

STAR ENERGY LIAISON COMMITTEE
Minutes of a meeting held Wednesday 26th November 2008
6pm, in Albury Village Hall

Present: Jonathan Lord, Chairman, *Blackheath Village Society*
Patricia Allen *St Martha Parish Council*
Andrew Oliver, *CPRE*
Walter Wilcox *Albury Pressure Group*
David Wright *Guildford Borough Council*
John Brockwell, *Albury Parish Council*
Roy Hogben, *Guildford Borough Council, Albury Parish Council*
Nick Wenman, Chairman, *Albury Parish Council*
Niall Breen, *Blackheath Village Society*
Nicola Savage *Save Blackheath Common*
Paul Dacombe, *Star Energy*
Barrie Hedges, *Daybreak Communications*
Joanna Cadman, *Clerk, Albury Parish Council*

6 householders/landowners from the appraisal drilling route

JL welcomed everyone, including the 6 householders from the appraisal drilling route from Albury Park to near Little Tangle, who had been served with an application by Star under Schedule 6 of the Gas Act 1965 for a direction to allow access to land for prospecting for the purpose of finding or proving a site for underground gas storage. It had been noted that the notices had caused some disquiet, as they had come 'out of the blue' and did not make it clear that SE was seeking access to 600 to 1400 metres below ground, and not the surface.

JL believed that it might have been better, in retrospect, not to postpone the planned September meeting, as this would have been raised and discussed at that stage. The reason for the postponement was that it had not been possible for Star to keep to their planned schedule. However, this group should meet on a quarterly basis, even if there was not a great deal to report.

1. **Apologies** were received from N Morris, Blackheath Village Society, A Povey, Surrey County Council, T Harrold, CPRE, and Paul Lister, Save Blackheath Common
2. **Minutes of meeting held 9th April 2008**
Were confirmed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.
3. **Matters arising**
It was agreed that these would be covered during the meeting.
4. **Update on Appraisal Drilling programme**

The update from SE took the form of a powerpoint presentation.

- Planning permission was received from SCC on 15/7/08.
- Planning conditions to discharge prior to starting work on the site are:
 1. visibility splays
 2. additional ecological surveys and mitigation plans
- Applied to Secretary of State for prospecting rights under third party land – it is hoped to have these in place by January 2009, which will enable work to start in, probably, March 2009.
- Rig planned to be on site circa April 2009 (this will depend on other commitments).

PD emphasised the shortage of gas storage in this country, as there are very few locations where the geology is suitable for gas storage, and this would naturally be more than 600m

below ground level. It was proposed to access Albury storage from the existing well site, which had been in position for nearly 20 years, but a pipeline would be needed to access the grid, which was planned to be sited within the parish of Ripley, north of West Horsley. The above ground elements of this facility would be the well site in Albury Park and the gas processing facility, a small site where the pipeline would connect into the grid. There would also be a temporary construction cabin near East Clandon whilst the pipeline was being laid.

(PD mentioned an appeal currently in progress, where a resident in another part of Surrey had applied enforcement against drilling under their land without permission. The Government was involved in this because, if successful, this appeal would have far reaching effects for oil and gas drilling in this country.)

PD continued by advising that, once on site and drilling has commenced, it is SE's plan to attend monthly parish council meetings and to set up a 24 hour hotline, so that questions and issues could be easily raised. He advised that the rig was currently in Hampshire, but was due at another site before coming to Albury.

5. Update on applications for storage project

PD advised that the existing reservoir covered a very large area and the application did not make a fundamental change to this, but sought permission to put gas back into the reservoir. It was not possible to use the existing wells as they are in the wrong direction. It was probable that 4 wells would be drilled, which would be used to inject and withdraw gas.

PD gave assurances that no drilling would take place on Blackheath Common.

PD said there were currently no proposals to have a well site other than the current one. IN response to a question, he confirmed that there were no proposals for Shalford. At present the premium area to be reached was under Blackheath Common and there was no benefit to accessing this from Shalford.

Albury 2: It was unlikely that a further well site would be needed, but it could not be ruled out completely.

Drilling would start in the spring, and that would be when information would be gathered on what was under Blackheath Common. Drilling would be completed by the summer. After interpretation by the geologists, by this time next year it should be possible to know what was there and whether it had potential.

PD advised that, if there was no gas or oil, it would not normally be possible to use the area for storage, as the geology would probably not be suitable.

6. Acquisition of Storage rights

PD advised that the legal definition of ownership of land went from the centre of the earth to the edge of the atmosphere. It was therefore necessary to obtain the right to store gas under third party land. Savills, who had experience of applications at this level, was making approaches to landowners on SE's behalf, both by meeting them individually and also by a public meeting planned for the new year. It was planned to hold exhibitions in Albury, Shalford and Ripley.

The preliminary Storage Authorisation Order had been approved by the Secretary of State in May 2008, the application to the Department for Energy and Climate Change for formal SAO, due to be submitted in the second quarter of 2009, would determine whether there are any fundamental issues from the point of view of the statutory authorities which would mean that this could not go ahead.

SE would provide the following by Spring 2009:

- An outline safety report, which demonstrated how gas could be safely stored.
- An EIA on the whole project: storage area, pipeline, all above ground equipment.
- Planning applications (to include Albury Park wellsite) would be submitted to SCC by the second quarter 2009.

There would be a financial inducement to the landowners, but as yet it was not clear what this would be. The rights had little actual value, but it was acknowledged that an incentive was necessary. There would be no implication as far as the future value of the houses was concerned, as the gas had always been there and all that was involved was extracting it and then replacing it as before. There would be no insurance implication.

It was hoped to acquire rights through individual negotiation, but a Compulsory Purchase Order would be used if necessary. This would be determined by the Secretary of State.

7. Community Feedback

This committee comprised representatives from a number of groups. SE would find it very helpful to understand the key issues, and believed it would be to everyone's benefit if, at these meetings, it was possible to concentrate on what each group was most interested in and concerned about. It was therefore suggested that a representative from each group runs through the issues that are fundamental.

DW recalled the early meetings, where SE representatives had said very little and had engendered an atmosphere of distrust. He believed that the most important element of these meetings was openness, and the fact that this was now happening was making a very big difference to attitudes and approach.

It was agreed that a representative from Shalford should be invited to future meetings, there seemed little point in arranging separate meetings.

8. Community Fund

PD explained that this was not specific to Surrey, but covered all of SE's operation areas. The maximum grant was £20,000 per project, and the criteria was briefly as follows:

- The project should be based within the area of the SE operation
- The project should be community based.

9. Concerns from Groups Represented on this Committee

Albury Parish Council: NW

1. Traffic: asked for assurances that traffic for the site would not come through the village, and these were given.
2. Traffic on New Road: this traffic, coming from the A25, would cause danger to pedestrians and cyclists, as there is no footpath. Would SE consider putting a footpath down the western side of New Road. This would be the side that the pipeline would run, so would have to be worked, but that would be after the footpath was needed. It would preferably be a rural path, not tarmac. PD agreed that this would be considered.
3. Albury 2: there were huge concerns on how the project would develop as far as this was concerned: the number of wells, potential of these being elsewhere than Albury Park, the impact on the existing site. PD replied that it would not be possible to address these concerns until the appraisal well had been drilled. It was possible that nothing would be found, it would be misleading at this stage to try to anticipate what might happen. By this time next year SE should know the extent of the reservoir for Albury 2, but will not have completed the assessment of what was needed to develop it, which could take another year. PD assured the meeting that the pipeline would

cope with Albury 2, the processing plant would need more equipment but would remain within its proposed site.

4. Current site: will need screening.

St Martha Parish Council: PA

1. Safety: as the site expands, more attention will be needed to safety. PD advised that a safety document must be submitted, but he reminded the meeting that the gas had always been in the ground and SE would not be replacing it at the indigenous pressure, not a higher one, although it may be possible to increase the pressure at a later date.

CPRE: AO

1. Pipeline and processing plant: as it was going through woodland, were concerned about what would be left after restoration and what the route would look like. The processing plant was substantial. PD advised that the restoration plan would ensure that the pipeline route would not be seen on the whole, although it would not be possible to plant trees over the pipeline in the woodland, but there was an ecological benefit to opening up rides.

Blackheath Village Society: NB:

1. Processing plant: PD assured the meeting that there was a significant scheme to minimise the impact on the AONB. There would be an archaeologist observing whilst the pipeline was being dug.
2. Green sand aquifer: concerns regarding this had been passed to SE's geologist, who would give assurances. This had been addressed during the planning application process. It was noted that parts of this aquifer reached as far as the Chilterns.

10 Any Other Business

Public meetings

- To be held in January, week commencing the 26th, starting with Albury. There would be meetings in Wonersh/Blackheath, Shalford/St Marthas.
- The meetings/exhibitions would concentrate mainly on Albury 1, but would touch on Albury 2.
- Letters would be sent to those affected.
- Press would also be contacted, in particular Surrey Advertiser. To consider taking an advertisement rather than seeking editorial. Also use parish magazines.
- Suggest contact made with SE through the Clerk.
- Savills must be thoroughly briefed, at present they were raising more concerns than they answered.
- JL suggested that a piece of the porous rock that the gas will be stored in should be brought to the exhibition, so that people can see and understand that the gas will not be stored in a void.

Offshore Projects

In response to a question, PD confirmed that these were still being pursued and that one field had recently been drilled, but had not been as successful as hoped.

11. Date of next meeting

Latter half of February. SE would provide two alternative dates, so that the one that the majority could attend could be chosen.

NW stressed that he believed these meetings were more beneficial, as they advised more people, than the suggested monthly attendance at a parish council meeting.

Members were reminded that communications with SE should be channelled through the Clerk.