

Press Release February 2013

Formation of new group for a FRACK FREE DORSET

At a meeting in Dorchester on 15th January 60+ local people came together to form a broad-based, non-political coalition of groups and individuals concerned about the possibility of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) coming to Dorset.

As accessible pockets of conventional gas run out, more extreme methods can be used to extract gas trapped in shale beds. Fracking involves the injection of pressurised fluid to fracture rocks and release shale gas. This is the process that notoriously set off a series of earth tremors near Blackpool in 2011.

The meeting learned that this controversial technology, that has been completely rejected by our neighbours in France, has recently been given the green light by the UK government. Exploration licences for most of South and East Dorset have been issued (see map). In order to begin fracking, companies also require planning permission from Dorset County Council.

Initially the group intends to work on raising public awareness.

The first major public meeting will be:

'No Fracking in Dorset'

Wed March 20th at 7pm at the Dorford Centre, Dorchester

The meeting will include a speaker, a film, discussion and time to consider the next steps to be taken.

Extensive evidence from the USA and Australia, where unconventional gas extraction has been pursued over the last decade, raises a range of concerns.

Those particularly relevant to Dorset include:

- The Danger of Water Contamination, including leakage of fracking fluid containing toxic chemicals and methane gas into the aquifers that supply 50% of Dorset's drinking water
- The Industrialisation of the Landscape, which is likely to be considerable because each 'frack pad' can only access gas from a very limited area. Access roads, pipelines, slurry ponds for toxic waste water and large numbers of truck movements would all be necessary.

A spokesperson for the group pointed out that, "Fracking is an extremely energy intensive, expensive way of producing gas. Prices are not expected to fall - this is chiefly a means of generating new income streams for the gas hydrocarbons industry. The British Geological Survey estimates that, at best, reserves represent a very temporary stop gap measure."

"Dorset has access to many forms of renewable energy and is in a great position to attract investment and green jobs and to contribute to an independent, secure energy future for the UK. Burning shale gas will seriously undermine efforts to cut carbon emissions and to meet legally-binding climate targets."

'Frack Free Dorset' sub-groups for steering, public awareness and planning research have already met. All groups have open membership and all interest is welcomed.

You can get in touch through the website being developed at

www.frackfreedorset.org, or the Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/FrackFreeDorset)

[FrackFreeDorset](https://www.facebook.com/FrackFreeDorset) or by ringing 01305 250123