

Louise Goldsmith

Leader of the Council

T: 03302222514

louise.goldsmith@westsussex.gov.uk

www.westsussex.gov.uk

Cabinet Office

County Hall

West Street

Chichester

West Sussex

PO19 1RQ



2 August 2013

Dear Resident

Oil and Gas Exploration – Lower Stumble Wood, Balcombe

I'm very sorry for the disruption that you've experienced over the past couple of weeks from protestors at Lower Stumble Wood. Here at West Sussex County Council, the interests of our residents are our primary concern and I am keen to ensure that we support you as much as we can during this challenging time.

Given the current high-profile media interest and the disruption to your village, I wanted to update you on the oil and gas exploration currently taking place at the site and to let you know what we're doing to try to make sure that disruption to you and your neighbours, despite the challenging circumstances, is minimised as much as possible. I hope this information is useful to you.

Cuadrilla currently has planning permission for the temporary use of the site at Lower Stumble Wood for a "hydrocarbon exploratory borehole" to allow them to determine whether gas or oil is present and, if so, how easy it is to extract. The permission for this was granted in April 2010 and all of the conditions attached to the permission have been met to allow them to begin exploratory works.

Cuadrilla cannot use fracking to explore for oil or gas at the site as they do not have the required approvals to do so. If an oil or gas reserve is found, they will need to submit a new planning application before they can go into production. This would be subject to a new full public consultation process, and an entirely new planning permission would be required. They would also need the necessary approvals from the Government and the Environment Agency. I am committed to ensuring that all local residents are able to take part in that consultation process.

Cuadrilla has begun preparing to drill the test borehole and will, at some stage in the coming days, begin to drill. This will continue for about 40 days and nights. We will monitor the noise from the site at this time to ensure that it complies with the conditions set out in the planning permission. During that time we anticipate there will be somewhere in the region of five heavy goods vehicles per day (excluding Sundays) accessing the site. These vehicles will, as is currently the case, only be allowed to access the site from the north through Balcombe village.

We are working with Cuadrilla to ensure that they are meeting the conditions set out in the planning application so that, where possible, disruption to you and your family is minimised. We are working with the police to keep the road network open and to maintain access for residents.

We will continue to monitor this development and carry out announced and unannounced site visits to ensure that the development is taking place in accordance with the conditions of the planning permission.

If you or any of your neighbours have any specific concerns or questions at the current time, the following contacts may be useful:

West Sussex County Council Planning planning.applications@westsussex.gov.uk
01243 642 118

West Sussex County Council Enforcement planning.enforcement@westsussex.gov.uk
01243 642118

West Sussex County Council Highways highwaysandtransporthq@westsussex.gov.uk
01243 642105

Environment Agency ssdenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk
03708 506506

West Sussex Police contact.centre@sussex.pnn.police.uk
01273 470101

I intend to keep you fully informed of any significant developments on the site and any subsequent actions considered by West Sussex County Council following the exploratory drilling. I am committed to ensuring that we listen, take account of and respond to the views of local residents and promise to work with you in the best interests of Balcombe and West Sussex.

I hope that this information is useful. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

With very best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Louise Goldsmith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the name "Louise" on the left and "Goldsmith" on the right, connected by a horizontal line.

Louise Goldsmith
Leader, West Sussex County Council