

ALBURY PARISH COUNCIL / STAR ENERGY LIAISON WORKING GROUP

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 22nd December 2009

Present: Cllrs Nick Wenman, John Brockwell and Peter Gellatly; Joanna Cadman (clerk to Albury Parish Council), Sophie Tucker (Star Energy Project Manager), Joseph From (Star Energy Drilling Manager) Barrie Hedges (Daybreak Communications).

Apologies: Mr Oliver Franks (local resident)

1 Review timings against project plan

A total distance of some 6,000 feet had been drilled and cased prior to the operation being temporarily halted pending construction of a noise baffle in mid-October 2009. Erection of the noise baffle started on 9th November and was completed on 18th December 2009. After some preparatory activities, drilling was due to recommence shortly and it was anticipated that it would be completed by late-March 2010. Earlier completion was possible but that would be dependent upon progress. Once drilling had finished, the temporary noise baffle would be dismantled and demobilisation of the rig would take place. This would take four to five weeks. The appraisal testing programme continued to be under review at present.

2 Review planning conditions

Through discussion with Surrey County Council, Star Energy was preparing a planning application for submission to Surrey County Council in relation to extension of the overall drilling phase, the temporary noise baffle and, minor site layout changes. The company had previously understood from Surrey County Council that an application was unlikely to be required. The current time limit condition (Condition 4) for the drilling phase finished on 8th January 2010, by which point it was hoped that the new application would be submitted. Sophie Tucker confirmed that the company planned, and that SCC were aware, that drilling would continue at that point as it was the safest way forward and in the community interest to complete the appraisal drilling without further delay.

Nick Wenman said that, from a community viewpoint, it was desirable to get the appraisal drilling completed. He was, however, worried that as the noise baffle appeared to have a greater visual impact than had previously been permitted for the rig alone, it could create a precedent for future development. The Parish Council might, therefore, feel it necessary to object to the application.

Action: ST to advise Albury Parish Council when planning application is validated.

3 Traffic

3.1 Traffic management plan

Traffic management continued to go well and was being strictly complied with.

3.2 Photographic surveys

A total of ten photographic surveys had taken place to date and no significant discrepancies had been noted. The next survey was due at the time of the meeting.

4 Noise

While the computer-linked site microphone had continued to operate during construction of the noise baffle, weekly visits by acoustics consultants to the site and to neighbouring properties had been temporarily suspended. With drilling getting underway again, the full programme would be resumed.

In response to a question from Nick Wenman, Sophie Tucker said she had yet to fully assess a consultant's report based on tests undertaken following completion of the noise baffle. The initial indication was that there could be a difference in sound level of around 10 decibels between the inside and outside of the baffle (though that should not be taken as the resulting noise reduction at neighbouring properties). More detail would be available at the next meeting.

Action: ST to advise further re the updated noise studies at the next meeting.

5 Security

There had been no security issues at the wellsite.

6 Communications

6.1 Communications programme

The communications programme was progressing as follows:

- personal contact was being maintained with residents at The Bungalow and Keepers Cottage
- 24-hour complaint line continued to operate
- the general Star Energy information line continued to be available in work hours
- the project website had yet to be updated in line with progress

It was agreed that it would be premature to convene a meeting of the full Albury Liaison Committee for the time being on the basis that the key information required by representatives from parishes in the wider surrounding area would relate to the outcome of the appraisal process.

Action: ST agreed to telephone all immediate neighbours to advise that drilling had recommenced.

Action: Star Energy would provide a community update for publication in the parish magazine. This would be required in mid-January to appear at the end of the month.

Action: Agreed that a site visit to view the noise baffle, once in place with drilling underway, would be helpful. This should include Roy Hogben, Keith Taylor and Mr and Mrs Franks. ST to organise at the appropriate time.

6.2 Star Energy Community Fund

BH reported that applications for 2010 grants from the Star Energy Community Fund would close on 31 December 2009. To date, he had received initial notifications of three applications from within Albury (two from Albury Parish Council and one independent one relating to a calling bell for the old parish church). Two further applications had been notified from the neighbouring parish of Shere. Applications would go before the grants panel in March, with grants awarded from 1 April 2010.

7 Complaints

No further complaints had been received since the last meeting. Only one, received in early August, was regarded as having involved a likely temporary breach of the planning limits

8 Any other business

Members of the Parish Council raised concern with the level of floodlighting in the car park area.

Action: ST said that the floodlights should not be on continuously and promised to investigate and ensure that they were switched off whenever not needed.

9 Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 25th January 2010 at 5pm.