

Balcombe Flow Test Community Liaison Group meeting
05 September 2018
18:00 at Lower Stumble Exploration Site, London Road, Balcombe, RH17 6JH

Attendees:

Bill Acraman, County Councilor (Chairman)
Paul Vonk, Managing Director of Angus Energy
Chris Clay (CC), Operations Manager of Angus Energy
Chris Bartlett, West Sussex County Council in Planning Team
Jane Moseley, West Sussex County Council in Planning Team
Sue Taylor, Parish Councilor and Leader of Energy Group
Alison Stevenson, Parish Councilor
Max Prestonbell, Parish Councilor
Rosemary Robertson, Parish Clerk
Nicky Gould, Parish Councilor
Andrew McNoughton, Midsussex District Council in Housing and Planning
Gary Marsh, Midsussex District Council in Service Delivery
Charles Metcalfe, Parish Councilor
Michael Turner, Area Environment Manager of Environmental Agency
Kate Wilson, Officer Representative for Midsussex Council
Peter Stuart, Sussex Police
Greame Brackenridge, Security

Agenda:

To discuss the flow test, what's being done to inform the public and answer any questions in relation to this.

Main Points Discussed:

How Angus Energy operates through non-fracking procedures and other sites in the region, what they are looking for and how they are different from previous company, Cuadrilla. Also established this is not a fracking site. All oil to be produced via conventional production methods.

Presentation via handout from Paul Vonk on how flow testing is carried out and potential affects.

FAQs to be included on the website, changes that could be made to them and a helpline both via email and phone for any other questions that arise from the public.

How and when Parish council members will be chosen for the next meeting.

Questions and Answers:

Charles: Why such short notice for this meeting?

Paul: We got the sign off from the county council on the pre-conditions so wanted to get to meet everyone as quickly as possible as the new operator of the Balcombe site.

Sue: So the nitrogen injection is hydrostatic pressure, you're not going to pump it to a higher pressure?

CC: To be able to get the nitrogen come out the pipe at the bottom of the well it needs to be at least at the same pressure as it is at the bottom of the well. It'll have to be marginally higher otherwise it won't push the water out.

Sue: Will you be using hydrochloric acid and do you know how many cubic meters?

CC: We will be using diluted hydrochloric acid and will be using about 20 cubic metres and ~15% hydrochloric acid.

Paul: The reason we do this is the fluid that's been in the well has been there for about 5 years.

Sue: Is that enough to fill that?

CC: It's enough to fill that and go into the limestone. The idea is to work out the existing fractures.

Max: I was under the impression that hole drilled in 2013 crossed a fault?

Paul: I'm not aware of it crossing any significant faults; we can address that at the next meeting with the geologist.

Sue: Looking at the map we think it crosses a Pilstyle fault and the Paddockhurst fault.

Paul: We'll discuss in more detail with the subsurface specialist at the next meeting.

Andrew: Where do the emissions go?

CC: Out the top of the flare.

Paul: We're working with the Environmental Agency and there is basically only one flare we can use although there are better flares that have less emission and smaller. This does not mean it's inferior though.

Sue: Will the flow testing be 24/7?

Paul: Yes.

Andrew: Will there noise implications?
Paul: They're restricted.
Jane: There are noise conditions and noise limits do not relate to the trains.
CC: There will be some noise but there are strict guidelines and monitoring on site.

Paul: There will be traffic management in place with a strict plan co-coordinated by Eclipse Security. There will be movement Monday – Friday between 7.30am and 6.30pm and Saturday mornings with the exception of school hours. There will be no movement to interrupt the schools.
Andrew: What about the baby schools as they leave at 12pm?
Paul: Good point, we will liaise with the school on this.

Andrew: How many movements will there be a day?
Greame: 12 per day at maximum more likely 6 or 7 in a day then taper off.

Bill: What vehicles size vehicles?
Greame: HGVs - articulated flat beds.

Max: How many days are you going to need to set up for it and then de-commission?
Paul: Three weeks, roughly.
CC: There will be traffic movements when we get the equipment on site, then it will be quiet whilst we test, then movement again when we de-commission.

Sue: What air and water monitoring will be done and how?
Paul: It's part of the planning permission.
CC: Specialist contractors will carry out the air and water monitoring reports, I imagine they will use the ground water bore hole [points to corner to left of roadside] for the water monitoring. They will also carry out noise, light monitoring and surveys of the bats.

Sue: Why can you not do actual air monitoring and have to rely on a computer?
CC: Because they cannot get too close to the exhaust as it's too hot so they measure the gas going in and calculate it from there.

Sue: When you look at the mud drilling logs the composition of the gas changes hugely on the different sections as you go through – I can't see how you get a consistent composition of gas throughout that whole 1700ft?
CC: We're working with the composition that's produced near the surface by the time it gets here we're measuring the total mix and that's the total mix we will be combusting.

Sue: When will we get to see the pre-condition operational reports that have to be signed off by the EA?

Michael: We won't publish them that would be for Angus Energy.

Paul: No problem.

Bill: Will the monitoring specialist be at the next meeting?

Paul: Yes.

Andrew: Can an additional environmental officer attend from Mid-Sussex?

Paul: That should be fine.

Rosemary: Will the handout be put on the website?

Paul: Yes.

Andrew: When is flow testing expected to start? It states September in the handout.

Paul: Could be September, we are waiting for approval.

Andrew: Might be better to change it to autumn.

Sue: May I suggest there is an explanation about the shut-in test? What is a shut-in test?

CC: Nothing happens, it'll be like it is now [an empty site], except we will have some pressure recording equipment installed in the well. The way the pressure recovers tells you something about the permeability and productivity.

Andrew: We know historically it flowed at about 50 barrels a day (Balcombe-1 in 1987), are you going to be taking that away? What if you get more than you expect?

Paul: We have a tank.

CC: About 2,000 barrels storage here if we have more than that there's a quality problem. As it is a well test, not full production, we won't need more than that. All liquids will be removed at the end.

Nicky: Are you expecting oil and gas?

Paul: Yes, it is an oil well but that's what the flare is for. A little bit of gas always comes through.

Sue: You might like to put that in too.

Sue: Will there be seismic monitoring?

Paul: No.

Sue: You might want to put that in.

Max: When will you tell us what flow rate you got?

Paul: A few days later, we will then publish a short statement saying what there is or isn't. If it is successful there are benefits to the local community as well. For example via business rates, about 6% goes to the community, and for example,

at Lidsey we have a scholarship scheme for £10,000 per year. We'd be looking to do similar things here at Balcombe.

Sue: It says you have to drill a second well by 2021, have you made any decisions yet on where that will be? Will it be here?

Paul: Depends on the flow rate because then we have to go back to our partners and see if it's commercially viable. We may want to drill here or we may not, we don't know at this particular time.

Andrew: Will there be chemicals used?

Paul: Yes, we used diluted acid to clean the wellbore before testing. The process and technique used is exactly the same method for cleaning water wells. We use the very same diluted acid to clean the well bore to eliminate impurities such as lime-scale and fine particles.

Andrew: Maybe good to put it on the website FAQs.

Sue: Will it be diluted here?

Paul: No, it's already diluted at the factory.

Andrew: By the time the flow testing starts the leaves from the trees will have fallen and it will be visible along London Road. The people who live on the roads over the hills there (points towards road) will be able to see.

Alison: A screen could be put up.

Paul: I like that, we could look into that.

Collective: Can we get some time frames?

Paul: We are waiting on regulators, we would like to be set up and start in September. There are many work streams that come together at the same time and they all come together very quickly.

Jane: They can go on site and start testing.

Paul: I'm happy for those who cannot make the meeting come to the site with me to take a look around.

Max: Can we see the information on the financial status of the company? And do you have sufficient insurance?

Paul: It's a publicly listed company and even though insurance etc. is confidential, the Oil & Gas Authority (OGA) has a financial viability test and we're not allowed to operate without passing. Insurance is part of the checks that the OGA performs.

Sue: Can Angus Energy hold a ticketed meeting at Bramble Hall to introduce themselves and explain their plans to the community?

Paul: That's maybe something for later and a conversation for afterwards when we have done the flow test.

Sue: How far in advance can you give notice for when the flow test starts?
Paul: 7 days notice.
Jane: We get 7 days notice but we don't necessarily share this.

Kate: When will the phone lines be operated?
Paul: Friday, there is a person on the other end.
Andrew: I suggest you put up the operating times of the phone line.

Next Meeting:

20 September 2018 at Bramble Hall, Balcombe, Haywards Heath, RH17 6HR.