



FFBRA NEWSLETTER NUMBER FOURTEEN

FUTURE EVENTS

In Balcombe

FFBRA Information Day, Bramble Hall, Saturday 18 January

Our next FFBRA meeting will be this Saturday at Bramble Hall, Bramble Hill, Balcombe, RH17 6HR 11 am till 1 pm and will be a Coffee Stop / Exhibition. 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 finalised planning application will not have been made public in time for this event. So instead we will display information that WSCC have recently made available to FFBRA regarding this application.

There will also be information available about the geology of Sussex, fracking regulations, planning processes, and various government reports such as Public Health England's report on Shale Gas and also the AMEC report.

Fernhurst, Wisborough Green and Shepherdsweil (who have all recently started to campaign against planning applications from the oil and gas industry) have very kindly given us samples of their guidance leaflets that they produced for their villages and we will have these available. FFBRA intend to produce similar guidance leaflets for Balcombe and so it will be very useful to have feedback from our members on these.

Rally at Lower Stumble, Balcombe, Sunday 19th January 1.30 pm to 2.30pm

France's Green Euro MEP José Bové, one of the leaders of the grass roots movement against fracking in France, will be speaking at a rally being held at the gates of the Balcombe drilling site this Sunday 19th January at 1.30pm. He has been involved in campaigning for organic farmers, against genetically modified crops, and against fracking

France has successfully banned Fracking in their country and it will be very interesting to hear José's views on how this was achieved.

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

Fracking Public Debate in Adastra Hall, Keymer Road, Hassocks, BN6 8QH, Wednesday 22 January, 7.30 pm

Fracking – Helpful or Harmful? Three speakers will each speak for eight minutes and then there will be a question and answer session. The speakers are Anneliese Dodds, <http://www.anneliesedodds.org.uk/> Labour MEP Candidate, Nick Grealey, well known pro-fracker, owner of website “No Hot Air” <http://www.nohotair.co.uk/> and Alan Rew, Balcombe resident and FFBRA Committee member.

This should be a very interesting evening; it is free and there will be light refreshments provided. Please do go, if you can. Also, if you know anyone in Hassocks (or nearby), please could you tell them about this event and ask them to go. It is important that we spread awareness of fracking across Sussex. Events like this where pro and anti frackers have the opportunity to state their cases are brilliant in helping increase public awareness. If you plan to go by train to the venue, the 18.58 pm train from Balcombe arrives at Hassocks Station at 19.12 pm. The Hall is a ten minute walk from the train station in Hassocks

Policy Exchange: Free Debate, Can Shale Gas Solve Europe's Energy and Climate Challenges Thursday 30 January

To get a free ticket go <http://www.policyexchange.org.uk/events/upcoming> and register.

This event has the following speakers

Chair: Guy Newey - Head of Environment & Energy, Policy Exchange
The Lord Browne of Madingley – Chairman of Cuadrilla; Partner, Riverstone; UK Government's Lead Non-Executive Board Member
Professor Dieter Helm CBE - University of Oxford; Member of the Economics Advisory Group to the Secretary of State for Energy & Climate Change
Jason Anderson - Head of European Climate and Energy Policy, WWF

Shale gas exploration has faced moratoriums in several European countries and it could face increasing environmental legislation from the European Commission.

This debate will consider how Europe's policymakers should deal with the opportunities and risks created by the innovation of shale gas.

All Day Benefit for Solent Fracking Awareness Sunday 2 Feb 1.30 pm to Monday 3 Feb 12.30 am at The Barn, The Milton Arms, 174-176 Milton Road, Southsea PO4 8PR

Tickets are £5 and can be bought online.

<http://solentfrackingawareness.ticketsource.co.uk/>

Our MP, Francis Maude will be holding a Drop In Surgery on 7 February between 5 and 6pm at Gough House, Madeira Avenue, Horsham RH12 1AB

This is a drop in surgery for any of his constituents. There is no need to book. You can expect to be given a 10 minute slot to talk to him about your concerns or ask questions about Cuadrilla's activities in the village, the planning process, recent changes to government legislation (or anything else). These surgeries are held monthly and the subsequent one will be on 14 March.

Public Information Evening about Fracking Thursday 13 February at 7.30 pm in the Assembly Room, The Council House, North Street, Chichester PO19 1LQ.

The meeting will be chaired by Cllr Michael Woolley, former Mayor of Chichester.

There will be several short presentations from:

- Trevor Beattie, Chief Executive
- Claire Potts, Minerals and Waste Lead, from South Downs National Park Authority
- Mike Elkington, Strategic Planning Manager from West Sussex County Council
- Keith Taylor, MEP for South East Region
- Tony Bosworth Energy Campaigner, Friends of the Earth

After the presentations, there will be an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions. Please could you let your friends/colleagues/members know about this event, particularly any who live in the Chichester area.

NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR OUR MEMBERS

A Different Day of the Week for our FFBRA Coffee Morning/ Exhibition in February

In last week's newsletter we asked for feedback as to the best time and day of the week for our monthly FFBRA meetings. We have held five of these on Saturdays (usually from 11 am to 1 pm) and they have been very well attended. However, always having them on a Saturday, has meant some people have not been able to attend due to commitments on that day. So we are going to try another day of the week.

So for our next meeting we will experiment and try having it on a Sunday – **Sunday 16 February 11 am till 1.00 pm** – please make a date in your diary. This is the start of half term which I know means some of you will be away but hopefully many of you will be able to attend.

Update on Cuadrilla's Planning Application

I spoke to Jane Mosely, WSCC Planning Officer, on Thursday 16 January and she told me she was still waiting on information from Cuadrilla. She told me she was expecting to get it today or tomorrow and that once she had that information she could start the validation process and then make the application public. Once it is made public there will be a six week public consultation period. So Balcombe continues to wait.

Government Incentives (or Bribes Depending on Your Point of View)

This week, the Government announced plans to give incentives (or bribes, depending on your point of view) to local councils to compensate for 'some of the hassle when they (the drilling companies) are getting it out', as Energy Minister Michael Fallon put it.

Whitehall officials estimated this would add up to about £1.7 million per fracked council. Plus the £100,000 already promised for each fracked place, and a share of 1% of profits.

In total, this could add up to '£10 million per wellhead', said Fallon. Or possibly not, if the drilling was less successful.

But set those figures against the expenses already incurred, and the outlook doesn't look so good. The policing at Balcombe this summer, during an only partially-completed testing of one well, added up to about £4.5 million. And that's before any actual fracking has been done (if we are to believe what Cuadrilla says - a tall order, anyway).

Set that against a similar figure for policing during extraction, if not more, and that £10 million starts to look pathetic. And that's before considering mending chewed-up roads, lost jobs and revenues in tourism, farming and hospitality, impact on house prices, and regulatory costs incurred by councils and govern-

ment bodies .**In any case, which would you choose if offered: money or good health?**

There has been a lot in the press this week on this topic. But for me one of the most enlightening was in a Public Finance Magazine.

“Financial compensation alone will not be enough to overcome opposition to fracking. It needs to be combined with a sophisticated programme of active public engagement”

The article goes on to explain that the complexities of the motivations that underpin support and opposition which involve people’s perceptions about positive or negative impacts of a project, the trustworthiness of the participants, and the perceived fairness of the process and the outcome. The web site reference to this is

<http://opinion.publicfinance.co.uk/2014/01/finding-a-way-forward-on-fracking/>

[“Concerns about environmental impacts, especially risks of air pollution and contamination of surface and groundwater, are among the most influential drivers of opposition to shale gas developments.](#)

Financial compensation on its own is incapable of tackling these issues comprehensively and effectively. Combined with other top-down decision-making processes, it is instead likely to sharpen a perception in local communities that certain projects are being imposed, triggering further opposition. Setting the terms of compensation only after opposition is already active and giving developers’ discretion over the terms of compensation further increases the chances of it being interpreted as a ‘bribe’. “

My take away from this article

1. We should expect to see a lot more public engagement from both the civil service and the government on this subject.
2. The government will ask licensees to carry out a comprehensive high-level assessment of environmental risks and to consult with stakeholders (I think that means us!)
3. The Government has handled this badly by setting out compensation too late when opposition has already become active
4. The Government should not have let the terms of compensation be set by the oil and gas industry.
5. Public perception of the trustworthiness of the participants (government, and oil and gas industry) is important
6. The offer of compensation is likely to increase opposition to fracking throughout the country and is a home goal.

Report from FFBRA Member attending the All Party Parliamentary Group on Unconventional Oil and Gas at the House of Commons, Monday 13 January 2014, 4 pm – 5:30 pm

Sue Taylor: I first heard of this meeting through an email sent to me from Brenda Pollack, Friends of the Earth campaigner, who was concerned that although the meeting was to discuss the impact of fracking on local communities, no local residents from any affected communities had in fact been invited.

I researched the purpose of the meeting and discovered that an all party group has been set up to discuss on a regular basis unconventional oil and gas exploration in the UK. They hold regular meetings but the one on the 13 January was particularly relevant to FFBRA as it was a

Discussion on the Impact and Consequences of Unconventional Oil and Gas Exploration on Local Communities

I applied on behalf of FFBRA to attend and managed to get four tickets for the event. Professor Laurie Dunne, Rob Greer and Kathryn McWhirter and myself went to the meeting. Beki Adams representing Sussex small businesses also attended. We were, I think, the only representatives of local communities so it was just as well we attended.

The setting, although very grand, is very comfortable and acoustically excellent. We were made to feel welcome.

Dan Byles, MP is the Chair of these meetings. He is responsible for establishing the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Unconventional Oil and Gas which comprises over seventy cross- party MPs and Peers and other stakeholders.

The format of this particular meeting was that Tony Grayling from the Environment Agency spoke first, and then Nick Boles, Minister for Planning and then the floor was open for questions.

Both Tony Grayling and Nick Boles talked repeatedly about “streamlining” in their introductions. Tony from the point of view of “streamlining” regulations and Nick talked about “streamlining” planning processes. Then Nick talked about his enthusiasm for shale gas as an energy source. He must have mentioned “enthusiasm” at least four times in eight minutes. He did not, however agree with my description later in the Q&A session of himself as “cheerleading” for the industry.

Both I and Laurie were able to ask a question. Below is the transcript of my question and the response to it from Nick Boles.

The format of the meeting is you put up your hand to ask a question, if you get selected by the Chairman, you can ask a brief question and then the panel, either Tony or Nick answer. I managed to get in one question and as you will see from the transcript below Nick Boles closed his answer to me with another

question “I challenge you to name any energy sources that don’t have energy costs at least as great as fracking”. He was being purely rhetorical as the format of the meeting does not allow for the person putting the question to the panel to continue with the debate after the panel has answered.

Transcript of my question and Nick Boles’ answer.

Sue Taylor, Chartered Accountant and Resident of Balcombe

To me this feels like the banking crisis all over again because you have are starting something where the costs will be passed onto the taxpayer and I am very concerned that in your enthusiasm for investment in this industry some of the steps you are taking are just going to land Sussex tax payers with a very large bill. You have already told the industry that they don’t need to put up a bond, they don’t need to put money up front. These are very small companies, the companies that are doing this. They set themselves up as small limited liability companies that can in fact just fold and they can walk away and we know from the experience in American that this is happening there already. So we have the problem of these potential costs going to the taxpayer.

We also know from the AMEC report that there will be enormous amounts of road traffic, and again the cost of road repairs will pass to the taxpayer, and building more roads increasing regulations there are so many costs that ...

We hear about jobs being created but we don’t hear about job losses. Tourism is worth £8 billion in Sussex, £8 billion, and in this country the GDP of tourism is 9%. Tourists are not going to want to come to the Sussex countryside and look at flares and look at large numbers of trucks trundling along. So we need both sides of the equation I find it very worrying. It is sort of like (long pause) “cheerleading” one side of the industry. We are hearing one side of the industry but not the other side of the cost equation. It is very dangerous and so I would like your comments on the other side of the cost equation.

Answer from Nick Boles, Minister for Planning

Very good question. Of course every energy source imposes social costs, costs that are and we as you know in this country have probably underprovided for future energy needs and are at some point at sufficient risk of being short of energy but we also have interests that are more than just economic interest in the sense of energy security. We don’t want to rely entirely on the import of energy. I don’t need to tell you about the cost to the tax payer of wind farms or the cost to the tourism industry of wind turbines. I probably don’t need to tell you of the costs to the taxpayer of supporting nuclear and the level of ... The problem is, I clearly don’t need to tell you about the effect of coal mining on the landscape and communities and air quality. The fundamental truth is that every energy source has a cost even solar panels and I can tell you, that when we start trying to put up a big deal to put up solar panels it may not generate any lorries or it may not generate flares but it has an effect on the landscape and again on tourism. We absolutely have to take them all into account. I think the specific point about these small companies with very little capital..... There clearly needs to be a way in which the liabilities can be picked up and back stopped by the industry and that is

this is an extremely important thing. The broader social and environmental costs are absolutely part of the consideration and how far along we need to go but I challenge you to name any energy sources that don't have energy costs at least as great".

Letter to José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission and the MEPs.

To this week's email is attached a copy of the letter to José Manuel Barroso that has been written by Mike Hill in conjunction with many organisations.

The background to this letter is that our government has been successful in defeating the European Union's attempts to set legally binding regulations for shale gas extraction. Now instead of adopting EU-wide regulations the states will be asked to follow a number of non-binding "recommendations" covering a range of protective measures against water contamination and other hazardous environmental impacts. This proposal of voluntary guidelines is a triumph for industrialist groups and governments of the UK and Poland who are promoting shale drilling in Europe. It is a major defeat for environmental protection groups such as the Greenpeace and the Friends of the Earth who were lobbying for creation of EU-wide laws.

The letter has been signed by a wide number of organisations. The key reasons cited in this letter for opposition to the shale gas industry are:

- It locks us into a fossil fuel cycle
- Requires a massive system of pipelines, pressure stations and transportation links
- Impacts local environments in a destructive manner
- Takes out a disproportionate amount of land, water and air
- Requires vast numbers of vehicles
- Will increase poverty
- Contradicts the local economic system
- Corresponds to large scale industrialisation

Fundraising

In order to fight Cuadrilla's new application we urgently need to raise funds for a fighting fund to cover such costs as planning consultant, legal advice, leaflets etc. Our target is £7,000. If you can help in anyway with fundraising, please get in contact by telephoning 01444 819 329 or by emailing suetaylorbalcombe@gmail.com.

Payment can be by Bank Transfer to
Account Name Frack Free Balcombe
Sort Code 08 60 01
Account number 20317139

Or by cheque made payable to "Frack Free Balcombe" and mailed to Sue Taylor, Little Meadows, Stockcroft Road, Balcombe, RH17 6LL
(6 houses down from the Oldlands Avenue end of Stockcroft)

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