

**West Newton Community Liaison Committee**  
**7pm on 03 September 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 (Liaison, Rathlin Energy) - SC  
Ron Jagger (Representing Burton Constable Parish Council) - RJ  
Karen Parker (Representing Ellerby Parish Council) - KP  
Jan Naylor (Resident Representative Ellerby Parish)  
Annette Ford (Resident Representative Sproatley) - AF  
Malcolm Acaster (Representing Sproatley Parish) - MA  
Lisa Brazier (Resident Representative Humbleton and Flinton Parish) - LB  
Don Fields (Resident Representative) - DF  
Inspector Pattison (Humberside Police Liaison Officer) - IP  
Simon Taylor (Communications, Rathlin Energy) - ST

**Apologies:**

Mat Martin (Construction Manager, Rathlin Energy) - MM  
Deborah Stabler (Representing Burton Constable Parish Council) - DS  
Anne Wood (Resident Representative Withernwick Parish) - AW  
Norman Wilkie (Chairman of Withernwick Parish Council) - NW  
Anita Howell (Resident Representative Ellerby) - AH  
Geoff North (Representing Aldbrough Parish Council) - GN

**Members Still TBC:**

Resident Representative for Aldbrough 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 they were confirmed as an accurate reflection of what was discussed at the meeting on 12 May 2015. DM-S thanked community representatives for making sure that the details of that meeting were communicated to residents in their constituencies.

**2. Crawberry Hill Update**

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 now 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. He said that there were no other factors influencing this decision.

DM-S said that, after thorough analysis, Rathlin has concluded that the costs associated with testing the Crawberry Hill well could not be justified, relative to the 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. West Newton B Update**

TS reminded community liaison group members that in November 2014, Rathlin announced plans to develop a second wellsite in the West Newton area. He said that West Newton B, known as an appraisal well, was introduced to stakeholders and the community at an exhibition in Aldbrough Village Hall with around 150 people taking the time to meet with and discuss the plans with Rathlin representatives.

He said that a planning application, which was submitted in January 2015, was approved following the local elections by East Riding of Yorkshire Council on 04 June 2015.

TS said, West Newton B, which is approximately one mile from the West Newton A wellsite, provides for the development of two wells. He said that work is not expected to begin until 2016 and must be completed within five years of the planning application approval date and two years from the start of construction.

He said that West Newton B will only be drilled to a depth of approx. 2,000m targeting the Permian carbonate sections that were evaluated as part of the company's testing operations at West Newton A. He reminded resident representatives that the total depth of the proposed West Newton B well is 1,000m above the Bowland Shale.

In a pictorial presentation, TS showed resident representatives: a map of Rathlin's West Newton prospect in a regional setting, a schematic highlighting the conventional reservoir targets, seismic readings showing rock formations, the similarities and differences in the West Newton A and West Newton B geology, predicted formation depths and the West Newton B casing programme. Most of this information was publicly available and displayed at the information sessions Rathlin held for stakeholders and the community in November 2014.

TS then went on to explain that East Riding of Yorkshire Council applied 15 conditions to the West Newton B planning application and that Rathlin is making very good progress towards addressing these. JF confirmed that it is not unusual to see these kind of conditions to be applied to applications of this nature. They include:

- A written scheme of archaeological investigation
- A construction environmental management plan
- A biodiversity enhancement and management plan
- Day and night time noise limits
- A construction method statement
- A traffic management plan
- Details and protocol for the establishment of a liaison group (which had in fact already been established)
- No high volume hydraulic fracturing within the Bowland Shale

JF then talked through the permit application process. He explained that the application covers:

- Bespoke mining waste operations (for extracting waste)
- Bespoke installation (for flaring)
- Bespoke water discharge activity (for clean surface run off water)

He then explained that the activities included within the permit application, are:

- To drill the first of up to two exploratory wells (to approximately 2000m in depth)
- To Drill Stem Test within the Cadeby formation and Kirkham Abbey formation
- To undertake an Extended Well Test of the Cadeby formation and Kirkham Abbey formation
- Well maintenance
- Well abandonment or drill and test the second of the two exploratory wells.

JF also confirmed that baseline water and air quality, followed by ongoing monitoring would be undertaken.

#### **4. West Newton A Update**

TS reminded resident representatives that the West Newton A wellsite is currently suspended following encouraging results from Rathlin's 2013-14 drilling and testing operations.

He explained that Rathlin is now proposing to vary condition 2 of planning consent (DC/12/04193/STPLF/STRAT) and is applying to extend the period for activities on site for a further 36 months. He said that a screening application had been submitted to East Riding of Yorkshire Council and that the company expects to submit a full application at the end of September 2015. He said that East Riding of Yorkshire Council had determined that West Newton A is a non-Environmental Impact Assessment development

TS explained that the current planning permission expires at the end of March 2016. He said that Rathlin would like to retain the option to drill the second of the two permitted wells (depending on the information obtained when drilling and testing the West Newton B well).

#### **5. Security**

CF said that a group of anti-fracking protestors had started to set up a new camp on private property, close to the proposed West Newton B site access (on Pasture Lane). She said that they had erected tents and started to build a wooden structure before being asked to leave by the landowner. She then explained that they had moved off the private land and on to the roadside verge, which is land owned by East Riding of Yorkshire Council.

A general discussion then took place about the anti-fracking protestors. It was agreed by everyone that in Rathlin's case they are protesting at sites where high volume hydraulic fracturing within the Bowland Shale is not taking place. Indeed, resident representatives acknowledged that their promotion of fracking at West Newton and Crawberry Hill was misleading and unnecessarily worrying for local residents. Some resident representatives also raised concerns about strangers walking around at night from the camp and other unsociable issues that had occurred during the testing phase at West Newton A and at Crawberry Hill - where no activity, other than routine maintenance, had actually taken place since the summer of 2013.

Resident representatives also raised concerns about the cost of policing and removal and clean-up costs associated with the protestors. They also acknowledged that it was the actions of the protestors that had resulted in the need to convoy vehicles into and out of the sites, which in itself causes disruption to local people. DM-S said that this is a serious issue for local people to consider as Rathlin will in all likelihood be operating in the area for many years to come. IP confirmed that Humberside Police would not be called upon to provide police officers, resulting in changes to agreed operations and traffic management plans, in an environment of lawful and peaceful protest where Rathlin is able to carry out its lawful business.

## 6. AOB

### Sproatley Crossing

DM-S confirmed that, following an independent highways assessment undertaken on behalf of Rathlin earlier in the year (following a meeting with Sproatley Parish Council), he had attended a meeting arranged by Graham Stuart MP and East Riding of Yorkshire Council earlier that week to discuss residents' ongoing crossing concerns in Sproatley (some residents have, for some time, been very concerned about the volume of traffic passing through the village and the risk to local people). He explained the background to the issue, saying that East Riding of Yorkshire Council's own traffic studies in previous years had shown that the volume of traffic through Sproatley was not at a level that would warrant a pedestrian crossing in the village – even with the additional traffic created by the gas storage projects in Aldbrough.

DM-S said that the study showed that any additional traffic created by the West Newton B project would only be temporary and that even at its peak, East Riding of Yorkshire Council's Highways Team had determined that a crossing for Sproatley still could not be justified. He also explained the challenges associated with the siting of any future potential crossing due to the proximity of junctions and road bends in the village. DM-S said that East Riding of Yorkshire Council representatives had said that a further study into a crossing closer to the school might be a solution that would allay local concerns, however, with bigger priorities in other areas of the county this wasn't a study that the local authority could justifiably support. In view of this, any future studies would probably need to be paid for through local fund raising.

DM-S said that at the moment Rathlin is still very much in the exploratory stage of its operations and consequently the company cannot commit to supporting this initiative beyond the study that it has already undertaken. He said, however, that should the company's exploratory work result in a commercial find and a long-term relationship with neighbouring communities then a full environmental impact study will take place which could include a range of neighbourhood initiatives. He explained that, in the meantime, the company will continue to operate safely and responsibly as part of its ongoing work.

### Sproatley Primary School

ST had been in touch with Sproatley Primary School when Rathlin was readying itself to apply for planning permission for West Newton B. The objective was to talk to the head teacher and teaching staff about Rathlin's proposed work and to identify any initiatives that would help to improve the general road safety of pupils at the school (TruckSafe, cycling proficiency, etc.). The head teacher, through AF, had indicated that it would be better to meet once the planning application was approved and after the summer holidays. ST and AF were asked to progress these discussions before the next community liaison group meeting.

### Local Bus Company Liaison

JN said that she was concerned about children who travel to and from schools further afield (South Holderness for example). Many of these children wait at and walk to and from bus stops in the area. She said that during the testing of West Newton A, because of the convoys into and out of the site, parents were concerned about their children's safety. She also mentioned that buses were occasionally delayed.

CF said that the convoys were only needed due to the protestor presence and actions and that if the protestors do not disrupt Rathlin's operations then there is no need for policing and conveying. She said that this also caused communication problems with the community as Rathlin couldn't always give advance notice on its operations as it did during the drilling phase (which resident representatives acknowledged went largely unnoticed). Resident representatives were asked to go back to their parishes to consider the impact that the anti-fracking protestors had had on their lives during the West Newton A operations and to respond as they felt appropriate. DM-S said that Rathlin will be here for the long-term and that it was important that the issues local residents are concerned about are addressed with those who are causing them – in the same way that Rathlin is held to account for its lawfully approved operations.

ST said that he would engage with East Riding of Yorkshire Council's education transport team and East Yorkshire Motor Services once Rathlin's West Newton B activity programme became clearer and that more detailed information would be made available, as before, through the community liaison committee meetings.

#### Ongoing Communication and Consultation

ST said that Rathlin will continue to work with and communicate with local communities in the West Newton area through the now well-established community liaison meetings (involving representatives from all surrounding parishes).

He reminded resident representatives that since 2012, Rathlin has held 32 community liaison meetings with representatives from the Crawberry Hill and West Newton areas. He said that the role of the community liaison group members is to engage with Rathlin to learn about its operations and to ask and questions that they and other members of the community might have.

ST said that Rathlin will always produce notes following the community liaison meetings which are posted on the company's website ([www.rathlin-energy.co.uk](http://www.rathlin-energy.co.uk)) and he urged resident representatives to share these with everyone in their parishes – through community newsletters, noticeboards, community websites and parish council and other community groups/meetings.

It was acknowledged by community representatives that some areas have stronger and more robust communication channels than others. It was agreed that ST would work with each of the community representative to look at what can be done to improve community engagement and education about Rathlin's work so that there is a more consistent and impactful system in place at a local level.

#### **7. Date and Time of the Next Meeting**

DM-S suggested that the next meeting should be held once all of the environmental permits had been approved for West Newton B. It was agreed that this would be the best and most appropriate time to meet again.

DM-S said that ST would contact resident representatives in due course to make any arrangements.

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's website: [www.rathlin-energy.co.uk](http://www.rathlin-energy.co.uk) and reminded resident representatives about the 24-hour emergency number: 0800 1959154.

He thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 20.40.