



FFBRA NEWSLETTER NUMBER TWENTY

This newsletter will deal exclusively with Cuadrilla's current planning application.

The last FFBRA Drop In Meeting before the end of the consultation period will be on Saturday 1 March at Bramble Hall 11 am to 1 pm. If you have any questions or would like more information, please come along. We welcome everyone.

How to Object to Cuadrilla's Application

Their application is described as being for "temporary permission for exploration and appraisal comprising the flow testing and monitoring of the existing hydrocarbon lateral borehole along with site security fencing, the provision of an enclosed testing flare and site restoration" at the Lower Stumble site in Balcombe.

You can object in one of three ways

1) Online via their planning portal.

<http://buildings.westsussex.gov.uk/ePlanningOPS/loadFullDetails.do?apId=1634>

2) In an email to: planning.applications@westsussex.gov.uk

Make sure you quote the reference number: **WSCC/005/14/BA**

3) Written letter or postcard to: County Planning, West Sussex County Council, County Hall, Chichester, PO19 1RH

Allow time for the post to reach WSCC by 13 March and make sure you quote the reference number: **WSCC/005/14/BA**

All objections must reach WSCC by noon 13 March 2014

GUIDANCE

Your objection needs to be an individual and personalised document. You may wish to consider some of the points listed below. We do not pretend to suggest this is a comprehensive list so please expand as you wish.

Please remember that your objection has to be site specific.

Recent changes to planning laws have seriously restricted what we are allowed to object to, this article is here to help you make your objection count.

Anyone can object. You don't need to live in Balcombe so please pass this information on to your friends and family and urge them to send in an objection.

Do not mention

- Fracking
- House Prices
- Government Energy Policies

Do mention any of these:

Pollution

The bore hole has been drilled through an aquifer. The horizontal well path runs directly under the aquifer and a stream. There are three geological faults near the well site. This includes the Paddockhurst Park Fault, through which the borehole has been drilled. Faults act as conduits allowing fluids to rise up through the strata.

At this flow-testing stage, 'acid washing' will be employed, using a 10% solution of hydrochloric acid. This is to dissolve and remove any residual drilling mud from the wellbore and clean the face of the limestone rock immediately adjacent to the horizontal well. Contaminated waste water from the well can find its way up to the surface, through faults, and into the aquifer.

The well would eventually need to be capped. However, these caps have a high failure rate, so when Cuadrilla are long gone, there will still be a bore hole with toxic liquids and gases continually trying to escape.

Water

- Water is a precious resource. The site is close to the Ardingly reservoir. Streams are close to the site that flow to the River Ouse (less than 1 km south)
- The River Ouse flows down to the abstraction points for Balcombe's water supply downstream at Barcombe, north-east of Lewes. It is also hydraulically connected to the Ardingly reservoir which provides water to many households in Sussex
- There is pollution risk to the aquifer through which the borehole passes. The distance between the uncased lateral borehole and the base layer of the aquifer is just over 500 metres
- Given the faults that already exist around the drill site, and the pathways created in the underground layers by the acid, this toxic liquid risks contaminating the aquifer.
- If the casing of the borehole fails, the fluid will leak into the underground strata anyway. Well-casings usually fail. It's just a question of when.

Toxic Waste Disposal

- The waste fluid from the flow-testing will be contaminated with heavy metals and naturally occurring radioactive materials (NORM) from underground layers

- Some of the toxic waste will be returned to the surface and will be transported away for disposal. Cuadrilla does not say where it will be taken to for processing.
- The remainder will remain in the ground.
- The NORM and waste will be taken by HGV through Balcombe village to the M23. NORM can remain onsite for 3 months, therefore will they be removed before the expiration of the 6 month period of Cuadrilla planning application?

Noise

- Day and night there will be constant noise, as a result of a mixture of industrial diesel generators, pumps, flaring and vehicles.
- The noise from the flaring is excluded from the noise assessment. The noise from flaring can be very loud.
- Cuadrilla broke the noise limits set as a condition of their planning permission last summer
- A village resident was forced to purchase sound equipment to monitor these breaches.
- There was little on-site regulation of noise (or anything else) by West Sussex County Council or the Environment Agency. WSCC admitted they “did not have either the trained staff or equipment to undertake its own monitoring”.
- Noise will be more noticeable during the normal stillness of night and in the early dawn hours. Prevailing winds will impact on the noise pollution.
- Cuadrilla’s projected noise levels do not take into account wind direction and the natural contours of the land.
- Noise has a serious impact on our lives and the peace of the village.

Air

- The application allows for flaring of gas, which can result in a number of toxic chemicals being released into the atmosphere. There is clearly a potential danger to health, particularly from high levels of carcinogenic polyaromatic hydrocarbons, sulphur dioxide and soot particles.
- There are no emission limits in the permits for the mostly toxic gases likely to come from flaring. The air will be spot sampled for a selected few chemicals by - you guessed it Cuadrilla - who lost the baseline air samples taken at the site before 11th September over the summer.
- Heavy goods vehicle traffic and diesel generator emissions will impact on local air quality. The prevailing wind will take airborne pollutants away from the site towards the centre of the village.
- Many emissions will not be measured at all.

Traffic, Route and Roads

The B2036 is a country road that runs through part of the village of Balcombe. It passes many houses, and, importantly, the Balcombe Primary School. As we have already seen from the increased HGV traffic last summer, the road surface is not suited to very heavy

loads. It has already deteriorated due to the trucks that used the road to and from the drilling site last summer.

Traffic Volume and Accident Risk

- Significant increase in the volume of HGV traffic on the B2036, increasing traffic noise, pollution and probable traffic delays. Last summer Cuadrilla's trucks drove past the primary school at times when children were being dropped off or collected. They broke their promise to avoid these times.
- If there should be an accident as an HGV passes the school, the children and staff would be at risk from toxic chemicals.

Wildlife and Environment

- There is ancient woodland to the north and southeast of the drill site and a stream only 25 metres to the southeast of the drill site.
- There are a large number of birds in the vicinity of the site.
- A bat survey conducted after drilling had started recorded five types of bats. The report recommended changing the lighting on the site to avoid spillage of light into the surrounding woodlands. This implies Cuadrilla's lighting already disturbed the bats during the survey and so Cuadrilla's data gathered while they were on site in the summer cannot provide a baseline.
- Under current legislation, it is an offence to 'disturb a bat in a way that would affect its ability to survive, breed or rear young or affect the local distribution and abundance of the species, or to damage or destroy a roost.'

Village Life

- Cuadrilla has caused social disruption and division in the community.
- This industrialisation could change our villages and West Sussex as a county for the worse forever.

What if something goes wrong?

Cuadrilla's track record speaks for itself. They have admitted they caused earthquakes in Lancashire and that they continued to drill after they had damaged the well casing. Drilling for hydro-carbons is a risky business and accidents can happen. Nobody can offer a 100% guarantee that there will be no leaks or contamination. In the event of a disaster you can bet that responsibility will be batted around between the landowner, Cuadrilla and WSCC. No reassurances has been given as to which party will accept ultimate responsibility or that adequate liability insurance cover has been provided for.

Cuadrilla Has No Social License to be in Balcombe

Cuadrilla obtained planning permission in 2010 to drill at Lower Stumble without the knowledge of the village. This permission expired in 2013. Cuadrilla are seeking permission to return. This time the views of the village must be listened to. The recent Balcombe Parish Council Poll showed that the majority of the villagers do not want Cuadrilla (or any other oil/gas company) in their village.

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