *Swedish Home*), and the result was homes fit for heroes. Sweden's architects and town planners went back to basics and designed for light, warmth, size and space. And by sensible innovations in landscape design and building construction, houses were integrated with their environment; people were separated from traffic; schools built within walking and cycling distance; playgrounds provided for children in sight of their parents; and illuminated ski trails laid out a few metres from the home.

²³ See *Letter from Whitehaven* by William Shepherd.