



## **FFBRA NEWSLETTER NUMBER TWELVE**

### **FUTURE EVENTS**

#### **In Balcombe**

#### **FFBRA Members Dinner at Elvira's, Borde Hill, Friday 17 January**

Elvira's Café, Borde Hill Lane, RH16 1XP (arrival 7.30 pm for 8 pm meal). The food is lovely. £18.50 per person, for two courses plus coffee. An opportunity to get to know fellow members a little better over a meal. To book places, please email [kathrynmcwhirter@btopenworld.com](mailto:kathrynmcwhirter@btopenworld.com) or phone Kathryn on 811682 or Sue on 819329. ASAP would be great, as we need to confirm minimum number of guests.

#### **FFBRA Information Day, Bramble Hall, Saturday 18 January**

Our next FFBRA meeting will be at Bramble Hall, Bramble Hill, Balcombe, RH17 6HR on Saturday 18 January from 11 am till 1 pm and will be a Coffee Stop / Exhibition. Please make a note in your diary. There will be tea, coffee, cakes and children's play area. Please come along and do feel free to bring along non-members. Cuadrilla's new planning application is expected to be made public 6<sup>th</sup> January 2014. FFBRA will display information about it in the Hall.

#### **Balcombe Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 22 January**

Next meeting will be held in Bramble Hall, Bramble Hill, Balcombe, RH17 6HR. Oil / gas related subjects are usually discussed between 8 pm to 9.30 pm (so you can leave before the end of meeting; also you can enter the meeting at any time). The public can ask questions to the Chairman in the Public Participation section. There will be an update from the Balcombe Parish Council Oil/Gas Working Group.

#### **Beyond Balcombe**

Free GASLAND 2 film screening at Brighton University Wednesday, 15th January 2014 at 17:00 Huxley 300 Lecture Theatre, Huxley Building University of Brighton, Lewes Road, Brighton.

## **NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR OUR MEMBERS**

### **The Economic Argument**

There has been a great deal of discussion about the impact of fracking on our wildlife, health and quality of life. But there has been less discussion on the economic impact. Yet this is also important to our wellbeing.

The current government's determination to make the UK attractive to unconventional oil/ gas exploratory companies means that many of the costs of the industry will be transferred from private companies to residents of Sussex.

Some of these transferred costs include

- Negative impact on house prices
- Loss of jobs in tourism, small businesses and the hospitality industry
- Impact on farming
- Road building and repairs
- Legal costs for West Sussex County Council
- Policing costs

However there are some less obvious costs as an excellent article in the Ecologist explains

[www.theecologist.org/blogs\\_and\\_comments/commentators/2216992/who\\_will\\_pay\\_the\\_costs\\_of\\_the\\_fracking\\_revolution.html?](http://www.theecologist.org/blogs_and_comments/commentators/2216992/who_will_pay_the_costs_of_the_fracking_revolution.html?)

### **The cost of cleaning up**

Campaigners and a cross-party group of MPs have tried to have an amendment made to a draft water bill to force operators to take out a bond to pay for potential pollution incidents before being granted a license to frack. This proposal has recently been overruled by the government. As pointed out by the Ecologist. *"This allows energy companies licence to have the actual fracking done by a string of asset-free limited liability companies, that don't need to carry insurance. In the event of a big accident, they can declare bankruptcy and walk away, leaving the pollution to be cleaned up at public expense"*.

### **Costs of monitoring**

The monitoring of sites will be paid for by publicly funded bodies such as the Environment Agency, and the Health and Safety Executive but ultimately the costs will be borne by the taxpayer. Well monitoring may need to carry on for decades or even centuries after the well has ceased its economic productive life of a decade or so. In addition if the well shaft is damaged as it was in Lancashire then monitoring by wire-logging may cease to be possible and further extensive works which could involve well boring may be required, just for monitoring.

### **Compensation to farmers**

If DEFRA have to pay compensation to farmers whose stock, water and land have been poisoned, these costs will be ultimately borne by the tax payer.

### **Costs of clean water**

Fracking takes enormous amounts of water. Sussex already suffers from water shortages. Water rates will rise. Also any clean-up operations will either be borne by the taxpayer or passed onto individuals via their water rates.

### **Cost of roads**

The Ecologist explains that

*“We will pay, via the Highways authorities, for road building and repair, to cope with the greatly increased and heavy traffic needed to service the fracking sites. With not just equipment but water having to be trucked in, and waste water trucked out, Amec’s Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Department of Energy and Climate Change estimated that there would be from 14 to 51 vehicle movements per day. That’s between 3,600 and 13,000 a year, for each and every well”.* This is a truly horrific amount of heavy traffic. Again our way of life will be blighted and it will be us as taxpayers not the oil and gas companies that have to pay the costs.

### **What has FFBRA Achieved in Four Months?**

The Residents Association was formed on the 7 September 2013.

Cuadrilla left Balcombe on the 28 September before being able to flow test their well. This was because they were unable to extend their original planning permission due to their not marking the location of their horizontal drilling in their documents. This was the planning issue that was spotted by Friends of the Earth lawyers.

Just before their permission expired, Cuadrilla applied for a new planning application to test their well. Having to apply for a new application instead of being able to extend the original one has slowed Cuadrilla down considerably.

Cuadrilla has been absent from the village since 28 September and FFBRA has done so much in this time that it is hard to remember everything that has happened.

Apologies for anything omitted - here are some of our members’ achievements over the last four months. And a very big thank you to everyone for all your hard work, creativity, and determination to stop oil and gas drilling in our parish.

#### **General**

- Established a constitution, a logo, a bank account, a regular spot in the Parish Magazine and signed up many, many members and held elections for committee members. Many thanks to all those who delivered the voting forms around the village – and to those who stood for election and everyone for voting. And to all those who have actively been recruiting members.
- Maintaining and updating our website [www.frackfreebalcombe.co.uk](http://www.frackfreebalcombe.co.uk)

### **Coffee Mornings/ Information Days**

- Held four coffee morning / information days in Bramble Hall. Many members and friends of FFBRA helped with these in lots of different ways; collecting display stands, making cakes and sandwiches, making art work and information material, acting as stewards, being on hand to answer questions, looking after the suggestion box and the membership forms, selling t-shirts and books, helping with the child care area, washing up, and collecting donations. All very well attended.
- David Smythe and Mike Hill gave FFBRA Powerpoint Presentations with a voice over about our local Sussex geology and its unsuitability for fracking and about Regulation. We are very grateful to both David and Mike for making these available to us as the information they contain is invaluable. These have now been made into a DVD and are available to all members (email [suetaylorbalcombe@gmail.com](mailto:suetaylorbalcombe@gmail.com) if you would like a copy or pick one up at our next Coffee Morning Meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> January).

### **Research**

- Researched land registry records and discovered that, in September 2013, Cuadrilla signed a 30 year lease of the land at Lower Stumble.

### **Interaction with WSCC, Environment and Other Agencies**

- Forced WSCC to act over the breach by Cuadrilla in their permitted noise levels by recording the breaches and threatening legal action.
- Letter sent to WSCC asking for an extension to the consultation period and asking for the consultation period to start after Christmas rather than before the holidays (which they have done).
- Attended two meetings to discuss the impact of fracking on Sussex with Louise Goldsmith, Leader of WSCC and representatives from Fernhurst, Wisborough Green, Kirdford and the protectors. Gave her information including a copy of FFBRA's response to the Public Health England Report, David Smythe and Mike Hill DVD and Alan Tootill's book "Fracking the UK".
- Sent in a formal complaint to Tony Kershaw, Head of Legal Services for WSCC about the confusing public notice in the Mid Sussex Times from Cuadrilla dated 14 November. This was signed by 70 members.
- Kept records of Cuadrilla's planning breaches (noise, traffic etc.) and complained about these to WSCC and various agencies.
- Attended and asked questions at a meeting between parishioners and the Environment Agency in October and kept a record of all questions and answers.
- Attended and asked questions at the presentation by WSCC in Balcombe in December on the planning process
- Spotted the inaccuracy in the Environment Agency's presentation which stated there was no connection between the River Ouse and the Ardingly Reservoir and getting a written acknowledgement from the Environment Agency that there is a connection. Important because this establishes that if there is pollution entering the streams around Lower Stumble, this will flow into the River Ouse and into Ardingly Reservoir

- Worked with various agencies and organisations to find out the cause of large numbers of dead fish in the Boundary Stream and also the cause of the pollution incident in the stream that flowed bright green for two days. FFBRA received funding to test the dead fish.

### **Actions**

- Many FFBRA members have made themselves available to speak to, travel to and inform other communities about what they have learnt about unconventional oil/gas companies and the experience of Cuadrilla's drilling in the Balcombe over the summer.
- Many, many letters sent to press, MPs, and WSCC.
- Television and radio interviews.
- Eleven weekly newsletters
- Sent in a formal response to the draft Public Health England Report Review of the Potential Public Health Impacts of Exposures to Chemical and Radioactive Pollutants as a Result of Shale Gas Extraction which FFBRA hope will get included in the final version.
- Sent many letters to the Lords Select Committee which has led to FFBRA being granted permission to submit written evidence to them.
- Carried a letter to Downing Street on behalf of FFBRA asking David Cameron to put a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing for shale gas, coal bed methane and underground coal gasification. A small choir of FFBRA members attended and sang Christmas carols.
- Sent flyer round whole village "What is in it for you"?
- Made visits to the other villages faced with unconventional oil/ gas exploration including Wisborough Green, Kirdford, Fernhurst, Shepherdswell, Llantrithyd and Barton Moss.
- Large number of signatures obtained for our petition to West Sussex County Council to oppose fracking in Sussex.
- Corresponded with researchers in the UK and USA in such fields as geography, law, public health, science and technology, veterinary medicine and sociology.
- Received funding to buy and run a community laser printer which has been used to print leaflets, forms and display material for FFBRA. This has been a great asset as it is a very fast heavy duty laser printer.
- Our Community printer has also been used to print leaflets for the National Trust AGM, leaflets for the Gasland 2 screening in East Grinstead, Wisborough Green's guidance document for responding to their planning application and supporting residents in Horse Hill, Surrey.

So what is our priority for this year? Fighting Cuadrilla's new application and for that we urgently need funding for a planning consultant.

If you know of anyone or are able to help with fundraising or can donate, please get in contact by telephoning 01444 819 329 or by emailing [suetaylorbalcombe@gmail.com](mailto:suetaylorbalcombe@gmail.com)

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