

Crawberry Hill Community Liaison Committee Meeting
7.00pm on 21 September 2015
Bishop Burton Village Hall

Notes of Meeting

Attendees: David Montagu-Smith (Chairman, Rathlin Energy (UK)) - DM-S
Tom Selkirk (Project Manager, Rathlin Energy (UK)) - TS
Caroline Foster (Field Manager, Rathlin Energy (UK)) - CF
Jonathan Foster (HSE Manager, Petroleum Safety Services Limited) - JF
Mat Martin (Construction Manager, Petroleum Safety Services Limited) - TF
David Oxtoby (Chair, Bishop Burton Parish Council) - DO
Margaret Hebb (Bishop Burton Resident) - MH
David Drew (Walkington Parish Council) - DD
Robin Taylor (Chair, Walkington Parish Council) - RT
Jason Chester (Bishop Burton Resident) - JC
John Castle (Walkington Resident) - JCstle
Simon Taylor (Rathlin Communications) - ST

Apologies: Peter Rolinson (Former Walkington Resident) - PR

1. Welcome and Introductions

DM-S opened the liaison committee meeting, welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending.

DD started by introducing RT who had been appointed the new Chairman of Walkington Parish Council since the last Crawberry Hill community liaison committee meeting. DM-S welcomed RT.

DM-S then discussed the notes of the previous meeting which were approved as an accurate reflection of what was said and agreed.

DM-S reminded the community liaison committee members that Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited (Rathlin) is not undertaking any high volume hydraulic fracturing in the Bowland Shale in East Yorkshire and that the company does not plan to do so in the future.

DM-S then went on to explain the purpose of the meeting, which was to discuss the implications of the announcement on 12 August 2015, where Rathlin had widely communicated that it would be abandoning the Crawberry Hill well bore. He said that he and the team wanted to explain this decision in more detail as well as taking resident representatives through the abandonment process and timeframe.

DM-S said that he would start by explaining the abandonment decision. TS would then give an update on the current planning position before JF would talk about the current status of planning and Environmental Agency (EA) permissions. CF would then address the wellbore abandonment and MM would talk through the restoration programme.

2. **Abandonment Decision**

DM-S reminded resident representatives that Rathlin is the first company to have drilled exploratory oil and gas wells in East Yorkshire since the 1970s. He said that the two wells, at Crawberry Hill and West Newton, were successfully drilled in 2013 and testing of conventional hydrocarbon targets in the West Newton A well was carried out in 2014.

DM-S explained that the results at West Newton A have been very encouraging with the recovery of natural gas together with the capture of important data on the characteristics of the sub-surface prospects. The next well, known as West Newton B for which Rathlin has planning permission, will help to assess whether this discovery could be the basis for a conventional commercial gas development. He said that Rathlin expected to undertake this phase of work in 2016.

DM-S restated Rathlin's position at Crawberry Hill following written confirmation to liaison committee members on 12 August 2015. He explained that the decision had been taken to abandon the well site on technical and commercial grounds and that no further exploratory work will take place at the existing site. He said that this decision has been taken in light of all the information derived from each of the exploration wells and against the background of continuing depression in world energy prices, which currently show little sign of recovery.

DM-S said that, after thorough analysis, Rathlin has concluded that the costs associated with testing the Crawberry Hill well cannot be justified, relative to probability of commercial success. He explained that the company continues to believe in the overall prospectivity of the geology in the Crawberry Hill area but the current well site is not a preferred location for further drilling or completion investment and, as a result, the well will be abandoned and the site will be restored.

He said that the associated works will be carried out in accordance with the terms and conditions of Rathlin's licence, the environmental permits and safety regulations governing the company's operations and within the timetable set by the planning permission granted by East Riding of Yorkshire Council.

DM-S said that Rathlin has reached an important point in the programme of exploration in East Yorkshire and that the company looks forward with optimism to the next phase of operations which will be focused on the West Newton area.

3. **Planning Application**

TS reminded resident representatives that Rathlin's application to extend its operations at Crawberry Hill were approved last year, extending the planning permission for a further 18 months.

He said that Rathlin had originally worked on a plan to start the proposed testing activities in early August but, for the reasons outlined above, a decision had now been taken to abandon the wellbore and restore the site.

TS said that the planning permission timeframe for testing the well had now elapsed - based on the company's ability to undertake and complete the works. He said that Rathlin's aim is to complete all of the restoration works at the site by 04 April 2016. He explained that Rathlin will be restoring the site to its pre-existing condition.

He said that the additional water boreholes that were drilled will be removed too. He said that the wellbore will be plugged and cemented in accordance with the Department of Energy and Climate Change's best practice guidelines.

MM confirmed that the site will be restored to the same topography. He said that he had led the surveys that were undertaken before any work started at the site in 2013.

He said that he had also project managed the site preparation and that he would be overseeing the restoration work personally to ensure that everything is reinstated to the same standard.

JF explained that Rathlin will need to surrender the current EA permit on completion of works – he said that this is known as a simple surrender, designed to demonstrate that all of the work undertaken has been done in line with the rules and regulations.

He said that the EA will work alongside the HSE and independent well examiners to make sure that the well is abandoned correctly and that the due process is followed. He explained that the statutory authorities' role is to assess Rathlin's work to make sure that there are no environmental or health and safety implications.

JF said that because no well testing has taken place, this should be a more straightforward categorisation and surrender process. He said that water monitoring will continue through the site restoration work. He also explained that ongoing assessment of the liner had shown that it is intact so Rathlin is not expecting any issues at the site in general.

4. EA Permits

JF reminded resident representatives that Rathlin had applied for a permit variation for the management of surface water. He said that the containment ditches are the current mitigation measure and that these had proven to be successful. He explained that the ditches have been continually monitored and that clean water had safely 'run off' into them as planned.

JF said that Rathlin has now applied for a licence to discharge clean surface water by creating a soak way. He said that, if approved, the water would continue to be tested and monitored before being discharged. He explained that relevant equipment will help to sample the water before it passes through an interceptor and then being naturally discharged (dissipating into the chalk). He said that if there is anything to suggest the water is unclean, it will be tankered away. He said Rathlin was not expecting to find anything untoward.

He explained that the permit sets out the monitoring regime, which includes sampling water offsite to test it under laboratory conditions as an additional precautionary measure. He said that current analysis shows that the water is clean with no signs of contamination whatsoever.

5. **Wellbore Abandonment**

CF reminded resident representatives that no work had been undertaken at Crawberry Hill since August 2013. She said that the wellbore abandonment works will require a workover rig and that a wireline unit will also be used. She said that the rig will be around 37m in height. She said it will be a truck mounted rig that will be brought to site in a maximum of 12 loads.

CF said that UK oil and gas guidelines for abandonment will be followed throughout. She said that the team, which is highly experienced in wellbore abandonment, will set plugs and cement at depths associated with the porous reservoirs and finally 350m from the top. She said at least 30m of solid cement will be put in place for each plug – although Rathlin will, in all likelihood, put more in. She explained that the wireline will help the team to continually assess the wellbore temperature so that they can make sure that concrete is mixed to set at the right level.

Resident representatives asked which independent people and organisations are involved in the wellbore abandonment and assessment process. CF said that Rathlin will submit its plan for abandonment to the HSE and the EA and that an independent well examiner and the HSE will monitor the works as they progress and on completion. CF said that the team will then take the wellhead out and 'cut and cap' the well. She said that the top will then be backfilled with chalk and soil. She explained that the cellar ring will be at least 1.5m below the ground.

CF said that once the 'cut and cap' work is complete, the site will be routinely monitored prior to starting the wider site restoration works.

6. **Site Restoration**

MM said that restoration will start with diggers which will remove the aggregate and his team will segregate all of the materials. He said that Rathlin will reuse and recycle as much of the material recovered from site as possible.

MM said that in the unlikely situation where any construction material is found to be contaminated it will be disposed of via appropriate recycling facilities. He explained that the liner will be cut into manageable sizes and disposed of accordingly and that it will be fully recycled. He said that sub soil restoration and compacting will take place. He said that the chalk will then be exposed and then the soil will be compacted together so that everything is restored to its pre-work conditions. He said that he would expect this work to take between four and six weeks.

MM said that the well head and fencing will be reused. He explained that the entrance will be reduced in size and that this will be the last thing to be put back. He said that a small element of hedgerow will be also reinstalled.

Resident representatives asked if the farmer will be able to re-farm the site as soon as the land is restored. JF said that there is always a period of settlement, but in essence yes it can be farmed on handover. He said the lease will be relinquished, but there is a five year period of aftercare – for ongoing monitoring, which Rathlin will undertake.

Resident representatives asked if additional soil would need to be brought to the site to replace what was removed. MM said that no soil was removed and that it is all currently on site so there will be no requirement to bring anything extra in.

MM said that stone removal will be necessary and that it is hoped that the materials at Crawberry Hill can be re-used elsewhere. MM said that roads will be kept clean throughout this phase of work as they had been when the well was drilled back in 2013. He reminded resident representatives that wheel washes had been used previously and that they would be utilised this time around too.

MM said that it was possible that Rathlin will use the same company which supported in the development of the site originally because they know the area and they had complied very well with the traffic management plan – especially in relation to avoiding the villages of Walkington and Bishop Burton. He confirmed that a Banksman would control traffic into and out of the site. He said that this was very much a reversal of the original works, which resident representatives agreed had been hardly noticeable from the neighbouring villages.

MM said that the original speed limit will be reinstated once the work is complete. He said that the temporary speed limit will have been in force for 18 months by Christmas. He said that the arrival of anti-fracking protestors [at a site where no fracking was ever going to take place] had resulted in Humberside Police reducing the speed limit further to 30mph. He said that a new application was being readied to extend the 40mph speed restriction throughout the abandonment stage.

Resident representatives asked if there is anything that might delay the works and take it beyond 04 April 2016. TS said that the availability of the rig and the weather were the biggest risks at this stage.

Resident representatives asked for Rathlin's view on whether anti-fracking protestors were likely to return to the site. DM-S said that as Rathlin never had any intention of carrying out high volume hydraulic fracturing within the Bowland Shale at this site, those protesting against fracking had clearly been misinformed about the nature of the operations going on there. He said that Rathlin is now abandoning the well before restoring the site and expects to get on with this phase of the operation uninterrupted. Resident representatives agreed that any further disruption by protestors would not make sense.

7. Any Other Business

DM-S asked resident representatives if there was any other business to discuss. No further items were raised.

8. Date and time of the next meeting:

DM-S suggested that the next meeting be held by exception - if resident representatives want to discuss anything specific with the abandonment programme. He said that if anything changes ST will advise resident representatives by telephone and email in the first instance and then a decision can be made as to whether a meeting is needed.

DM-S thanked resident representatives for their proactive input and wider community engagement over the last three years and 19 community liaison meetings. He said that their input had been tremendous and that their feedback had shaped a great deal of the company's thinking and actions. He said he was most grateful and that the community should be proud to have people behind them who care so passionately about them and the local area.

He reminded everyone Rathlin intends to be a good neighbour at all times and that all possible will be done by the company to make sure this is the case.

He also said that the company is accessible 24-hours a day, seven days a week and urged anyone with any concerns to get in touch.

He said that further updates are available via Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited's website: www.rathlin-energy.co.uk and reminded resident representatives about the 24-hour emergency number: 0800 1959154.