

West Newton Community Liaison Committee

7pm on 18 February 2015

Densholme Care Farm, Great Hatfield

Notes of Meeting

Attendees: David Montagu-Smith (Chairman, Rathlin Energy) - DM-S
Tom Selkirk (Project Manager, Rathlin Energy) - TS
Jonathan Foster (HSE Manager, Rathlin Energy) - JF
Tony Fildes (HSE, Rathlin Energy) - TF
Caroline Foster (Field Manager, Rathlin Energy) - CF
Steve Croft (Seismic Programme Manager, Rathlin Energy) - SC
Julie Turrell (Humberside Police) - JT
Norman Wilkie (Chairman of Withernwick Parish Council) - NW
Deborah Stabler (Representing Burton Constable Parish Council) - DS
Ron Jagger (Representing Burton Constable Parish Council) - RJ
Karen Parker (Representing Ellerby Parish Council) - KP
Annette Ford (Representing Sproatley Parish Council) - AF
Jan Naylor (Resident Representative Ellerby Parish) - JN
Don Fields (Resident representative) - DF
Simon Taylor (Communications, Rathlin Energy) - ST

Apologies: Geoff North (Representing Aldbrough Parish Council) - GN
Anne Wood (Resident Representative Withernwick Parish) - AW
Lisa Brazier (Representing Humbleton and Flinton Parish) - LB

Members Still TBC: Resident Representative for Aldbrough Parish
Resident Representative for Humbleton and Flinton Parish
Resident Representative for Sproatley Parish

1. Welcome and Previous Minutes

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

DM-S confirmed that notes of the previous meeting had been produced, circulated and posted on Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited's (Rathlin's) website. He asked if anyone had any comments about the notes. None were received and the notes were confirmed as an accurate reflection of what was discussed at the meeting on 06 November 2014.

2. Introduction of New Members

DM-S welcomed the new members, specifically AW, JN and DS and asked everyone in the room to introduce themselves and who they represent.

It was confirmed that although DF had recently moved away from Burton Constable Parish that he is still a very welcome member of the liaison group having been involved right from the beginning.

3. **Seismic Programme Update**

CF gave an update on the seismic testing programme which took place in late November 2014 up to mid December 2014.

Firstly, she reminded the liaison group about Rathlin's licenced areas (PEDL 183, 2008; 241,000 acres) and showed this on a map.

CF/TS then went on to discuss Rathlin's programme of work to date and what is planned for 2015:

- 2008** - License PEDL 183, granted by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC)
- 2008-09** - Reprocess and map 1,200 km vintage 2D seismic
- 2010-11** - Walkington 3D seismic survey
 - Crawberry Hill well location identified
 - 2D seismic surveys, Watton, Humbleton
- 2012** - Planning approval at Crawberry Hill
 - Identify plus planning application - West Newton
 - 2D seismic survey, Keyingham
- 2013** - Planning approval - West Newton
 - Drill and evaluate Crawberry Hill well
 - Drill and evaluate West Newton well
- 2014** - Test West Newton well
 - 3D and 2D seismic survey, West Newton (Holderness) area
 - Planning application for West Newton B
- 2015** - Test Crawberry Hill well
 - Planning decision on West Newton B
 - Construct West Newton B access and well site (contingent upon planning approval)
 - Drill and evaluate West Newton B well

CF then gave a detailed explanation of the 2D and 3D seismic programme with technical details about the chosen locations and the methodology used – including the additional precautions taken and the actual PPV readings from the various test points.

Resident representatives said that the level of noise and vibration during the seismic programme was unacceptable and that this had been a subject of worry and debate amongst the local community. They also said that this had done a lot to undermine people's confidence in Rathlin. CF said that Rathlin regretted any distress. She also said that the recorded levels of disturbance were generally all well below the levels which should have caused damage. She explained that any complaints had been dealt with on a case-by-case basis and that this was something that Rathlin was taking very seriously. DM-S confirmed that this would be the final seismic testing programme to be undertaken in the area by Rathlin.

4. **West Newton B Well Design**

TS took the liaison committee through the proposed West Newton B (WNB) well design. He reconfirmed that the well would not be drilled as deep as West Newton A (WNA) and that it would reach a depth of 2,100m, 1,000m above the Bowland Shale.

DS asked why that was the case. TS said that it was because Rathlin will only be testing the conventional Permian reservoirs – subject to receiving planning approval of course.

5. Planning Application

JF said that the site selection for WNB was influenced by three key variables:

Geology

He explained that minerals can only be extracted from where they occur.

Environmental Conditions

He said that Rathlin needed to consider and limit any potential environmental impacts.

Social Conditions

He confirmed that Rathlin would need to ensure that the operations limit the impact on local residents.

In terms of the planning application process, JF reminded resident representatives that:

- Rathlin was issued PEDL 183 by DECC in 2008.
- Exploratory drilling operations require planning permission.
- 'Screening Opinion' issued by East Riding of Yorkshire Council "No Environmental Impact Assessment required".
- WNB planning application has been submitted to East Riding of Yorkshire Council.

He said that prior to submitting the planning application, Rathlin consulted a number of organisations, including: different departments at East Riding of Yorkshire Council, The Coal Authority, The Environment Agency, Natural England, The Wildlife Trust and English Heritage.

JF then explained about the independent assessments and reports that had been submitted with the planning application: archaeological assessments, ecological reports, noise impact assessments and hydrological risk assessments. He then gave an overview of the potential impacts, Rathlin's proposed mitigation measures and the relevant independent studies and their findings.

JF then showed a map of the site location and the proposed access route to the WNB site (east onto the B1238, through Wyton and Sproatley on to Moor Lane before joining a newly built track across a farmer's field to the WNB site on Crook Lane). He then shared some statistical data about the daily impacts that people might experience should the application be granted.

JF explained that the planning application sets out Rathlin's proposals in detail. He said that the development, if approved, will consist of four phases:

1. Site construction
2. Drilling
3. Well testing
4. Restoration and aftercare

He then went on to show how the site would be constructed, including showing pictures of the well design. He went through everything from the site design, site preparation and the lengths the company goes to to separate the operations from the general environment.

JF then explained about the conductor equipment for safely drilling through the aquifer. He also showed a drawing of a drill rig with all of its component parts and went through this in detail (also showing pictures of the actual drilling rig from WNA). He then showed pictures of the drilling rig layout at the proposed WNB site.

He then went on to show examples of the casing strings, how they are cemented in place and then he covered the well control equipment and processes and procedures.

JF then covered the topic of well testing and the ground flare system. He then went through how the site restoration process would work.

Finally, JF went through the principal health and safety legislation and regulations applicable to Rathlin's work and his team's approach to this.

6. Questions

DM-S explained that all of this information, and more, had been available at the Rathlin information sessions on 07 and 08 November 2014. He said that Rathlin had been very disappointed with the very low turnout since more than 9,000 households had been invited to attend and less than 250 stakeholders and residents actually came to the events overall.

He then opened the floor up for resident representatives to ask any questions they might have.

DS – What will happen with WNA?

TS – The site is temporarily suspended. The planning application expires in March 2016.

WNB will be drilled and then a decision will be taken as to what we might happen with WNA. He reminded resident representatives that Rathlin has a planning permission to drill a second well.

RJ – Why did you decide on WNB when you haven't got the results from the seismic surveys?

TS – A decision was made based on the information currently available from previous 2D seismic studies. Based on best available information and time associated with drilling and testing the WNA well, Rathlin decided on this location. Results from WNB, combined with the 3D survey and WNA results will give Rathlin more detailed information for future decision-making.

KP – How many wells could there be in the West Newton area?

TS – We have always said that there could be up to six wells.

KP – What does this mean from a production perspective?

DM-S – First of all we will need planning permission for future exploration wells and the same applies if we reach the stage where we decide to apply for a production licence. If we identify a gas field we would look at a more comprehensive development. If it is a gas find, the field would need to link into the National Transmission System.

DS – What do these producing gas fields look like?

TS – If you can visualise the NTS system at Ganstead, a producing gas site would be significantly smaller than that.

JF then showed an image of an operational gas site, the equipment and how the sites are screened. He said that it might be possible to visit the site as this is what had been done before (resident representatives were invited to visit Rathlin's website where there is an aerial view of an operational gas site which helps to set the matter into context).

- AF – Would it be possible to meet with residents near to the site shown by JF, which is a North Yorkshire location.
- JF – Said that this would be worth contacting the parish council in that area to discuss what happened during drilling, exploration and latterly in production. This site was drilled 20 years ago. JF agreed to supply AF with the parish council's details.
- KP – When is the planning application likely to be considered by East Riding of Yorkshire Council?
- DM-S – It is hoped that this will be sometime in March. The date is still to be confirmed.
- DF – Will a no fracking commitment could be applied to WNB?
- DM-S – The well is being drilled to approximately 2100 m which is 1,000m above the Bowland Shale. We have no interest in the Bowland Shale at WNB and high volume hydraulic fracturing does not form part of our plans, now or in the future. A no fracking commitment is, therefore, unnecessary.
- DS – Can you only carry out 'fracking' within the Bowland Shale?
- DM-S – Any rock formations can be stimulated, we don't plan to do this. DM-S encouraged the liaison committee to read the Infrastructure Bill to understand the definitions and interpretations within the Bill which will help clarify matters.
- DS – Could you drill deeper down WNB in the next, say, 15 years?
- DM-S – It is feasible, however, our interest is not in that area. Any future activity would be subject to the relevant planning approvals and public consultation.
- RJ – Did anyone had seen the documentary on Sky about fracking showing what happens in the US and the number of wells drilled there?
- DM-S – It is unlikely that UK regulation would allow that to happen here (nobody said they had seen it).
- JN – Raised concerns about traffic management, specifically at the Swiss Cottage roundabout if a diversionary route is needed. What happens if the route through Bilton is blocked off?
- JF – If there are any variations we will only ever work to under the council's/Humberside Police instructions. We would only use the ports as a holding area until any situation is clarified and re-routing instructions are issued.
- JT said that at WNA any holding and convoy issues were down to Humberside Police - associated with protestor activity. She confirmed that this was not instigated or recommended by Rathlin.
- JT said that the deviations from the traffic management plan is based on police intelligence. She explained that 'locking on' was a risk which could have been far more disruptive to other road users than the short-term impact of convoying vehicles in.
- DF - When would work start?
- DM-S - Later in the year (Q3/Q4).

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 once the WNB application had been determined by East Riding of Yorkshire Council.

DM-S thanked resident representatives for their proactive input and reminded them that Rathlin intended to be a good neighbour at all times.

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.