



FFBRA NEWSLETTER NUMBER EIGHT

FUTURE EVENTS

In Balcombe

FFBRA Information Day Saturday 7 December, Bramble Hall, RH17 6HR 2 pm till 4 pm.

Cuadrilla, having recently signed a 30 year lease with Simon Greenwood for the Lower Stumble site, have applied to WSCC to “to flow test and monitor the existing exploration lateral borehole (horizontal drilling) at the Lower Stumble exploration site” Their application also including site security fencing, the provision of an enclosed testing flare and site restoration”. The purpose of the exhibition will be to explain in detail what this means.

Members and non-members of FFBRA are welcome to attend. There will be tea, coffee and cakes – and a children’s play area will be provided. Please come along.

Beyond Balcombe

House of Lords invites RAFF to give Evidence on Fracking in Lancashire

RAFF (Residents Action on Fylde Fracking) has been invited to give oral evidence at the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee (EAC). The Committee is currently conducting an inquiry into The Economic Impact on UK Energy Policy of Shale Gas and Oil and is interested in local views on the development of shale gas in Lancashire.

The hearing will take place in the Palace of Westminster, London on Tuesday 10 December at 3.30pm. RAFF representatives will give oral evidence, that is, answer members’ questions in a hearing open to the public and the media.

RAFF spokesperson Pam Foster said: “We see this as a great opportunity to provide fact-based evidence that shale gas extraction would be disastrous for Lancashire’s agriculture and tourism industries, as well as for its residents.” FFBRA see this as a big break through to have the Lords hearing from actual residents what fracking is like – and remember this is the only area of the UK that has been fracked. It would be great if some of our members could go along to this very important meeting. Xmas shopping in the morning – and an opportunity to support our Northern friends in the afternoon – what could be better!

NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR OUR MEMBERS

Carols at Downing Street

Who would like to go with Charles Metcalfe to deliver a letter from FFBRA to David Cameron asking him to stop fracking in the UK? Currently different organisations across the UK are taking it in turns to go to Downing Street and FFBRA's date is Friday 20th December, at 1pm. Three members will be allowed to go to the door with the letter and since it is close to Xmas, Charles is planning to sing a carol, and would welcome fellow-singers, if possible. He would also love a larger choir of FFBRA members singing Xmas carols outside the gates (there are no restrictions on numbers outside the gates). Email me if you would like to go. (And you can Xmas-shop after the letter-delivery...)

Louise Goldsmith, Leader of West Sussex County Council Requests National Debate on Fracking

Following on from a meeting with myself and other representatives from Fernhurst, Kirdford, Wisborough Green, and small business and the protester community Louise Goldsmith has taken on board our concerns and has written a letter to David Cameron which is reproduced below.

Her letter is fair and compelling.

Please support her call for a national debate on fracking by writing, expressing your concerns, in emails or letters to Francis Maude, our MP or to Nicholas Soames MP.

Why should we, the residents of Balcombe be front line in an untried, untested experiment in the UK?

Text of Letter from Louise Goldsmith sent to David Cameron 4 December

Dear Prime Minister

I am writing to you again, following my last letter of 07 November 2013, to ask you once again to please consider facilitating a national debate on the country's energy requirements and the ways in which that energy should be sourced.

There have been significant protests against hydraulic fracturing in the West Sussex village of Balcombe this year which has attracted a great deal of media interest. The subject has divided what was, until recently a harmonious community. Balancing the right to peaceful process which ensuring public safety and making sure that residents and commuters can go about their daily business has been difficult. Significant costs have been incurred by various public services in doing so.

In the coming months we are expecting at least three further planning applications which may request permission for hydraulic fracturing in some of our West Sussex villages, I recently met with representatives of these villages

and a representative of these villages and a representative of the wider anti-fracking campaign movement.

I know from speaking with them and from what we have seen in Balcombe over the last six months, that there are many people who have deep seated and genuine concerns about hydraulic fracturing is the solution to the country's energy concerns is not good enough.

So many people have said that the way forward is a national debate and reasoned consideration of the issues. This has not happened to date and, as a result, people living with this on their doorstep are concerned and anxious. I believe that it is for national government to facilitate this debate and conversation with those potentially affected.

At West Sussex County Council we are more than willing to help in anyway and I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you or your Government colleagues at a convenient time.

Yours sincerely

Louise Goldsmith

Leader, West Sussex County Council

cc. Peter Bottomley, MEP

Nick Herbert MP

Nick Gibb MP

The Rt Hon Francis Maude MP

Henry Smith MP

Tim Loughton MP

The Rt Hon Nicholas Soames MP

Andrew Tyrie MP

Fracking in Britain could create just a THIRD of the jobs Cameron predicted, energy experts warn ministers

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2462625/Fracking-Britain-create-just-THIRD-jobs-Cameron-predicted-according-energy-experts-advising-ministers.html>

Although the Prime Minister has claimed shale gas industry could create 74,000 jobs, experts working for energy department warn real figure could be 24,000. But even more importantly these new jobs might only last 4-9 years with few opportunities for local people'

Here is the text from the Daily Mail, 16 October 2013

Shale gas drilling across Britain could create just a third of the jobs David Cameron hoped for, the government has been warned.

The Prime Minister has insisted the country could benefit from 74,000 new jobs and could not afford to miss out on 'fracking'.

But a study produced for the energy department suggests that just 24,000 full-time roles could emerge even when the industry is at its 'peak.'

Fracking involves injecting a mixture of water, sand and chemicals into the ground at high pressure to crack shale rock holding oil and gas reserves deep underground.

The prediction could be a major blow to Mr Cameron's argument in favour of shale gas.

In August he argued it would cut energy bills and bring money into local communities through levies on gas firms. He also claimed 'fracking will create jobs in Britain'.

He cited a study which 'predicted that 74,000 posts could be supported by a thriving shale-gas industry in this country'.

Mr Cameron added: 'It's not just those involved in the drilling. Just as with North Sea oil and gas, there would be a whole supply chain of new businesses, more investment and fresh expertise.'

However AMEC, an engineering consultancy that is advising the Department for Energy and Climate Change, suggests the real figure could be much lower.

According to the "[Financial Times](#)", at a meeting last month AMEC told DECC officials that just 15,900 to 24,300 – both direct and indirect – would be created at 'peak construction' by the shale gas industry.

Most jobs would also be short-term, last between four and nine years while fracking sites were built.

AMEC also warned that few jobs would go to local people, with only 17 per cent of jobs going to people living near a fracking site at Preese Hall in Lancashire.

Mr Cameron and Chancellor George Osborne have been outspoken supporters of fracking in the face of protests about the safety of the process.

France last week upheld its nationwide ban on fracking due to fears the process may cause long-term environmental damage.

The move follows a number of high-profile protests against the practice in Britain, where energy firms have been allowed to undergo exploratory drilling.

Anti-fracking protesters set up a camp near Balcombe, West Sussex, over the summer as energy firm Cuadrilla drilled for oil.

Cuadrilla has now submitted new plans to carry out 'flow tests' to determine the rate of extraction at the well after test-drilling found oil in rock samples.

Report from Lords Select Committee last Tuesday

Stuart Gregory, one of our FFBRA members, went along as he was interested to hear the evidence being presented on regulations. The four witnesses were Mr Duarte Figueira, Director, Office of Unconventional Gas & Oil, Department of Energy and Climate Change; Lord Smith of Finsbury, Chairman and Mr Tony Grayling, Head of Climate Change and Communities, Environment

Agency; and Mr Peter Baker, Director, Hazardous Installations Directorate, Health and Safety Executive

<http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Main/Player.aspx?meetingId=14396>

Here is the link to the Lords Select Committee meeting last Tuesday on Shale Gas Exploration in the UK.

Main observations from Stuart was that most of the Lords seemed to be asking the right questions. The exception being Lord Lawson, who is passionately pro-fracking which is ironic as he lives in France – and the French have banned it.

If you watch the video recording, you will see what it will be like next Tuesday if you decide to go along when RAFF present to the Lords.

Stuart said to let you know, if you don't want to be on film, try to sit to the side. As it was his first time going he inadvertently sat behind the main speakers.

Important points he reported back from the meeting were:

It was stated in the meeting by the EA that Cuadrilla was the only company to have fracked in the UK, using the modern, high-volume, high-pressure slick-water technique (at Preece Hall). This is very important to us as we can now quote this as an official statement. Select Committee meetings are documented and a transcript will appear. It gives us an official statement we can use to counteract the spin in the media that fracking has been going on for years in the UK.

Second point is that there was discussion in the Lords about fracking creating jobs; however there was no mention of the jobs that would be lost by the industrialisation of the countryside. These jobs in tourism, and agriculture, for example, are vital to the economy of Sussex and are long term stable providers of employment whereas the jobs created by shale gas exploration are temporary and most likely will not be filled by locals as they are in security, lorry driving and a few specialist drilling related jobs. We saw this in Balcombe. The security guards I spoke to came from London, the lorry driver my neighbour talked to came from Hull and the drilling specialists travel with the drill around the country.

If you have time please could you watch the video of this meeting or read the transcript and then write the Lords explaining this point about shale gas exploration bringing job losses as well as gains. Benjamin McNarmee is the political analyst who is compiling all the evidence for the Lords so you should send your email to mcnameeb@parliament.uk. He will then pass it on to all the Lords.

Update on Dead Fish in Boundary Lane Stream, Balcombe

Many of you will remember that this summer there was an unexplained incident when many fish died in a stream in Balcombe. This is in a stream north of the drilling site called Boundary Lane

This was reported to the EA at the time and Lynne Towner one of our members, has been tirelessly working with various agencies to find out what caused this. Here is one of her latest reports – progress is being made in the investigation and Lynne is talking the Head of Fisheries and the EA about these results.

I have now received both the sediment test results and it is showing a breach on Ammonia downstream and a breach on Nickel @ 70% over upstream and was told when asked that there is no Aquifer below this stream.

At the time when I reported it, the EA attended and initial routine tests carried out on site for oxygen, ammonia, PH etc were all ok. Fish were identified as Bullheads, Trout, Brook Lamprey, all being very sensitive fish and will only live in the very healthiest of waters, this also ruled out specie specific diseases. They ruled out Algal bloom too. It was then thought that maybe it was an oxygen crash but the natural elements to contribute to this were just not there, i.e. heavy leaf fall, storms, increased water temperature to cold nights, etc ,unless a pollutant (chemical) had gone through the stream and depleted the oxygen !Then the invertebrate test proved unfruitful really, only showing bloodworms who will live in anything due to their high haemoglobin and caddis fly who are at the top of the sensitivity scale so proved by that time that the stream was clean. Then came the sediment tests that have proved a breach in Ammonia which I think is probably due to field run-off and EA have said it is more a chronic problem but not high enough to kill fish but also a breach on Nickel @ 70% over. Fish test for Ethylene Oxide (oxirane) is due back on the 9th Dec. The EA had told, and it has been documented from them, that Cuadrilla must not use this chemical but on a Freedom of Information request to WSCC it said they had used it, hence why we thought it best to test the fish.

Autumn Budget and Shale Gas Exploration in the UK

The chancellor, George Osborne, has given the oil/gas companies all that they could wish for and more in the budget announced today.

He said “This allowance makes the UK tax regime for shale gas the most competitive in Europe” and “Evidence collected from operators also indicates that the allowance makes the effective tax rate for shale gas projects lower than the US - making the UK an attractive competitive opportunity for global operators”.

It is hard to understand why this is necessary when France, German, Holland and Ireland have effectively banned shale gas exploration so we are not in competition with them anyway.