

West Newton Community Liaison Committee

7pm on 12th June 2019

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
Stephen Croft (Site Technical and Local Liaison, Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited) – SC
Caroline Foster (Operations Engineer, Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited) – CF
Harry Clark (Resident Representative, Ellerby) – HC
Anita Howell (Representing Ellerby Parish Council) – AH
Annette Ford (Resident Representative, Sproatley) – AF
Lisa Brazier (Representing Humbleton Parish Council) – LB
Matthew Grove (Representing Withernwick Community) – MG
Ron Jagger (Representing Burton Constable Parish Council) – RJ
Geoff North (Representing Aldborough Parish Council) – GN
Don Fields (Resident Representative, Sproatley) – DF
Vanessa Nolan (Resident Representative, Humbleton) – VN
PC Jenny Gray (Humberside Police) – PC JG
PC Chris Matthews (Humberside Police) – PC CM
Deborah Stabler (Representing Burton Constable Parish Council) – DS
Charlie Sharp (Representing Withernwick Parish Council) – CS
Mark Hood (Resident Representative, West Newton) – MH
Sarah Blanchard (Resident Representative, Aldborough) – SB
Simon Taylor (Rathlin Communications) – ST

Apologies:

Darren Chamberlain (Representing Sproatley Parish Council) – DC

1. Welcome:

DM-S opened the liaison group meeting, welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. The notes from the last meeting on 24 April 2019 were agreed as a true and accurate reflection of the discussions at that time.

HC said that there had been a discussion at the last meeting about the liaison group's constitution, however, this was not reflected in the notes. TS said that the updated constitution was circulated after the meeting under separate cover.

DM-S said that the drilling phase of the West Newton A-2 (WNA-2) was now almost complete. He said that the company expected to decommission and demobilise the main drilling rig sometime the following week (week commencing Sunday 16 June 2019). DM-S then confirmed that the next step would be an assessment of the work to date before a decision would be made on how to approach the testing phase. He said that any testing programme might take around six weeks to complete. He said that these matters would be covered as part of the meeting agenda.

DM-S then introduced Sarah Blanchard, a new liaison committee member and resident representative for Aldbrough. DM-S mentioned that a new Marton resident had approached Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited to ask if she could join the West Newton Community Liaison Committee.

DM-S said that the community liaison group currently has the agreed number of people from each parish area (one resident representative and one parish council representative). The Burton Constable representatives are Ron Jagger (parish council representative) and Mark Hood (resident representative for West Newton). Additionally, Deborah Stabler, who has now moved from the area but still has land close to the West Newton A site, had previously made a request via Burton Constable Parish Council to stay on as a member of the group – in view of her longstanding involvement and the fact that she has personal and parish interests in the area. RJ said that, in order for the new Marton resident to become a community liaison member, it would be a case of the person replacing either himself, Mark or Deborah. He undertook to raise this matter at the next parish council meeting.

2. Operations update summary:

TS said that the West Newton A-2 well had reached a total depth of 2,061 metres to the top of the Westphalian Coal Measures. He said that initial results were encouraging. He said that 28 metres of core were cut and recovered in the Kirkham Abbey reservoir formation. He confirmed that wireline logs had also been acquired. TS said that the well would be cased and cemented to total depth and will then be temporarily suspended, pending further evaluation. He confirmed that, over the next 7-14 days, the drilling rig and associated equipment will be demobilised from site. He said that the information acquired while drilling will be analysed to inform a potential well testing programme. He said that planning permission is in place for an extended well test.

MG asked about the flaring. TS said that although a flare was brought on to site as a precautionary measure it wasn't needed during the drilling phase. He said that flaring as part of the potential testing programme would be discussed later in the meeting.

CS asked when the lighting would be removed. TS said that the rig lighting will be removed when the equipment is demobilised. He said that the site would still require a smaller amount of lighting to enable the site staff and security personnel to move around the site safely at night. He said that this would take into consideration all feedback received so far.

HC said that he had received some comments from people about the lighting and a low frequency noise. TS said that Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited had received a small number of complaints about lighting during the drilling phase and that on each occasion measures had been taken, based on very specific feedback, to address concerns. He said, having taken the required action, no further comments had been received.

With regards to the low frequency noise, TS said that this might have been the generators. He said that the noise monitoring that the company had undertaken had not shown any incidences where the levels had gone above the statutory requirements for this type of operations. TS explained that, having received a similar comment, the team moved the noise monitoring equipment (which had been placed close to the two nearest residential properties) nearer to Witherwick but that this had not highlighted any issues either. TS said that prevailing winds may have heightened awareness but even then the levels were within the agreed parameters.

TS said that Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited would like to thank nearby neighbours for their understanding during the drilling phase.

3. Operations update

CF gave a presentation that covered the following areas:

The drilling timeline

CF said that the drilling phase had largely gone to plan, although it had taken slightly longer than originally anticipated. She explained that the planned programme of running the casing, cementing, installing the wellhead, coring and wireline logging was all in place, but that there had been some unplanned challenges associated with the rig itself, changing drilling assemblies and general logistics.

Well testing

TS explained that the East Riding of Yorkshire Council planning permission provides for 90 days to undertake an extended well test. He said that the Environment Agency permits provide for flow tests in the Kirkham Abbey and Cadeby formations and that these tests are based on volumes (not times).

The Oil and Gas Authority

TS said that the Oil and Gas Authority has given permission for an extended well test (up to 90 days) in the Kirkham Abbey formation.

Well testing operations

TS said that the logistics and operations for well testing operations may include:

- Mobilisation
- Rig up (a small workover rig – similar to the one used at the beginning of these operations)
- Wellbore perforation at predetermined points within the well
- Clean up and flow test
- Acidise and/or N₂ lift as required
- Run the downhole gauges
- Extended well test
- Pressure build up
- Demobilisation

TS then showed a diagram with the equipment that would be on site during the well testing phase. He also explained that two 'shrouded' flares will be used this time around – known as a clean-up flare and an extended well testing flare.

Community comments

CF said that Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited had received comments from four Witherwick residences during the drilling phase of the operation – relating to noise and light. She explained what had been done to mitigate both issues – as summarised by TS earlier in the meeting. She then took the liaison group members through the noise monitoring data to show the actual results.

Restricted Access on Piper's Lane and Fosham Road

CF explained that on Monday 10 June 2019, East Riding of Yorkshire Council issued an emergency road closure for the 'Temporary Prohibition of Through Traffic' for Piper's Lane and Fosham Road. She said that access has been restricted due to the likelihood of danger to the public, or of serious damage to the road, not attributable to Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited's operations. She explained that Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited had witnessed a number of incidents which had put road users in danger and, to mitigate against this, had applied to restrict access along the route. CF said that traffic and pedestrian access will be administered by traffic management personnel contracted to Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited. She said that access would be maintained at all times for pedestrians and vehicles to properties directly affected by the closure and for the emergency services.

She said, that the route will be closed to all other people whether on foot, pedal cycle, horseback or any other vehicle. CF explained that this is not a through road and therefore there is no alternative route.

She summarised by saying that the Order covers the full extent of Piper's Lane, Marton and Fosham Road, Withernwick, together with parts of the footpaths adjoining the highways (approximately 100 metres). The closure will continue for a period of twenty-one (21) days to 30 June 2019. She said that it is an offence to contravene a Road Traffic Order.

CF said that if anyone has any queries or questions they should please contact Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited via www.rathlin-energy.co.uk or call the office on 0207 2689860. Alternatively, residents can speak with East Riding of Yorkshire Council's Highways Customer Care Team on 01482 393939.

RJ and DS both raised concerns about accessing the route and both gave examples of how the security/traffic management personnel or Humberside Police had made it difficult for them, as business owners along the lane/road, to gain access that week. DM-S apologised profusely for this and CF/SC undertook to brief the people concerned so that future access would be trouble-free.

RJ said that if it wasn't for Rathlin Energy (UK) none of this messing around would be needed. DM-S reminded the liaison group that when the first well was drilled (WNA-1) back in 2013, it was done so with next to no disruption and little cause for complaint. He said that, he hoped by restricting access to the road to only those who need to use it, this should improve matters.

Another member of the liaison group said that, as someone who uses the route daily to go about their normal business, restricting access had significantly improved matters for local people already.

CF also explained that a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), restricting access on Fosham Road and Piper's Lane, was being processed by East Riding of Yorkshire Council's Highways Department and that, if authorised, it would come into effect on 1st July 2019 (when the current 'Emergency Order' expires).

She said that if the TRO is granted, it could be in place for up to 18 months - but that access to the route will only be restricted when the West Newton A site is operational.

She explained that the TRO would enable local residents and businesses to access their properties as well as the emergency services.

CF finished by explaining that the TRO could also restrict access to footpaths surrounding Fosham Road and Piper's Lane. She said that these changes would temporarily affect walkers, pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.

HC said that he had received some complaints about damage to the road verges at the junction of Lambwath Lane/Langthorpe Road and a report of unsafe driving by tanker on 19 May 2019. CF said that she would go away and investigate both issues and that she would reply to HC directly.

A discussion then took place as to the road safety issues mentioned by Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited. PC JG and PC CM said that since the drilling operations began there had been 11 separate road closures associated with unsafe protestor activity. Some community liaison members said that local people were really 'fed up' with the disruption being caused by the protestors - stating that the mess and disturbance they were creating/causing was completely unacceptable.

Well clean up treatments

CF then talked liaison group members through how the testing operation would work and the treatments that are used to clean up the well to assist with the flow process.

She summarised, by showing how equipment is lowered into the well and the process for puncturing the casing using small charges. CF said that, at that point, the team would normally expect oil or gas to flow into the well. She explained that if it doesn't flow this could potentially be associated with blockages caused by the drilling fluids and mud clogging access between the well and the formation. She said that in such circumstances a clean up treatment involving the injection of hydrochloric acid (very similar in strength to everyday household cleaners – such as toilet cleaner and patio cleaner) would be used. CF then gave a demonstration to show how this would work in practice using familiar household products with a similar strength to the fluids used in the operation. CF explained that more information about this can be accessed through the Environment Agency in a document that defines the use of acid at oil and gas exploration and production sites (dated January 2018).

CF said that to aid the initial flow of gas or oil (if oil is present), nitrogen (N₂) may also be introduced to displace the wellbore fluids, reducing its hydrostatic weight. She explained that nitrogen is classified as an inert waste and the venting of such is considered a closed loop system, in so far as nitrogen is extracted from and vented back into the atmosphere. She said that no nitrogen would remain in the wellbore.

Both processes were talked through in detail with reassurances given on how low the risks are in terms of safety considerations and environmental impacts. CF then led a discussion on the safe handling of the materials used during the testing phase.

Resident representatives said that they felt reassured by the practical demonstration given by CF, which showed how the products behave once they come into contact with the drilling mud or geological formations. CF said that the products tested, if used in the home, are flushed down people's sinks, toilets, etc. – entering the water system. She said that the spent acid from the Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited well are tankered away and disposed at a regulated site – which is an added safety measure.

CF then showed the liaison group the company's product safety sheets and how they compare, in terms of the level of detail, with everyday household products.

Onshore UK Production Facilities

TS explained that, at the last meeting, liaison group members had asked for details about other nearby onshore gas and oil production sites. It was suggested that at some point a site visit could be arranged. TS presented his findings, as follows:

Site	County	Started Producing
Saltfleetby	Lincolnshire	December 1999
Keddington	Lincolnshire	November 1998
Malton	North Yorkshire	November 1996
Marishes	North Yorkshire	July 1996
Pickering	North Yorkshire	November 2001
Kirby Misperton	North Yorkshire	July 1996

TS also referenced the Knapton Gas Fired Power Station in North Yorkshire. He showed pictures from the boundary fences and aerial images for each site highlighting how little equipment is in place and how, with tree planting and bunding, they are well away from the public view.

TS then discussed a potential/notional field development for West Newton showing how an oil or gas field could be developed and where, potentially, it could link in to the National Grid System (NG).

He explained the development requirements, as follows:

Regulatory:

- East Riding of Yorkshire Council Planning Permission
- Environment Agency Permits
- National Grid Entry and Capacity
- Oil and Gas Authority Field Development Approval

Operational:

- Site(s) Construction
- Drilling and Equipping Wells
- Processing Facility
- Pipeline Installation
- Grid Connection and Commission

Production...

TS then showed a picture, at scale, of how the Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited site(s) could look in relation to other developments in the area, including:

- Aldbrough Gas Storage
- Tansterne Biomass
- Withernwick Wind Turbines
- South Skirlaugh National Grid
- Ganstead 1619 National Grid

Resident representatives commented and noted the fact that the West Newton site was smaller than all but the South Skirlaugh National Grid site.

5. Any Other Business

DS said that a resident in Marton had been woken up and was concerned by vehicle movements during the night. SC said that a delay in getting vehicles out that particular day had resulted in vehicles leaving the site later than planned. He said he sympathised with residents and that the situation was as unacceptable to Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited as it was to them. TS said that the Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited team was meeting with residents from Marton the very next evening (13 June 2019) to discuss some of the issues and challenges they have faced together.

HC raised the issue of mud spillage from a vehicle leaving the site. TS said that the spillage had been investigated and cleaned up. He said that lessons had been drawn from this and that there should be no re-occurrence.

6. Next Meeting

DM-S proposed that the next meeting should be towards the end of August when the testing operation may be in progress. He said that ST would be in touch nearer the time to confirm the details.

Further updates will be available via Rathlin's Energy (UK) Limited website: www.rathlin-energy.co.uk

Non-emergency calls should be directed to 0207 2689860 during office hours. 24-hour emergency number 0800 1959154.