



FFBRA NEWSLETTER NUMBER FOUR

Dated 7 November 2013

FUTURE EVENTS IN BALCOMBE

Balcombe Parish Council Surgery

Saturday Bramble Hall 9 November 10.00 till 11.00

This is the first surgery of the BPC. A great chance to ask questions and put your views forward. Only once a month so please don't miss this opportunity on Saturday. For more information see <http://balcombeparishcouncil.com/>

FFBRA Polling Day

Saturday 16 November 11.00 am to 1.00 pm Bramble Hall.

Come and vote for FFBRA committee members.

Cuadrilla Planning Application

Currently the date we expect this will be made public is 21 November.

Beyond Balcombe

Since this is a quiet week (at least in Sussex) why not make time to inform friends beyond Balcombe about the dangers of fracking and which companies already owns the rights to drill in their area. Here is a link https://www.foe.co.uk/help_us_pull_plug_fracking_40282.html to an excellent map showing all the areas licensed for exploratory drilling in England (and the name of the company who owns the license). It even has a post code locator. Have a look at the map, find areas affected where you know people. Email them with the link to the map and details. Then call them and explain that unconventional oil and gas drilling will be coming to their area and ask them what they know about it.

NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR OUR MEMBERS

Cuadrilla has Signed a Thirty Year Lease for the Lower Stumble Site

30 year lease was signed between the Balcombe Estate and Cuadrilla Resources Limited on the 25 September 2013 and this lease will run from 26/9/2013 to 25/9/2043. This information was discovered through the diligent work of one of our members who has been monitoring the Land Registry not from a press release or statement from either party to the lease.

Kirdford and Wisborough Green Parish Council

Nov 5 The Parish Council voted unanimously to reject the application by Celtique Energie for exploratory drilling. For more information go to <http://www.no-drilling.co.uk/blog/press-release-unanimous.html>.

This is the fifth parish council in the South to vote to reject planning applications from Oil and Gas companies in a month. The others are Eythorne, Tilmanstone, Guston and Shepherdswell. Good news.

Polling Day for FFBRA Committee Members 16 November 2013

You will receive a FFBRA card and details of nominees through your mail box by Tuesday 12 November. If you have not received it, please email members@frackfreebalcombe.co.uk or ring 01444 818 329.

- Take your FFBRA card to the “polling office” in Bramble Hall on Saturday 16 between 11am and 1pm.
- Hand over your FFBRA card and this allows you to put your hand into a box and pull out the voting card with a list of candidates.
- Go somewhere private in the room.
- Select nine candidates on the Voting Card that you want to have represent you on the committee, by marking a cross against their names, and post it into the letterbox provided
- The letterbox is opened witnessed by as many members as would like to be present (minimum of two), who then collate the results.

Alternatively you can do a postal vote. You need to have posted your ballot papers back by first class post to Sue Taylor, Little Meadows, Stockcroft Road, Balcombe RH17 6LL by 14 November. Postal voting does not provide any secrecy.

Report on the Coffee Morning and Exhibition 2 November

Mike Hill's presentation on Regulating the Fracking Industry was well received and there were many requests for copies of his presentation.

FFBRA made £26 from the cakes and teas – which this week did not cover the £40 Hall hire.

Planning tips and tricks from the perspective of an exploratory oil/gas company were on display. This was the subject of some discussion and so they have been reproduced below in this week's newsletter.

David Smythe Presentation as a DVD

Finally we have cracked turning a Powerpoint presentation into a DVD and we will now be able to provide a copy of David Smythe's Powerpoint presentation as a DVD for £1 (to cover the cost of production) to anyone interested in having a copy.

US Frackmaster Visits Balcombe

Craig Faulkner (known as the Frackmaster), CEO of a large US fracking company and also owner of a hedge fund that invests in royalty payments from oil/gas companies fracking came to visit Balcombe on the 6 November. He was filmed and interviewed by the BBC South in the Balcombe Tea Room and at the Lower Stumble site.

Mr Faulkner was shown the Lower Stumble drill site by the BBC interviewer and he described it as “a nice wide open space”. Very disturbing.

When interviewed by BBC South Mr Faulkner made some revealing comments about the earthquakes in Lancashire caused by Cuadrilla. He said it was a mistake and that Cuadrilla should not have been fracking near faults. (He obviously had not been informed that the geology of the Weald is full of faults).

He also stated that contamination of aquifers was not possible because the horizontal drilling takes place at depth of three to four thousand metres below the aquifer. This is four times further from the aquifer than in the case of Lower Stumble. Again he obviously had not been briefed properly.

Because of these blunders his statements in this interview could be used as an argument against fracking in the High Weald. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-24837828>.

Planning Application Tips and Tricks for Onshore Gas Companies

Number One

Never mention the word “fracking” in your planning application.

Even if the geology is unconventional oil or gas shale, never, never use the “f” word.

This has two benefits

1. Some people will actually believe you will not “frack” and therefore not object to the application.
2. Some people will use the “f” word in their objections because they have worked out that “fracking” is necessary to make the drilling economically viable. Their objections will be deemed inadmissible because they have mentioned something not in your application

Number Two

Start with an application for an exploratory bore hole. This will make some people believe that this is somehow less harmful and that the “drilling” process is only temporary and will only last for a short period of time. Once this is achieved, then apply to “flow test”. A third application to “frack” will then be easier to obtain because of the precedence of drilling in the area.

Number Three

Get your exploratory hole completed. Samples tested so that your backers are confident of the viability of the site. Then if you are surrounded by land not leased by yourselves, wait until the new rules (expected early next year) come into force 2014 that will allow you to horizontally drill under other people’s land without requiring their permission.

Number Four

Always make your drill pad less than one hectare that way you don’t need to have an environmental impact assessment (EIA). If you need more than one hectare have a cluster of pads all less than one hectare each.

Number Five

Make sure you apply for new planning application before the expiration of the old one so you can carry forward your permits (such as radio active waste disposal permits etc.). This is important. If you don’t do that you will have to apply for new permits with your new application which would involve more consultations with locals and give them more time to work out what is going on.

Number Six

When applying for planning try and time the application so that the public consultation period straddles a major holiday period (for example Xmas to New Year). This will reduce the amount of time the public have to review the application and send in their objections. Also the Council offices will be closed for part of the consultation period so the locals will not be able to call and get advice.

Is this why Cuadrilla are delaying sending WSCC the information they need to valid their planning application? What can we do about it?

Number Seven

If a County Council looks as though they may support the locals in their objections to your application, make sure that you use an expensive legal team and threaten the County Council with large costs if they lose when you take your application to appeal. This can be very effective in making them back down.

Breaking News – Just Received from EKAF (East Kent against Fracking)

“I'm the bearer of extremely good tidings - Coastal Oil and Gas Ltd have now withdrawn their applications to drill three exploratory boreholes in Shepherdswell, Guston and Tilmanstone! They say they will re-submit applications, but, if they do, we'll be ready for them this time with all we've learnt from the fight this time. It's also likely that they're only saying this to save face and keep investors happy.” From Pat Marsh, Secretary, EKAF

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