



FFBRA NEWSLETTER NUMBER TWENTY SIX

NEWS FOR OUR MEMBERS

WSCC Planning Committee voted against Balcombe 12- 1 on the 29th April

FFBRA is consulting with lawyers as to next steps to protect Balcombe. The fight goes on across Sussex to prevent our villages and the countryside from being overrun by the oil industry. We must all remember that it is the thousands of production wells that will be the real disaster and most of the residents of Sussex are still unaware that the oil industry intends to arrive at a field near them.

The councillors who voted against Balcombe were

- Heidi Brunsdon (Chairman) (Conservative) – Imberdown
- Janet Mockridge (Conservative) - Southwick
- Andrew Barrett-Miles (Conservative) – Burgess Hill Town
- Duncan Crow (Conservative) – Tilgate & Furnace Green
- Simon Oakley (Conservative) – Chichester South
- Liz Kitchen (Conservative) – Warnham and Rusper
- Jeremy Hunt (Conservative) – Chichester North
- Sujan Wickremaratchi (Conservative) – Haywards Heath Town
- Gordon McAra (Independent) – Midhurst
- Lionel Parsons (UKIP) - Sompting and North Lancing
- Trixie Hall (UKIP) – Durrington & Salvington

The only councillor who voted for the people of Balcombe was Sue Mullins (Labour) - Gossops Green & Ifield East

The meeting was described by Frack Free Fernhurst as:

“Staggeringly, almost all Councillors questions were to do with which way to route the traffic, and no more than a couple of references to the wishes of the local community - whose articulate, intelligent, and relevant representations were passed over, and seemed not to have any influence come the vote.

Our take on the whole charade? The planning process is not fit for purpose, elected councillors are insufficiently informed to make sound decisions and finally, even if they were, it looks very much like their hands are tied by over dependence on the equally unfit for

purpose EA (who were represented) and the HSE who did not show up - true to form.” – Frack Free Fernhurst

Issues WSCC refused to consider

Nearly all the important concerns to public health and risks to the environment were deemed to be out of their scope by the councillors and the planning officer.

It is clear that the current planning system does not work when everything that is important cannot be considered by those people who bare the sole responsibility for the decision.

The council spent nearly three hours considering the application. As pointed out by Ruth Hayhurst much the time was spent on issues that it could not consider.

For more information including the including the responses from the officers advising the councillors at the meeting as to why they should not consider them see Ruth Hayhurst report

<http://investigatingbalcombeandcuadrilla.com/2014/04/30/17-issues-west-sussex-could-not-or-would-not-consider-when-deciding-cuadrillas-balcombe-planning-application/>

The issues NOT to be considered:

- Lack of an Environmental Impact Assessment
- Concerns that the Environment Agency and Health and Safety Executive were deficient in their performance at Balcombe
- Request for deferment of the decision because of lack of and inadequate information from the Environment Agency and Health and Safety Executive
- The impact of the flare on air quality
- Concerns about the integrity of Balcombe-1 well casing
- Lack of detail on aspects of conditions to be decided later
- Cuadrilla’s past performance on complying with previous planning applications
- A proposal that a legal agreement which might help enforce breaches of planning conditions
- Lack of public engagement with the local community by Cuadrilla
- The majority of public opinion against the application in the consultation
- Comments and concerns from the public gallery
- The likely cost of the application to West Sussex County Council for policing protests
- Likelihood of future protests at the site if the application were approved

- Concerns about the financial situation of Cuadrilla (Balcombe) Ltd and the proposal for a bond to cover any problems with clearing up after accidents
- Concerns about what would happen if Cuadrilla did not restore the site
- Previous County council motions on deciding planning applications
- Do the officers have a contingency plan for dealing with vandalism leading to a pollution incident?

If you would like to watch the full discussion, go to:

http://www.westsussex.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/134891

Singleton Well Integrity Failure

The councillors on WSCC Planning committee were taken to visit the Singleton oil field to see an example site. Singleton is a conventional production oil well. Unconventional sites will be bigger to achieve the same production level due to need to store and manage a lot more fluid on the site regardless of whether the fracking fluid is slick water or hydrochloric acid.

The choice of Singleton has a grim irony in that Singleton was the site of a pollution incident caused by two well integrity failures. What if the same happened at Lower Stumble? Oil in the river Ouse? Presumably no one told the councillors about the leaking crude oil due to well integrity failures:

“The two pollution incidents at the Singleton Oil Field (now operated by IGas but operated by a different company when the incidents occurred) occurred in the early 1990s, and were caused by failure of cement behind the conductor and the 9 5/8-inch casing. This was identified as a result of five groundwater monitoring boreholes installed at the Singleton Oil Field in 1993. The leak was from the well cellar (cement lined cavity in which the well head sits) via the preinstalled conductor and the 9 5/8-inch casing, both of which appear not to have been adequately cemented in-situ in at least one well. A thorough investigation commenced in 1997, including the drilling of a number (>11) of additional boreholes, and the carrying out of tracer tests and CCTV examination under the auspices of, and in consultation with, the UK Environment Agency. The leak paths, once identified and verified, were remediated.”

Davies, R.J., et al., Oil and gas wells and their integrity: Implications for shale and unconventional resource exploitation, Marine and Petroleum Geology (2014)
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.marpetgeo.2014.03.001>

It is chillingly to know that these leaks releasing crude oil were first identified in 1993 and it took until 1997 to fix them.

The planning officer, Jane Moseley, cited Singleton in her recommendation to the Planning Committee as an example as to why drilling close to another old well is without problems. Had she been informed by the Environment Agency about this

pollution incident at Singleton? Did the Environment Agency deliberately conceal it from her?

If we as a residents association have been able to find out about this pollution incident, should not WSCC have also been able to find this out?

Report from Chartered Hydrologist on Lower Stumble

This report was received too late to be sent to the councillors before the Planning Committee. It supports everything we said in our objection about the risk to the water supply. It also provides new information about the Balcombe aquifer; that this is held in reserve by South East Water as part of their drought contingency plan. A copy of the report is attached with the newsletter; please forward this to friends and colleague. This is important information and needs to be published and brought to the attention of the whole of Sussex. Tell your friends to send it to the press, to MPs and most importantly of all to your county councillor.

Is Celtique planning to start preparing for drilling at Billingshurst in June?

Celtique already has permission to drill at Billingshurst. They obtained this in February 2013.

Immediately after the Cuadrilla obtained their permission to return to Balcombe, Celtique put in their application for a waste permit for the site near Billingshurst called Broadford Bridge. Celtique's application was published on the Environment Agency's web site on 30 April. The public consultation period will be until the 30th May. Four weeks!

https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/portal/npsapp/celtique/celtique_energie_weald_limited_1?pointId=2911990

Planning permission is for *"The siting and development of a temporary borehole, well site compound and access road including all ancillary infrastructure and equipment for the exploration, testing and evaluation of hydrocarbons in the willow prospect at Wood Barn Farm, Adversane Lane, Broadford Bridge, Billingshurst, West Sussex"*.

The reference is WSCC/052/12/WC

When the public consultation period finished for Cuadrilla's application for a waste permit, Cuadrilla started their drilling operation within a week. Will Celtique try to do the same?

Broadford Bridge site is a greenfield site so Celtique will have to construct a drilling pad. This will involve the transportation of 5,562 tonnes of stone (278 lorry loads). The proposed site is at Woodbarn Farm about 1 mile west of Broadford Bridge.

I have not been able to find specification of depths and where the horizontal drilling will take place from their planning documents. From their community engagement

documents I have gleaned that the well is to be drilled to a depth of 10,000 feet. The rig will be 36 metres in height. Celtique state “*The target reservoir is the Triassic sandstone. This is a conventional (non-shale) reservoir anticipated to contain gas and the rock is sufficiently permeable that gas should flow naturally into the well from the reservoir when produced. Celtique will not be using hydraulic fracturing this well.*”

The directional bore is not indicated on the site map, however Celtique say “*In most cases we cannot find a well site directly above the well target, and therefore have to drill a directional well.*” This well will also give Celtique a clear picture of the shale layers and depth in the area as they drill through to the sandstone.

Lobbying - Public Consultation

In order to get the response you want make sure you have the consultant’s report written by someone with vested interest in your project. For example the government paid AMEC to produce the public consultation paper for the 14th round of licencing. In this week’s Motley Fool investment advice cites AMEC as one of three investment tip to profit from, you guessed it, the shale bonanza. Conflict of interest?

<http://www.fool.co.uk/investing/2014/05/02/3-companies-that-could-boom-from-the-shale-bonanza-ashtead-group-plc-amec-plc-and-weir-group-plc/>

Balance between risk and reward, Francis Maude’s statement on the decision by WSCC

<http://www.wscountytimes.co.uk/news/columnists/francis-maude-balance-between-risk-and-reward-1-6030578>

Francis Maude in his regular column in the West Sussex County Times 3rd May writes an article titled “**Balance between risk and reward**”

The obvious comment to this is “Whose Risk and Whose Reward, Mr Maude?”

In his article Maude mixes up Cuadrilla’s old planning application which had permission for hydraulic fracking with the new one which does not. He implies we are dependent on Russian gas, when it accounts for less than one percent of our imported gas. He makes deliberate obfuscation between shale wells and Wytch Farm which is an off shore conventional oil field which has terminals and processing onshore and no flare. He implies REPOWER Balcombe is in some way complementary to the oil wells that he wishes to see across our landscape.

Maude refers to our “*regulatory system which is internationally regarded as being the model in ensuring the safest possible processes*” What Maude omits to say in his article is that we now have a self-regulatory system designed for offshore wells, one that pays no attention to the health, safety and wishes of the nearby residents – and

one that has an appalling reputation for killing people and producing leaking wells in the North Sea. Onshore wells such as Wytch farm and Singleton were developed under the older and safer onshore regulations and not the current system of “self-regulation”

It is well known that Maude appointed Lord Browne to the cabinet as an unelected member. Only this week though are we finding out about Maude’s connection with Tony Caplin. According to the Daily Mail *“Cabinet Office Minister Francis Maude is a former business associate of Mr Caplin and gave him a top Tory HQ post”*. Maude is the Minister for the Cabinet and the Paymaster General. Mr Caplin was recently sacked as head of £60bn Treasury quango.

A government investigation has begun to study the dossier of secret emails by two disgraced Conservatives. Iain Corby who ran the Policy Research Unit, which advises Tory MP and Mr Caplin, Maude’s business associate and appointee. In these emails Iain Corby suggested to Tony Caplin they could both make money from a £5 billion investment project

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2619586/Probe-secret-emails-written-disgraced-Conservatives-Iain-Corby-Tony-Caplin-plotted-make-money-5bn-investment-project.html#ixzz30lJEtGNJ>

EVENTS

Balcombe.

Keith Taylor, our Green MEP Visits Balcombe Tuesday 6th May 1-3pm

Keith is one of the very few elected politicians who have supported Balcombe. He is planning to be in Balcombe next Tuesday and would like to meet residents to hear about our views and whether there is anything he can do to help. If any of you are free between 1-3pm, he would be keen to meet you.

The regional Green Party Bus will be in the Balcombe Train Station from 1-3pm on Tuesday. As well as a chance to talk to Keith, you can watch Lech’s latest film Frack Democracy (30 minutes) which will be shown in the bus.

Coffee and a Chat, Half Moon Pub, Thursday 8th May 10.30 am to 12.00 noon

Do come along. Great coffee, pastries and good company.

REPOWER Balcombe Coffee Morning, Saturday 10th May 10.00 to 1.00 pm

Bramble Hall, Balcombe

You are invited to drop in for a coffee and a cake and find out more.

To find out more go to www.repowerbalcombe.com

Beyond Balcombe

Staplefield Fete and Fun Day, Bank Holiday Monday 29th May 12 noon to 4.00 pm

Can you help FFBRA's information stall at the Staplefield Fete on 29th May 2014? One of Sussex's best fetes. It is a traditional family fun day and has the additional benefit of a vintage car show.

This is an opportunity to share some of the information and experience FFBRA with the residents of another village that is a likely target for Cuadrilla. The horizontal drilling from Lower Stumble goes in the direction of Staplefield and Cuadrilla own the PEDL licence for their parish. The oil industry is well aware that a nearby motorway is an excellent way to mask "the noise problem".

Can you help with any of the following?

- An hour or more of your time assisting at the stall on the day. We need at least 6 people willing to man the stall (so that we can have time off to enjoy the fete)
- Table (at least 6 feet long, preferably folding)
- Gazebo (up to 3 metres wide) to keep the rain off if we are unlucky with the weather)
- Folding Chairs
- Bunting
- Gingham table cloth (or suitable country style)

Haywards Heath Society, Energy Debate, Wednesday, 28th May 2014

at the Redwood Centre Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath (Next to Clair Hall)
Join the Society for an informative evening about local energy needs and production in Sussex in this Question Time style debate.

Speakers include:

- Will Cottrell, Brighton Energy Co-operative,
- Kalya Ente, Brighton & Hove Energy Services Ltd,
- Ollie Pendered, OVESCO / Community Matters / Barcombe Energy Group,
- A representative TBA, Sussex Energy Saving Partnership