

STAR ENERGY LIAISON GROUP

**Minutes from the meeting, held Thursday 30th November 2006
At 7.00 pm, in the Memorial Library**

Present: Jonathan Lord (Chairman) (Blackheath Village Society)
Michael Baxter, Albury Estate
Prue von Radowitz (chairman, Albury Parish Council)
John Brockwell, Albury Parish Council
Nick Morris, Wonersh Parish Council
Paul Lister, SaveBlackHeathCommon
Andrew Oliver, CPRE
Patricia Allen, St Martha Parish Council
David Wright, Guildford Borough Council
Christian Staunskiaer, Brook Residents Group
Robin McKie, Commercial and Lands Director, Star Energy
Roger Pearson, Group Operations Director, Star Energy
Adrian Fernando, Business Development Director, Star

Energy

Barrie Hedges, Communications Advisor, Daybreak

Communications

Joanna Cadman, Clerk to Albury Parish Council (minute taker)

1. **Apologies** were received from Andrew Povey and Keith Childs
2. **Minutes of the meeting held Thursday 12th October** were distributed at the meeting by Star Energy, following their amendments. The Chairman requested that he be advised of any factual corrections following the meeting, and these minutes would then be taken as read at the next meeting.

3. **Chairman's Opening Remarks**

JL noted that there had been a public meeting and an exhibition by Star Energy since the last meeting on the 12th October. Both had been well attended, but not with the same numbers as the January meetings.

4. **Report from Star Energy**

AF wished Star Energy to be able to formally respond to the issues raised, both at the public meeting and subsequently in literature distributed to residents. Their response is noted as follows:

Noise

several people questioned the impact of noise from the drilling rig on nearby residential

properties. For the project to proceed, the company must comply with Surrey County Council noise guidelines. If the noise exceeded this Surrey County Council guideline limit, it would not be allowed to continue in operation. Once it has arrived in the UK, the rig proposed for use at Albury would be thoroughly tested to ensure that it could meet the required limit.

Noise levels from flaring

Noise levels would have to comply with Surrey CC guidelines. We might have to restrict night-time flaring in order to comply with the guidelines.

Pollution from flaring

(Claim that no information has been provided on levels of contaminants such as hydrogen sulphide) There is no hydrogen sulphide in the gas currently produced from the Albury field.

Impact on bats

Ecological studies have examined the potential impact of the proposals on any bats in the vicinity of the site. While their presence was not confirmed, the studies adopted a precautionary principle and concluded that any impact on them would be negligible.

Condition of New Road for lorry traffic

Our highways consultants regard New Road as suitable for the level of traffic proposed from this temporary use. Traffic levels proposed are not significant compared with existing traffic flows.

Visual impact from St Martha's Hill

Views south from St Martha's Hill comprise elevated, broad and panoramic vistas across the Tilling Bourne valley to the extensive wooded landscape of Blackheath and Albury. The site is located 3.5km from St Martha's Hill. At this distance, the site (including the existing telephone masts) is not visible due to intervening landform at Albury Warren, and the wooded nature of the landscape. The proposed drilling rig would be in operation for up to 18 weeks – a temporary effect. Other operations within the site would be fully concealed by existing vegetation. It is concluded that the proposals would have a neutral visual impact on views from St Martha's Hill, since there would be no discernable deterioration or improvement in existing views.

Visual effect from south of Albury Park

South of Albury Park, the elevation drops into the local valley at Brook. The site and the proposed works would not be visible from these lower elevations due to intervening landform and vegetation. Further south, the elevation increases, up Brook Hill towards Farley Green. At a distance of 1.5km, views back toward the site are possible as part of broad views that extend beyond Albury Park towards the North Downs. However, it is considered that, at this distance, the existing telecom masts will be barely perceptible set within and against the wooded landscape across a complex landscape of woods and copses. The proposed drilling mast would also be barely perceptible at this distance. This is considered to represent a neutral visual effect, with no discernible

deterioration in the views available.

Height of the drilling rig relative to telephone masts

The height of the drilling rig when fully extended is 29 metres. The two telephone masts have been measured since the meeting and found to be 30 metres and 35 metres.

Number of residential properties and businesses within 500 metres and 1,000 metres.

The number of receptors shown in our noise report is indicative only and are intended to convey where most of the properties are clustered. In some cases, a red dot represents a single property but this is not always the case. Reference is made in our reports to "Albury Park Mansion" as a large retirement home. It is only shown as one dot in figure 7.1, but we accept that a relatively large number of people may live there in separate residences within the one building. This property is situated significantly lower than the site and is, therefore, shielded by the intervening ground profile.

Production is likely to include an emergency shutdown system, dumping to the atmosphere

During drilling, safety is assured by containing any gas within the well by employing (at any one time) two independent "barriers". Once the detailed drilling work programme has been prepared, a risk assessment is performed to be certain of this standard of containment in all operating modes, and the programme and risk assessment are reviewed by an independent examiner before submitting to the HSE for comment. During a flow test when the gas is burnt in a shrouded flare, a similar policy is followed whereby the well can be isolated by two barriers. There is no gas inventory held at the surface other than an insignificant quantity contained within a pipe about six-inches in diameter and 40 metres in length.

Any future gas compression and drying plant required for gas storage has many safety provisions to ensure the safety of our staff and third parties. We must design contingency measures for all potential hazardous events even though they are highly unlikely. One highly unlikely event is fire or a gas escape. We design automatic systems to detect such a rare event and the hazard is eliminated by removing the fuel. The automatic system would isolate the pipeline, wells, and unaffected part of the surface plant, and relieve the pressure in the affected plant to make it safe. Any gas is piped away to a safe discharge, normally a high level vent, where, methane gas being lighter than air, it disperses to the atmosphere. The design is such that a flammable gas cannot reach the ground at any point. The safety of the plant to third parties is assessed as a part of the planning process by independent experts and the assessment results will be contained in any future application.

"If Star Energy finds gas it will want to process and store it on site"

Other than the small inventory contained within the gas compression and drying plant, gas will not be stored above ground during either the appraisal or a subsequent gas

storage operation.

“Star Energy has not made clear its long term intentions”

We have made very clear to the liaison committee, and in the application, that the findings of the appraisal well will determine the size of the porous rock reservoir which is proposed to be used as an underground gas store.

“This represents industrialisation of an area of outstanding natural beauty”

Albury has been a drilling site for 20 years. The temporary appraisal project does not constitute further industrialisation. You can, of course, only work minerals where they exist – there are many quarries in National Parks.

Height of the “silos” at Humbly Grove?

The Humbly Grove adsorption towers “silos” are 16.5 metres high. If a gas storage project were to follow at Albury, the “silos” there would be likely to be the same height.

- MB explained that there was a ‘cordon sanitaire’ on the current site, and no trees could be cut down without the written consent of SCC. He expected that similar conditions would be put in place for the new application. If SCC required a bigger ‘cordon sanitaire’ the Estate would consider this, as the Trustees did not want the site to be visible. SE advised that it was possible to make the silos wider and lower to ensure effective screening by the surrounding woodland,
- Any application for storage would necessitate the completion of a Landscape Analysis.
- *Lighting:* RMcK explained that all lighting on site would be localised, so should not have a visual impact
- *Area:* SE explained that the processing plant site area required for any future development would be a further six acres. They stressed that they could not give a complete answer at this stage, as currently dealing with appraisal only, which meant that answers on future plans for the site might not be completely accurate. In the same way, SE did not wish to compare what might be on this site with Welton Gas Storage as the basis of design is completely different and they would therefore bear no valid comparison with Albury.

Industrialisation of an AONB: SE pointed out that the drilling site had been in place for a number of years. They were not using more land, so no increase in industrialisation. Everything would be contained within the ditch, an area of 90 x 60 metres. This would be the position even if the drilling rig had to be moved within the site.

SE were strongly advised to make their long term intentions clear, as people were talking of little else.

5. Albury as preferred site

SE explained that Albury was the preferred site, as it was safe and screened.

- *Impact on residents:* JB did not believe that SE had taken into account the number of people living close to the site. He suggested that if they moved the site closer to Ripley, to Sheepleas for example, it would have less impact. He asked if SE had looked at alternative sites. AF advised that they were still studying a number of sites, but needed to talk to landowners and finish the studies.
- *AONB:* AO asked if SE were looking at sites outside the AONB. RMcK advised that they were looking at a number of sites along the pipeline route and were undertaking sieve analysis studies on the sites that were available. AO pointed out that an AONB should not be industrialised. AF confirmed that SE were looking for other areas, but also had to consider the national situation. PA pointed out that the Tillingbourne Valley was a valuable national resource and that this would be the second time that it had had to deal with an industrial development. RP considered this to be SE's challenge, to construct a site that was well screened, quiet and safe but confirmed that technically the site could be anywhere between the well site and the connection to the pipeline system.

It was agreed to be up to SE to demonstrate that they had investigated all possible sites. RP advised that part of the planning application would be to prove that this exercise had been carried out.

Connection to Grid: At Scotia gas' existing above ground installation (AGI) at the junction of Long Reach and Green Lane West. SE promised a map reference. (post meeting note: Grid ref:TQ077548, X:507700m Y:154800m, Lat: 51:16:56N (51.2823) Lon: 0:27:24W (-0.4567)) The pressure in this system is between 17-38 bar.

If the appraisal well discovers higher volumes of gas than is presently discovered, then SE would probably have to connect to the National Transmission system which would require installation of a second compressor and a third adsorber tower (silo).

6. Visit to Humbly Grove

A number of members expressed an interest.

It was **agreed** that SE would send two or three alternative dates to the committee after Christmas. A committee meeting would be held after the visit.

AO asked if the gas at Humbly Grove was similar to Albury, and was advised that there was more methane at Albury, therefore less hydrocarbon liquids.