



FFBRA NEWSLETTER NUMBER FIVE

FUTURE EVENTS

In Balcombe

Polling Day for FFBRA Committee Members

Saturday 16 November at 4.00 p.m. to 6.00 in Bramble Hall, Balcombe

The count will be 6.00 to 7.00 and the results announced immediately.

Please do take the opportunity to vote for your choice to represent you on the committee.

Beyond Balcombe

Presentation in Bath on Sunday 17th November

Ian Crane: This will be the last talk by Ian this year. He is an excellent speaker and very knowledgeable. This event will concentrate on the specific threat posed to Bath by fracking so if you know anyone who lives in that area, please let them know about this event. Free admission with a suggested donation of £5.

7.00pm - Sunday 17th November 2013

New Oriel Hall, Brooleaze Buildings, Larkhall, Bath, BA1 6RA

Debate in London on Monday 18th November.

Mike Hill: Fracking - the facts, the impacts & how to protect the environment

Note: Café Diplo is a forum for debate on contemporary international issues, held on selected Monday evenings at [the Gallery](#). The Cafe talks are given by invited speakers and start at 18:45 and end around 20:30 giving plenty of time for questions and lively audience participation.

Tickets on the door. Admission £3.00

It is easy to get to Café Diplo from Balcombe by train. It is near Farringdon station (a direct main line connection from Balcombe station).

The Gallery, 77 Cowcross Street, London, EC1M 6EJ

For more information go to

<http://www.mondediplofriends.org.uk/2013/fracking-facts-impacts-how-protect-environment>.

NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR OUR MEMBERS

Report on the first Balcombe Parish Council Surgery

This was held on Saturday 9 November. The next one will be Saturday December 7th

The format was two desks (one manned by Katherine Daniel and Carol Jarvest and the other by Botts Bottomley and Alison Stevenson).

Parishioners sat opposite them at their desk and could ask questions. Tea and coffee was available. I would estimate about eight people attended (but I was not there for the whole hour so there might have been more).

It was useful. I was able to enter into a dialogue and ask more than would have been possible in rigid format of a Parish Council meeting.

I asked took the opportunity to ask about the Neighbourhood Plan for Balcombe.

The Neighbourhood Plan is scheduled for completion by May 2014. While we do not have one, the parish is susceptible to “hostile” (i.e. not supported by the community) large scale development.

The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group headed by Katherine Daniel needs more volunteers. So if you would like to get involved, then contact Katherine Daniel or Rosemary Robertson for more information.

I was told by Katherine that the Balcombe plan can include clauses like “we don’t want oil/ exploration in the village”. This does not have any legal weight while the government are supporting fracking as a national policy, however it would carry some weight as a statement of local views.

The Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan can’t be accepted without the agreement of the village and so it is important we make known our views now.

Currently the plan involves 20 houses being built over 20 years (very modest development) and Katherine and the others on the working group are in discussion with the two main landowners (Simon Greenwood and Julian Smith) as to possible sites.

The plan does not just cover development. It also includes what the village wants to protect and so, for example, it includes the need for a local shop and public transport, and special views.

I know many of you are consumed by the battle to prevent oil and gas drilling but I do hope some members of FFBRA will contact Katherine and become part of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group. You will be welcomed by Katherine and this is an important local Working Group that needs supporting.

Planning Application from Cuadrilla

The application was made by Cuadrilla to WSCC on the 26 September. Cuadrilla and WSCC have been in dialogue about the content since that date. The public cannot see the application until this validation process is completed. It is expected that the application from Cuadrilla to return to “flow test” will be made public on the 25 November.

One of our members received this email today from Mike Elkington, Strategic Planning Manager, Communities Commissioning Directorate, West Sussex County Council, who is dealing with the planning application.

‘No decision has been made about the length of the consultation period. However, the Parish Council has suggested a minimum of five weeks. In addition, we are always mindful of the possibility that members of the public, and others, may not want/be able to look at planning documents over the Christmas/New Year fortnight (and other holiday periods). Accordingly, we will do our best to be accommodating whilst seeking to move towards determination of the application at the earliest appropriate date.’

Flow Testing compared to “fracking”

“Flow testing” may sound innocuous compared to “fracking” but the difference is minor. One of our members sent in this comment which makes an important point about the fact that the process is the same for “flow testing” and “fracking”; it is just that the pressure applied in the case of “flow testing” is slightly lower.

‘Earlier this summer I asked Cuadrilla for information about their exploration programme in Balcombe. I was told that they intended to drill down vertically to a depth of about 3000 feet and then from a shallower level they would drill out horizontally for about 1500 feet. They would then pressurise the horizontal bore to about 3000 pounds per sq. inch (about 100 times the pressure in a car tyre). This means that flow testing will use all the same high fluid volumes, all the same chemicals as in fracking but at a slightly lower pressure. The difference between flow testing and fracking is very small.’

Election of FFBRA Committee

This will take place on Saturday 16 November. We are extremely lucky to have 14 great candidates for 9 places on the committee.

You should by now have received your polling card and detail of candidates for the FFBRA committee. If you have not received them, please call 01444 819 329.

Either post your response through my letter box (Little Meadows, Stockcroft Road, RH17 6LL) or come to Bramble Hall on Saturday to vote between 4.00 and 6.00 pm. Counting will take place between 6.00 and 7.00 pm and the results will be announced immediately after the count is completed.

Sue Taylor

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