

Notes of the Parish Council meeting held on 26 October 2015

These notes are produced to give the public an early update of the main matters discussed by the Parish Council (PC) at its recent meeting. They are not the official minutes.

1. The Open Forum was very well attended, not only by Tarvin parish residents but also by people from surrounding areas. Most people were there to voice concerns about seismic survey work being carried out locally by Tesla International on behalf of IGas. This work is needed to find out what the underlying geological layers in the ground are. Once the data has been analysed, the potential for gas extraction using the hydraulic fracturing technique (commonly called “fracking”) can be assessed. Tarvin parish is at the southern end of two blocks of land where IGas has been granted licences to explore for gas.

The meeting was joined by Gordon Grant, a representative of IGas, and Dave Hounds from Tesla. Set out below is a summary of the questions asked. Some of these concerned fracking itself rather than the seismic survey. Where the questions were answered, the answers are given. Where questions were not answered, Mr Grant agreed to provide answers at a later date. All of the questions and answers will be put on the Parish Council’s website tarvinpc.tarvinonline.org and on Tarvinonline

Communications

Q. Why has the seismic survey not been better publicised in the area? (poor communications with local residents was often mentioned)

A. A leaflet had been delivered but it was acknowledged that this had not been as good as it should have been. Notices had been placed in local newspapers. Borough Councillors had been written to. There had been an exhibition in Ellesmere Port and an event in Littleton. The IGas website had been regularly updated

Q. Would IGas/Tesla consider other means of communication e.g. notices on roads like those used by CWaC Highways when there are road closures, diversions or maintenance work?

Q. What is IGas doing to respond better to the questions which have been raised with them already?

Q. How do Tesla and IGas intend to ensure their activities are transparent?

Seismic Survey

Q. Is the seismic survey accurate enough to identify the sub-surface details?

A. The seismic survey is a three-dimensional survey. It identifies the depth and width of sub-surface geology, where there are fractures, where gas might be and where gas might have migrated to

Q. If property is damaged as a result of seismic survey work or subsequent fracking, will homeowners be compensated?

A. The charges weigh 500 grams and are set off at a depth of 8 metres. When a charge is set off a dull thud is heard [NB this was challenged by a comment that in Barrow it was a loud bang]. There is no testing within 50 metres of an occupied dwelling. Property damage will be paid for if it can be proved to be caused by the seismic survey

Q. What will be the criteria for extending seismic survey work?

A. Work on the two blocks in North West Cheshire is due to be completed mid-November. The results will then be analysed to decide if any area has the potential for fracking. Before fracking can take place there would need to be a planning application and the Environment Agency, Health and Safety Executive and Department of Energy would all have to be consulted

Q. What safeguards are in place to prevent horses and other livestock being disturbed by the seismic charges?

Q. Are the inspectors who oversee the seismic survey work and any subsequent fracking activity independent of the companies doing the surveying or fracking?

Q. How are the public kept away from an area where a seismic survey test is due to take place?

Q. If the seismic survey bore meets ground water before 8 metres, what precautions are taken? [this was a written question submitted at the end of the Open Forum]

Q. Is it true that pressure has been put on landowners to allow surveying on their land?

Q. Will the results of the seismic surveys be made available to the public?

Fracking

Q. If the seismic survey work leads to a proposal for fracking, how will the local infrastructure cope with the extra vehicles and disruption?

A. Any fracking proposal would have to gain approval through the Planning system, and any successful application could well have conditions imposed (depending on the specific area)

Q. If fracking takes place it is likely to be at very high pressure. In which direction to the cracks travel?

Q. Is it true that fracking carried out by IGas in Salford caused contamination of the site?

Q. If fracking takes place, how much land does a well occupy? What density of wells might be expected? Would there also be a shale hut?

Q. If a community does not want fracking, why does IGas go ahead?

Q. If there were to be fracking how would IGas ensure no leak of dangerous chemicals?

Q. What happens to all the waste produced by fracking?

Many other comments were made, including what happens in other countries where there are different regulations, and that the website letstalkshale.com may be a source of independent balanced information [this is not endorsed by the PC]

The representatives of IGas and Tesla International were thanked for coming, as were the members of the public.

The PC agreed not to call a public meeting at the present time but to wait and see if a planning application for fracking came forward in future. At that stage members of the public would be invited to give their views at an Open Forum