

West Newton Community Liaison Committee
7pm on 03 February 2016
Densholme Care Farm, Great Hatfield
Notes of Meeting

Attendees:

David Montagu-Smith (Chairman, Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited) - DM-S
Tom Selkirk (Project Manager, Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited) - TS
Caroline Foster (Field Manager, Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited) - CF
Jonathan Foster (HSE and Planning Manager, Zetland Group Limited) - JF
Ron Jagger (Representing Burton Constable Parish Council) - RJ
Jan Naylor (Resident Representative Ellerby Parish) - JN
Geoff North (Representing Aldbrough Parish Council) - GN
Malcolm Acaster (Representing Sproatley Parish) - MA
Vanessa Nolan (Representing Humbleton and Flinton Parish Council) - VN
Norman Wilkie (Chairman of Witherwick Parish Council) - NW
Don Fields (Resident Representative) - DF
Simon Taylor (Communications, Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited) - ST

Apologies:

Lisa Brazier (Resident Representative Humbleton and Flinton Parish) - LB
Annette Ford (Resident Representative Sproatley) - AF
Karen Parker (Representing Ellerby Parish Council) - KP
Deborah Stabler (Representing Burton Constable Parish Council) - DS
Anne Wood (Resident Representative Witherwick Parish) - AW
Anita Howell (Resident Representative Ellerby) - AH
Steve Croft (Local Representative, Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited) - SC
Mat Martin (Site Construction Manager, Zetland Group Limited) - MM
Tony Fildes (HSE Manager, Zetland Group Limited) - TF

Members TBC:

Resident Representative for Aldbrough Parish
Resident Representative for Witherwick

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 at the meeting on 03 September 2015 had been produced, circulated and posted on Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited's (Rathlin's) website. He asked if anyone had any comments about them. None were received and they were confirmed as an accurate reflection of what was discussed.

DM-S thanked community representatives for the lengths they are going to to make sure that the details of the liaison meetings are communicated to parish councils and residents in their constituencies.

ST asked resident representatives to note that AW (Withernwick resident representative) had been in touch to say that she was resigning from the committee due to other commitments. DM-S asked ST to pass on thanks and best wishes to AW. NW said that he would seek the nomination of another resident representative from Witherwick. GN said he would raise the matter again with Aldbrough Parish Council as, despite great efforts from him and from Rathlin, no-one had come forward.

2. **Crawberry Hill Update**

CF confirmed that the abandonment work on the Crawberry Hill well bore had been undertaken. She said that the wellbore abandonment works had been completed in early December and that following a process known as a cut and cap, the next step would be for the site to be restored. Weather permitting this work is scheduled for completion by the end of April.

Resident representatives asked if the protestors had been the reason for the company leaving the site as this was being suggested locally. DM-S said that this was not the case. He said that the commercial viability of the prospects at West Newton looked more promising at this stage. He said that the Crawberry Hill well had shown encouraging signs, but that the site was not commercially viable in the strata that the company explored. He said that the understanding gained through detailed analysis at Crawberry Hill had helped to give Rathlin a better understanding of the geology in the West Newton area. He said that Rathlin will not relinquish the licence at Crawberry Hill and that his team may go back to explore around the area at a later date. He confirmed that the 'anti-fracking protestors', who had caused huge problems in the local area at a site where no fracking was taking place, had no bearing whatsoever on this decision.

3. **West Newton A Update**

JF 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's application to vary condition 2 of planning consent (DC/12/04193/STPLF/STRAT) to extend the period for activities on site for a further 36 months had been successful.

JF said that Rathlin received confirmation of the extension to its planning application on 21 December 2015, for three years, to 2018. He reminded resident representatives that the original planning permission, now extended, gives Rathlin the option to go back and drill a second well at the West Newton A site.

CF said that the Environment Agency had been out to the West Newton A site about a month before to inspect it and to assess the new water monitoring and discharge equipment and to get a clear understanding of how it works in practice. She said that the Environment Agency is satisfied with the activities and the lengths that Rathlin is going to analyse the water before it is released.

CF said that the installation of new water discharge measures have resulted in around 40 tankers worth of clean water being released - significantly reducing the amount of truck movements to the site. This was welcome news to the committee members.

CF said that other than well bore and ground water monitoring (via the two existing water monitoring boreholes) no other activities have taken place at the site since the last meeting.

CF confirmed that the company's security team continues visit the site daily as does the company's local representative, SC.

4. **West Newton B Update**

JF reminded resident representatives that Rathlin was granted planning permission to explore for oil and gas from the West Newton B site on 04 June 2015. He said that the application lasts for five years overall, but expires after two years once work begins.

He reiterated 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.

He then reminded resident representatives that the activities included within the permit application, were:

- To drill the first of up to two exploratory wells (to approximately 2,000m 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 groundwater and air quality, followed by ongoing monitoring would be undertaken. JF reminded resident representatives that there are already two ground water monitoring boreholes at West Newton A and Rathlin will install a further two at West Newton B.

JF said that since the application was granted all of the planning conditions have been addressed. He also confirmed that most all of the required Environmental Permits have now been secured for West Newton B. He said that the permits application was submitted on 14 September 2015, after the last community liaison committee where the subject was discussed at length. He said that there are just a few outstanding items that Rathlin is working with the Environment Agency to address (primarily surrounding the type of flare to be used).

JF said that despite the concerns persistently raised by the anti-fracking protestors only four letters with varying comments were received as part of the public consultation process.

JF confirmed that no work will take place until relevant Environmental Permits are in place and no date has yet been set for work to commence.

DM-S said that the local representatives and parish councils will be advised before work begins so that the information can be communicated across the local community.

5. **Any Other Business**

Resident representatives said that a local group had produced a video where it appeared that Rathlin had confirmed on camera that it had undertaken a mini fall-off test at West Newton A. They asked for an explanation.

DM-S confirmed that, contrary to social media reports and rumours around the local villages, the company did not undertake a mini fall-off test at the West Newton A site. DM-S said that the suggestion that this test has been undertaken is 'utter nonsense'. He then raised questions as to the legitimacy of the online film clip, the context in which it had been created and the motives of those who produced it. He said that other than those who had produced it, and several media outlets, no-one else had been in touch with the company to question it. He said that anyone who had been in touch had been told that the contents of the film are questionable and incorrect. He said that Rathlin had written directly to the people who created it to clearly set the record straight.

DM-S said that despite all of this, the people who produced it continue to hold events around the area showing the film, trying to undermine Rathlin. ST said that the events have not been well attended and that, despite certain sections of the media asking to see the unedited version of the film, it had not been forthcoming. DM-S said that resident representatives and the local community should draw their own conclusions from this.

A resident representative said that they did think it was odd the protestors had waited more than 12-months to release the video.

DM-S said that in-spite of all the above, anyone who would like independent confirmation about that the mini fall-off test did not take place should contact the relevant statutory authorities. He then asked if resident representatives still had any doubts as to whether this test had been undertaken based on their knowledge of Rathlin and the transparent way in which it goes about its business. No-one spoke out to the contrary. DM-S asked resident representatives to correct anyone who promoted the film's authenticity and to make sure that the facts are communicated within their constituencies. Rathlin now considers this matter to be closed.

RJ said that an old brick bridge between Marton and Witherwick, which has survived two world wars, is showing signs of deterioration since Rathlin arrived in the area to undertake its work. JF said that it was hard to understand the correlation between the two things but that Rathlin would send SC out to take a look at the bridge with RJ.

6. **Date and Time of the Next Meeting**

DM-S said that ST would contact resident representatives in due course to make any arrangements for the next meeting - when there is more to report. However, in the meantime, anyone with any questions should contact ST straight away and if needed a meeting will be called.

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 and reminded resident representatives about the 24-hour emergency number: 0800 1959154. DM-S thanked everyone for attending. The meeting ended at 20.45.