

Bishop Burton and Walkington Liaison Committee (Crawberry Hill)

17 April 2012

Bishop Burton Village Hall

Notes of Meeting

Attendees: Cllr Phyllis Pollard, Chair (East Riding of Yorkshire Council) - PP
Cllr David Oxtoby (Chair, Bishop Burton Parish Council) - DO
Margaret Hebb (Bishop Burton Resident) - MH
Jason Chester (Bishop Burton Resident) - JC
Peter Rolinson (Walkington Resident) - PR
John Castle (Walkington Resident) - JC
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, Moorhouse Drilling and Completions) - JF
Caroline Foster (Field Manager, Rathlin Energy (UK)) - CF
Simon Taylor (Rathlin Communications) - ST

Apologies: Apologies were received from David Drew (Walkington Parish Council)

1. **Welcome and Introductions:** DM-S opened the liaison group meeting welcomed attendees and thanked them for attending. Attendees were asked to re-introduce themselves and the organisations they represent.

PP had pre-warned the group that due to other diary commitments she would arrive ten minutes after the scheduled start time, so DM-S took the opportunity to discuss that day's press coverage about 'fracking'. A report had been published indicating that this gas extraction method should continue, but under strict conditions, according to a government-named panel of experts. It was generally acknowledged that the coverage was informative and educational.

2. **Notes from the Previous Meeting (27 February 2012):** PP arrived at her scheduled arrival time to chair the meeting. The notes from the previous meeting were discussed and approved as an accurate record of what was discussed and agreed at the previous meeting.

3. **Meeting Agenda:** It was agreed that the agenda for this meeting would include:

- Operations Update from Rathlin Energy (UK)
- Members' Discussion
- Any Other Business
- Date of Next Meeting

4. **Operations Update:** DM-S suggested that he would lead on this part of the meeting as he had some important news to share with the committee.

DM-S went on to explain that since the last liaison meeting in February there had been a change in circumstances. He said that the planning application had been submitted at a time when an outline understanding had been reached re: leasing the land for the proposed well site.

Having received planning approval for an exploration well at Crawberry Hill, Rathlin was then unable to agree commercial terms for its preferred site location before work was due to begin in the summer.

He said that Rathlin is currently exploring alternative options with the intention of submitting a new planning application at a nearby location. The new application will be consistent with the original submission and Rathlin expects to receive similar planning conditions should it be approved.

DM-S reiterated Rathlin's commitment to open and transparent communication and consultation – something the company was acknowledged for before, during and after the first application was submitted. He confirmed that the Rathlin team will continue to operate in the same way as the project moves ahead. He also said that as soon as there is more to report, Rathlin will communicate with stakeholders, consultees and people nearby.

DM-S said that Rathlin was currently in the process of researching alternative surface locations and that the company's objective is to find a suitable site, preferably to the south west of Crawberry Hill further away from residential areas.

DM-S confirmed that the target remains the same and that, as a consequence, the new application will contain largely the same information as the first one. He said that information including archaeology and ecology would need to be refreshed but most of the details in the new application will be similar to the original submission.

He said that a revised/new location would result in a new subsurface trajectory to the target but that this would be unnoticeable to residents.

DM-S recommended, and it was agreed, that the liaison committee was a good consultation vehicle and that the meetings should continue. Although PP's role as Chair would need to be clarified (due to PP being Chair of East Riding of Yorkshire Council's planning committee), it was agreed that the group was an effective representative democracy and that this forum is probably best from an ongoing communication and consultation perspective. It was also agreed that group members would act as a conduit for information between the community and Rathlin. Rathlin welcomed this as, having learned a number of valuable lessons from the first application, team members are now able to give more complete answers to any questions raised.

Responding, PP said that it is a shame that the situation has arisen but reiterated the importance of handling things according to procedure whilst consulting professionally throughout.

Community representatives reinforced this point stating that it is imperative to find the right site – one that will cause the least possible disruption. They also reiterated the importance of health and safety and stressed again the view that the water aquifer should be protected at all costs.

JF repeated Rathlin's commitment to protecting the water aquifer by recapping on Moorhouse's (the drilling contractor) years of drilling experience and its very strong health and safety track record.

JF confirmed that finding the right site is at the forefront of Rathlin's mind and that it is hoped that a suitable alternative would become clearer within four-six weeks. He said that under no circumstances would the company be progressing with a new application until terms have been agreed with a new landowner and all of the legal documents are signed. He also confirmed the widely held view that a site further away from Walkington would be preferable saying that Rathlin had also adopted a 'West is Best' view on the issue. That said, he confirmed that matters were slightly unclear as of today [17 April] and that there are a number of options currently being explored.

Community representatives expressed concerns that this news coincided with the government advisors' report on 'fracking' – the issue that was discussed at the beginning of the meeting.

DM-S said that this was purely coincidental and that Rathlin would be reaffirming its commitment not to hydraulically fracture the Crawberry Hill well. He stated, categorically, that there would be no material changes to this application.

Community representatives asked if the Bond arrangements would be the same – the Bond that is agreed with the landowner. JF said that it was impossible to say until any negotiations are complete but reaffirmed Rathlin's commitment to putting in place relevant and adequate obligations - reinforcing the company's financial standing and its commitment to doing the right thing.

DM-S also repeated the company's position on its financial standing – an issue that had been addressed to the planning committee's satisfaction and something that would be reinforced with the new planning application should that be necessary.

Jointly, DM-S and PP asked that the committee remain united from a communications perspective, setting matters into context and helping constituents understand what was happening. The liaison committee was in no doubt that it was in nobody's interest to reignite people's fears.

TS said that Rathlin intended to share the detail of the new planning application with the liaison committee before it is submitted. He said that there will be no surprises. He said that the intention was to learn lessons from the first application so that any issues could be tackled 'head on'.

PS was then asked to talk the liaison committee through the discharging of the consented application's planning conditions and additional information regarding monitoring during the operations.

PS explained that he has been consulting with Sean Needham of URS, who is the Principal Hydrogeologist who completed the Hydrogeological Risk Assessment for Crawberry Hill. Discussions have been held regarding monitoring of water boreholes both upstream and downstream of the site throughout the operations.

Three potential boreholes have been identified by URS, these would provide suitable opportunity for sample collection during the operations. In order to obtain access to sample these boreholes permission will be required from the relevant owners.

PS informed the committee that URS have proposed to undertake passive sampling of boreholes using a hydrasleeve. This method will ensure that samples can be quickly analysed and interpreted. URS have identified possible analysis for BTEX, Naphthalene, MTBE and TPH.

PS then confirmed that he has spoken with a number of air quality consultants regarding monitoring during the operations at Crawberry Hill. The monitoring would be undertaken throughout the drilling and extended well test operations. A baseline survey will also be completed prior to the commencement of operations. The consultants have recommended a number of sampling methods, primarily using diffusion tubes. Monitoring may be carried out for BTEX, H₂S, Methane and VOCs. In addition, collection pads may be used to monitor dust levels.

PS highlighted that the monitoring proposed for Crawberry Hill site is typically seen on much larger more complex sites or those in long term production.

PS confirmed that the traffic management plan has been submitted and approved. This document confirmed that no vehicles associated with the Rathlin operations will travel through Walkington or Bishop Burton.

All conditions have been signed off for the previous site location. PS explained that this documentation would be included with the new application and amended accordingly to take account of the new location.

Community representatives asked if the borehole locations would change. PS explained that it all depended on the new site location. He said that the company would take advice from Yorkshire Water, the Environment Agency and from professional consultants.

5. **AOB.**

No other matters were raised

6. **Date and time of the next meeting:**

The next meeting will take place at 7pm on Tuesday 12 June 2012 at Bishop Burton Village Hall.

DO agreed to check and confirm the Hall's availability.