



FFBRA NEWSLETTER NUMBER NINE

FUTURE EVENTS

In Balcombe

No events planned.

Recruitment: Please could you all try and recruit another Balcombe resident to FFBRA this week. I still see houses with yellow ribbons where the residents have not yet joined. The more members the more powerful FFBRA will be in stopping Cuadrilla from returning to Balcombe. Membership is £1 and includes a weekly newsletter. A membership form has been emailed with this week's newsletter. Return completed forms to Sue Taylor, Little Meadows, Stockcroft Road, Balcombe, RH17 6LL. (the house is 6 houses down from the Oldlands Avenue end of Stockcroft Road).

Beyond Balcombe

The Truth Behind the Dash for Gas Saturday 14th December 2013.

Mayfield Memorial Hall, Court Meadow, Tunbridge Wells Rd, Mayfield, East Sussex TN20 6PJ

FILM SCREENING at Mayfield Memorial Hall of the "The Truth Behind the Dash for Gas", the recent UK documentary on Hydraulic Fracking. Ian Crane presents the inside story of fracking as someone who worked in the oil industry. Rosalyn St. Pierre from East Sussex county council will present her view. There are two sessions being held one in the afternoon and one in the evening.

2:15 – 3:00pm presentation by Ian Crane

3:00 – 4:00pm the film

4:00 – 4:20pm presentation by Rosalyn St. Pierre

10min break

4:30 – 5:15pm Q&A with Ian and Rosalyn (after 30min break)

5:45 – 6:30pm presentation by Ian Crane

6:30 – 7:30 the film

7:30 – 8:30pm Q&A

Carols at Downing Street

Message from Charles Metcalfe to all members

A group of us will be going to 10 Downing Street to hand in a letter from FF-BRA to the Prime Minister, on Friday 20th December, at 1pm.

We have a 20-minute slot, during which we intend to deliver the letter, hang some gifts on the Christmas tree outside Number 10, take photos and sing a carol. And if there are any press who want to talk to us, we shall be happy to do that as well.

However, only 6 of us are allowed inside the gates to Downing Street. But we would welcome support from other members of FFBRA and the Balcombe community, and would like to suggest that we could sing a few carols outside the gates to Downing Street after we have delivered the letter. So, anyone who would like to join us would be welcome (particularly if they have a strong carolling voice!).

Those of us taking the letter in will probably travel on the 10.37 train, to make absolutely sure we're there in time. But the 11.37 should get you there in time as well".

NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR OUR MEMBERS

Update on Cuadrilla's Application to return to Balcombe

From Jane Mosely to one of our Members Thursday 12th December 14.18 pm by email *"It will not be validated and made public this week, but may be next week if all is in order"*. This would be a very unwelcome Xmas present from WSCC, and I am sure we are all hoping that they delay validating it until after Xmas so we can enjoy the festivities in peace with our families. However if it is made public before Xmas WSCC has said we will be given eight weeks for the consultation period (two weeks extra to compensate for holiday period); if it is made public after Xmas the consultation period will be six weeks.

Report on the Resident Information Session held by WSCC in Balcombe on December Onshore Hydrocarbons - Planning

This event was recorded and if you can watch it on

http://www.westsussex.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/121359

The Information Session was introduced by Louise Goldsmith, Leader WSCC who explained that its purpose was to "provide residents with the knowledge and understanding of the planning process and how you can engage with this"

Most of the presentation was by Mike Elkington (Strategic Planning Manager for WSCC). He was supported by Tony Kershaw, Head of Law and Governance, and Samantha Mowbray, Head of Policy and Communications in the question and answer session.

Bill Acraman, our County Councillor and Peter Bradbury, West Sussex County Councillor for Cuckfield and Lucastes also attended.

WSSC had invited all residents of Balcombe, restricted to one ticket per household plus four residents from the villages of Fernhurst, Wisborough Green and Kirdford where an oil /gas drilling application is also being considered by WSSC.

The event was well attended and after the presentation, there was a robust question and answer session.

Mike explained the roles and responsibilities of different authorities in granting permission to the oil/ gas industry when they operate onshore (as opposed to off shore).

Mineral planning authority (MPA) is part of WSSC for the County (excluding South Downs National Park)

- Grants planning permission for location of wells and well-pads

Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC):

- Issues licence to drill once planning permission and other approvals in place—assesses risk of and monitor seismic activity
- Grants consents for flaring and venting

Environment Agency (EA):

- Protects water resources (quality & quantity)
- Controls treatment and disposal of mining waste
- Controls emissions to air
- Controls treatment and management of naturally occurring radioactive materials (NORMs)
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE):
- Regulates safety aspects of all phases of extraction
- Ensures appropriate design and construction of well-casing

Planning Application Process

Mike Elkington explained what considerations the planning committee could take into account when determining whether or not they agree or oppose the application from Cuadrilla.

These are

- Views of consultees, landowners, and public
- Visual impact - local area and more widely
- Impact on neighbours and local amenity
- Impact on highway capacity and road safety
- Impact on historic environment
- Impact on ecology and biodiversity
- Impact on water environment & flood risk
- Site restoration and aftercare
- Consistency with national and local policy

What WSSC cannot take into account when determining the application are the impact on house prices in Balcombe, or emissions, control processes, or

health and safety issues that are addressed under other regulatory regimes. Nor can they take into account any alternatives to onshore oil and gas that the local residents might prefer.

Each planning application has to be taken in isolation. So the planning committee will not consider the impact of the production stage of oil/gas drilling in Balcombe despite the fact that the purpose of exploration is to find oil/gas to exploit.

The planning committee will not take into account most of the issues that are the most worrying aspects of developing Lower Stumble as an oil/gas drilling site.

Also they do not consider issues dealt with by other authorities as these considered Non-Planning Issues.

These include seismic risks, flaring or venting of gas (except the resulting noise and visual impact), well design, construction, and integrity, mining waste chemical content of fracking fluid, disposal of water following fracking, and abstraction of water.

Many of the questions and answers are well worth listening to on the video. Here is the transcript of one which captured much of the mood of the evening.

Question from a Balcombe Resident

“A couple of observations, firstly, if I may, people have been talking about the noise, the fact that it was not appropriately monitored during the presentation. There was a comment made about a future planning application you would look at the time of truck movements during school hours, its begs the question not just about the noise whatever restrictions you put on the planning applications will you have the resources and the resolve to actually monitor and ensure those restrictions are adhered to?

Secondly another observation, a gentlemen asked about resources, will you have sufficient resources? I do hope that in engaging sufficient resources you will not be pushing the bills onto local residents so someone else can make lots of money.

My final thing that I want to ask about, I hear lots of concerns from lots of people, one of the concerns that I have is the communication. I did not see anywhere on the slides who was responsible for communication. I did see the WSCC was responsible for some kind of dialogue with residents. Where is the communication?

This meeting should have happened a long time ago. I personally have very little faith left in the ability of our council to offer the protection that many of the people here are looking for. People have to speak for themselves but I fully agree with the lady who said who is pulling this together?

I came here and listened how the evening was going. There has been a lot of interesting things to say, they also had a lot to say about that is not to do with us. I have heard more about what is not to do with us than what is to do with us and my faith in your ability to look after myself as a citizen of this village and this county is dropping very, very fast unfortunately [Big Round of Applause from the audience]

Please, my question is “How are you going to restore my faith and all the people who have just applauded? Thank You”

And for the answer, please watch the video.

Lobbying Key WSCC Councillors

The fate of Balcombe, Fernhurst, Kirdford and Wisborough Green will be determined by 20 key councillors on the WSCC Planning Committee and Louise Goldsmith as leader of WSCC.

The main duties of councillors are to represent the needs, priorities and aspirations of their electors and the people of Sussex. They must be accessible and liaise/ consult extensively with local communities, organisations and businesses. **Remember they work for you.**

Councillors should seek ways of improving the quality of life for people in Sussex now and for the future by promoting the economic, social and environmental well-being of the county and with this in mind please lobby them about the threats posed by the oil and gas industries.

Please help make them understand the risks to the environment, damage to the local economy (e.g. small businesses, tourism and farming), and the threat to our health and our families’ health, if they support applications from oil/gas companies to drill in unconventional geology in Sussex.

The planning committee is likely to meet in March or April next year to consider Cuadrilla’s new planning application and so we have until then to influence them.

Ways to do this include writing to them directly or if you have friends who live in their constitution then, please ask your friends to write.

Of course personal contacts are always the most effective so if you identify anyone who could approach them directly that would be better. FFBRA have prepared a DVD of the presentations by David Smythe and Mike Hill, if you have any way of sending this to them with a personal message, please could you email suetaylorbalcombe@gmail.com so that a DVD can be sent to you to forward with a personal message.

Do you know any of these councillors or anyone who knows them?

Key Councillors	Ward	Email/Phone
Louise Goldsmith	Chichester West	Louise.goldsmith@westsussex.gov.uk 03302222531
Peter Catchpole	Holbrook	Peter.catchpole@wessex.gov.uk 01403 258678
Christine Field	Lingfield and High Weald	Christine.field@westsussex.gov.uk 01342 810310
Lionel Barnard	Henfield	Lionel.barnard@westsussex.gov.uk 01273491426
Michael Brown	Fernhurst	Michael.brown@westsussex.gov.uk 01798 869313
Peter Evans	East Preston &	Peter.evans@westsussex.gov.uk

	Ferring	1903 240876
Bob Lanzer	Maidenbower	Bob.lanzer@westsussex.gov.uk 01293 884789
Pieter Montyn	The Witterings	Pieter.montyn@westsussex.gov.uk 01243 511319
Andrew Barratt-Miles	Burgess Hill town	Andrew.barrett.miles@westsussex.gov.uk 01444 233081
Heidi Brunsdon	Imberdown	Heidi.brunsdon@westsussex.gov.uk 07889 837362
Mick Clark	Saltings	Mick.clark@westsussex.gov.uk 01273 701895
Duncan Crow	Tilgate & Furnace Green	Duncan.crow@westsussex.gov.uk 01293 888564
Gordon McAra	Midhurst	Gordon.mcara@westsussex.gov.uk 01730 815569
Janet Mockridge	Southwick	Janet.mockridge@westsussex.gov.uk 01273 871089
Sue Mullins	Gossops Green & Ifield	Sue.mullins@westsussex.gov.uk 01293 511069
Simon Oakley	Chichester East	Simon.oakley@westsussex.gov.uk 01243 538394
Lionel Parsons	Sompting & North Lancing	Lionel.parsons@westsussex.gov.uk 01903 527534
John Rodgers	Cissbury	John.rodgers@westsussex.gov.uk 07761 848820
Robin Rodgers	Northbrook	Robin.rodgers@westsussex.gov.uk 01903 201299
Sujan Wickremarat	Haywards Heath Town	Sujan.wickremaratchi@westsussex.gov.uk 07968 179083

Here are two examples of letters sent to councillors. They are only samples and members should write in their own words about what concerns them about Cuadrilla drilling for oil/gas in the village.

First Letter

Dear Cllr Wheale,

I read in my local paper, the News, that after a members' briefing from officers on fracking in Hampshire this week you are quoted as being confident about its future in Hampshire.

This may not have been your view after another recent public briefing in Winchester, attended by almost 200, and given by a geologist (who had worked in the US) and a senior planning consultant. They took a rather less complacent view drawing heavily on the US experience of fracking and pointing up the risks and disbenefits of the process.

This is not a story of a couple of nodding donkeys tucked away out of sight. Fracking in the Hampshire countryside (mostly in seats held by Conservative members) would mean industrialising some rural areas (including national parks) on a grand scale.

It will do little for energy bills as the product is sold on the European energy market at international prices, raise issues of safety, public health and the environmental wellbeing of our county.

I recognise that the County Council as a Mineral & Planning Authority may not be able to impose a ban but could always adopt the precautionary principle especially in the UK where the technology is largely untested.

I would be happy to provide you with further information if needed

Yours sincerely

Second Letter

Dear Councillor Bradbury

Thank you for attending the meeting on planning at Balcombe on Thursday.

I am forwarding you a copy of Frack Free Balcombe Residents Association (FFBRA)'s response to the recent consultation document written by Public Health England. As a member of the Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee, the issues discussed in this paper and our response to them will be of concern to you.

FFBRA is a recently formed residents' association of over 200 members who live in Balcombe. Many of us live within half a mile of the proposed drilling site at Lower Stumble. We have been greatly concerned by the statement made in the consultation document that "Estimated cancer risks and chronic non cancer indices were greater for residents living within half a mile of the nearest well pads" see page 10 Review of the Potential Public Health Impacts of Exposures to Chemical and Radioactive Pollutants as a Result of Shale Gas Extraction.

I would very much like to set up a meeting with you and Professor Lawrence Dunne who is a member of our association to discuss the findings in this paper and the residents of Balcombe's response to it. We believe that the evidence presented in our response to PHE can be used to support Louise Goldsmith's call for a National debate on Fracking.

I can be contacted on 01444 819 329 or by email to arrange a suitable time and venue.

Kind Regards

*Sue Taylor
FFBRA*

Industry Lobbying and Fracking Myths

There is an enormous industry that has developed around lobbying on behalf of the oil/gas industry. The industry lobby has penetrated to the heart of the Cabinet office, where Lord Browne, chairman of Cuadrilla, is “Lead Non-Executive Director”. Much misinformation has been fed to the media. Let’s dispel some of these myths.

Myth 1 *‘They’ve been fracking for years, all over Britain.’* No. **One** British well (in Lancashire) has been fracked using this controversial kind of fracking. DECC confirms this. The difference is one of scale – fracking of old used low pressures and small volumes of water and additives. It’s like comparing a corner shop to a hypermarket.

Myth 2 *‘Fracked gas will mean lower energy prices.’* No, not in Britain. We are part of a European free market. Economists, bankers, Offgen and even Cuadrilla agree that shale gas will not bring low gas prices.

Myth 3 *‘David Cameron: fracking will create 74 000 UK jobs.’* DECC advisors AMEC cut that prediction by a third. In any case, 90% of fracking jobs are specialised. Workers will come largely from abroad, peaking at drilling time.

Myth 4 *‘UK regulations are strong and effective.’* Untrue. Our regulations were never strong, and are being slackened. Environment Agency (EA) staff are being cut by 10%. The industry self-monitors. The EA relies mainly on a reassuring Friday afternoon fax from Cuadrilla.

Myth 6 *‘It all happens so deep down that nothing can migrate’.* Gas and fluid frequently leak up the outside of wells. Natural faults can act as conduits. Our Balcombe oil is so shallow that even a man-made fracture could reach the aquifer, according to a study by the University of Durham.

Taxpayers to Pay for Fracking Pollution if Companies go Bust

The environment minister, Dan Rogerson, has rejected proposal to amend regulations to make companies sign a bond to pay for potential pollution incidents. So we are now in a situation in the UK where a company that wants to set up a landfill site has to post an upfront liability guarantee before they can start operating, but a fracking company does not has to. Which company can do the most damage?

Here is the report from the Guardian dated December 11th 2013.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/dec/11/taxpayers-fracking-pollution-companies>

“Taxpayers will pay to clean up any pollution caused by fracking if the companies go bankrupt, after a proposal to make UK operators take out insurance against such damage was ruled out by the government.

Energy companies including Centrica-backed Cuadrilla are poised to drill shale gas wells around the country after the Treasury published draft legislation on Tuesday for tax breaks for the industry. Hydraulic fracturing – or fracking – is the controversial technique that involves pumping sand, chemicals and water underground to extract shale gas trapped in rocks.

Campaigners and a cross-party group of MPs argue that before operators are granted permits to frack, they should have to take out a bond to pay for potential pollution incidents. Without such a bond, campaigners argued, clean-up costs would have to be paid for with public money if a company went bust.

But on Monday, the environment minister Dan Rogerson said that there was no case for an amendment bringing in such proposals to the draft water bill. He told MPs: “We believe that the existing regulatory framework is fit for purpose for the exploration and exploitation of onshore oil and gas activities. There are a great number of checks and controls available to us to ensure that operators comply with the requirements of their permits and deal with the wider pollution risks without adding to existing regulation.”

The government could not support the new clause, he said, adding that if fracking companies caused pollution they could be fined under existing regulations.

However, Lib Dem MP, Roger Williams, who backed the proposed amendment to environmental permitting regulations, said: “It is true that, if properly implemented and enforced, existing regulation could mitigate many of the risks posed by fracking, but we should still plan for the low-probability, high-risk scenario of a pollution incident. The amendment would simply ensure that, if the worst did happen, there was clear liability in place and the cost of clean-up did not fall on the public purse.”

Energy companies and ministers have repeatedly said a high standard of regulation means fracking in the UK will avoid the environmental concerns seen in the US, where fracking has been linked to water contamination and dangerous levels of radioactivity at waste sites. In November, Cuadrilla CEO Francis Egan told MPs fracking was “completely safe”, and the water and oil and gas industries signed a memorandum of understanding over the impact of shale gas operations on water supplies.

Liability guarantees akin to those in the proposed amendment are already a requirement for companies that run landfill sites before they begin operating sites. While companies can currently be fined for polluting waterways, campaigners say the proposed bond for fracking explorers would address the problem of companies going bankrupt and becoming unable to pay for cleanup costs.

Rob Cunningham, head of water policy at the RSPB, said: “The prime minister promised one of the most stringent regulatory regimes for fracking in the world but his government appears more interested in tax cuts than managing risk. It really doesn't matter if you are pro or anti fracking, this proposal would simply ensure that when things do go wrong shareholders,

not taxpayers bear the cost for clean up if companies go bust or cease trading. If government's response boils down to concerns over cost of insurance it sheds an interesting light on just how safe they really think the technology is."

Date of publication of FFBRA Newsletter Nine: Thursday 12 December 2013