



NO COVANTA INCINERATOR

Press Release 26/09/17

Despite limited notice, lack of advertising and dubious timing - Bedfordshire Against Covanta Incinerator (BACI) was delighted that nearly 400 concerned residents turned out to the Environment Agency's drop-in event last Wednesday about the Covanta Incinerator at Rookery Pit.

The Environment Agency (EA) claimed there was no funds to advertise both the drop-in event - or indeed the 2nd Consultation period which is open now until 23rd October.

BACI remains confused about the Environment Agency's approach to this 'so called' Public Consultation. With a weekday afternoon timing 1pm - 7pm, only 9 days notice and lack of EA advertising - last week's drop-in event would not appear to be the actions of an organisation 'wanting' to consult with the public.

The event itself would appear to be a just a tick-box situation. All attempts were made to 'consult' with as few members of the public. The event was marked at the venue as 'Community Drop-In' - no mention of either Covanta or Incinerator or even Waste and the marketing posters used show a graphic of lovely white building with no chimney and were clearly not representative of an incinerator.

BACI was told the event had 11 EA representatives in attendance. However - BACI noted that only 3 of the 11 were from the National Permitting Service - who are the 'team' actually responsible for the draft permit and decision document.

BACI representatives and volunteers were on hand at the event to discuss and survey the public's experience of the event.

The results of the survey and comments show that the local residents were not convinced by the Environment Agency's responses to the nearly 2,000 objections to the 1st Consultation and were even less impressed by the EA representatives and the lack of meaningful interaction at the event itself.

The event was clearly understaffed with many residents not able to even speak to a representative at all. Residents also found the stock answer by the EA representatives of 'it is in the documentation' extremely unhelpful. One of the top concerns of local residents is the environmental impact of the traffic of nearly 600 HGV movements a day - however - the EA maintains that they have nothing to do with this aspect despite the fact that the 600 movements will be using village lanes and going directly past a sixth form college.

Residents were also insulted by the inclusion of a map on the limited display that was nearly 10 years old. Newer residents to the area were astonished that map did not even resemble the area that they know. This was expressed to BACI as a total vote of no confidence in the EA and their ability to make decisions based on current information.

The only literature available to takeaway was a small handout - which on closer inspection contained misleading information which does not represent the past and present situation of the Rookery Pit Incinerator - namely:- 1) the principal waste stream 2) the Authority responsible for the planning decision made.

The majority of residents left the event feeling that it was a 'done deal'. The terminology on the documentation that the EA was 'minded' to issue a permit also did not seem very consultative.

BACI volunteers also observed a number of residents still arriving at the venue past 7pm trying to be involved but let down by the chosen timing of the event.

Although the EA are clearly doing everything in their power to make this 2nd Consultation a lost cause - BACI would urge residents to still respond to the Consultation and get more information at www.bedsagainstincinerator.com, join the facebook group or follow on twitter [@BedsACI](https://twitter.com/BedsACI)

BACI (Bedfordshire Against Covanta Incinerator) was formed in 2016 to oppose the Covanta Incinerator at Rookery Pit South and has no political affiliations.