

West Newton (WN) Liaison Committee

Densholme Care Farm, Great Hatfield

06 November 2013

Notes of Meeting

Attendees: David Montagu-Smith (Chairman, Rathlin Energy (UK)) - DM-S
Tom Selkirk (Project Manager, Rathlin Energy (UK)) - TS
Philip Silk (Planning Manager, Moorhouse Drilling and Completions) - PS
Jonathan Foster (HSE Manager, PSSSL) - JF
Caroline Foster (Field Manager, Rathlin Energy (UK)) - CF
Ron Jagger (Resident of Burton Constable) - RJ
Don Fields (Representing Burton Constable Parish Council) - DF
Karen Parker (Representing Ellerby Parish Council) - KP
Adam Lovell (Rathlin Energy (UK) Communications) - AL

Apologies: Steve Croft (Representing Withernwick Parish Council) - SC
Geoff North (Representing Aldbrough Parish Council) - GN
John Mann (Representing Withernwick Parish Council) - JM
Simon Taylor (Rathlin Energy (UK) Communications) - ST

1. Welcome and Introductions:

DM-S opened the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance. He detailed what each individual agenda item was and which person from the relevant parts of the business would be discussing.

DM-S explained how the site was now moving to a different stage in operations and that there is currently a temporary application for work being submitted. He explained there would continue to be site movements but it would be significantly less than previous as operations had moved to a testing and evaluation period, which is mostly sub-surface. DM-S said there would be much less activity and any associated vehicle movements would be less specific.

D-MS said the meeting would also address how Rathlin manage community communication in the future.

2. Current operations update

CF explained that logging - which was a 24-hour operation – has now been completed. DF raised the issue of a light which was facing out of the site towards West Newton. CF informed DF that she was already aware of the light, and indeed another which was pointing out of site, and that she had been out personally to address the situation. CF would visit the site again at the conclusion of this meeting to ensure the light remained repositioned. CF then referred back to the logging exercise and that it had taken longer than expected, not three or four days, but a week.

DM-S asked if there had been any concerns about traffic. RJ said there had been a few mutterings and complaints regards the traffic movements, but that it was only really from people who had met them on the road and had to navigate safely past them. He said those he had seen had been driving considerately and quite steady.

TS asked if the 25 mph speed limit had been adopted. JF confirmed it had. CF suggested most lorries had been arriving with escort vehicles due to their size so speed should never have been an issue. JF explained there was a deliberate under usage of signage reminding of speed limitations and that drivers are told about the importance of adhering to any speed restrictions before they deliver – with detailed and very specific briefings given beforehand.

RJ queried the shift patterns. JF explained some of the logging crews were operating three journeys between dropping off and picking up so there would be additional movements at shift changeover.

RJ explained he had been asked by a resident called Annette at 'Letter Box Cottage' if he could raise a point on her behalf. Annette said cracks have recently appeared in her bungalow and wondered whether there was a connection to the drilling activity.

TS assured RJ that this was not the case and that seismic testing had not been carried out in that area and that even if it had, the likelihood of cracks appearing in a house on the surface was highly unlikely. TS explained that wherever seismic activity took place a comprehensive monitoring and recording process was instituted (Peak Particle Velocity). CF agreed to follow this up and contact Annette directly. She reconfirmed that no seismic works had occurred nearby. DM-S assured residents that if it was something important to them or others then it was important to Rathlin Energy (UK) and that matters would be looked into.

3. Well testing programme

TS explained what had been happening on site recently was an evaluation of the well prior to testing, which is proposed for the New Year. A 'wire' was sent down the well, with a tool on the end which records and measures by sending out a sound pulse. In this case the works will enable Rathlin Energy (UK) to create an image of wellbore. The intention of this work is to find out if any additional activity will be required, to hydraulically isolate any areas of hydrocarbon interest, deep in the well. If this is required, a separate tool will be sent down to create holes in the casing and cement is then pumped in to isolate the specific area. This will involve 12-hour working for approximately 10 days.

The well will then be monitored for between two and four weeks. If necessary the process will be repeated. This work will take place between 7am and 7pm. TS said there will be a tanker on site when cementing is occurring.

TS indicated that the geological analysis of the well suggested that further testing is warranted. TS confirmed that fracking is not being contemplated. RJ asked if it may be considered in the future. TS said not for this well and that it was never part of the original plans or proposal.

TS said that the next phase of testing, proposed for the New Year, would involve three separate elements and that two would be very deep down - at about 2,500 metres. The objective is to acquire information about the reservoir properties of the rock to understand the pressure and mechanical characteristics.

The other test, at around 2,000 metres depth, is to establish if there is gas and if it could be produced.

TS explained that if gas is tested, then a daily rate of flow needs to be determined as part of the commercial evaluation.

RJ asked if similar operations were taking place at Crawberry Hill (CH). TS said that CH is at a similar stage as at WN. DM-S said these sites were very similar and that was not surprising for two sites only 15 miles apart. DM-S said there are parallels. TS explained that both sites have similar targets to test.

4. Environment Agency permitting process

The EA permits are required now as oil and gas operations have recently been categorised as a mining operation. As such, additional permits are required which focus specifically on extractive waste. JF reinforced that the permits are not being implemented because there are any additional risks. He said it is merely procedural.

The new categorising (i.e. as a mining operation) meant there were permits to be obtained in relation to ground water – which is anything between 25 metres and 10,000 metres – and that everything is classed as ground water. This is different from the original permits, WR11, for well boring which were specific to the protection of the near-surface aquifers. Specifically, JF explained it was the EU Mining Waste Directive and the EU Industrial Emissions Directive.

TS said there was a four-week public consultation period and then a seven to nine week period of determination for the EA permits.

KP suggested that if fracking was ever considered then these permits would maybe not be a bad thing. TS agreed, and explained that it would not have any impact on the way Rathlin Energy (UK) conducted previous operations nor expected/future operations at either site. He explained the permits essentially cover what comes out of the well and went in during the drilling and testing phase.

RJ asked if Rathlin Energy (UK) was working at a local level with the EA. JF explained it was at a national policy level although they were working with a newly formed department in the EA which has regional offices in Leeds. JF explained the legislation covered mine waste and that it didn't apply to water wells. He also explained it covered waste, which if any gas was flared in a testing capacity, then it is classed as waste, therefore the new permits are required.

JF explained the EA was working with industry to simplify the process. TS explained permits were being progressed in parallel at WN and CH. He said that Rathlin Energy (UK) anticipate a 13-week period before the testing can commence from the date of submission, which is expected to be at the end of November.

5. Public liaison communication routes

TS asked what more Rathlin Energy (UK) could do to keep residents informed of the application and approval process for the permits. He also asked what additional information was required and if the current communications were acceptable. RJ explained that people in the parish were aware of his role. DF indicated people within his community did approach him if they had questions about the operations DF wondered if maybe a public meeting may be worth considering.

DM-S asked if traffic information would assist, as he didn't want people to be taken by surprise. KP said the parish council was not meeting until 2014 but that may be a good time to attend as the permits would have been submitted by then.

KP said there was a parish newsletter which went to print on November 10 that would be a good place to put information. TS asked if there were any others, Burton Constable and Skirlaugh were suggested. TS suggested putting the names of the parish council representatives on the Rathlin website. It was agreed that CF would co-ordinate with assistance from the communications team.

6. Members discussions

Covered as above

7. Any other business

No other matters arising

8. Date of next meeting

TBC confirmed following completion of permits process. DM-S passed on his thanks to the residents for attendance and continuing involvement in proceedings and discussions.