



DON'T DRILL THE HILL

A Voice for Leith Hill

September 2017



Welcome to our first Newsletter full of up-to-date information about the campaign against oil-drilling on Leith Hill. It's information that you rarely find in the media.

Read on, find out more and join us by helping in any way you can. It's easy once you know how!
Request your own e-mailed copy each month by contacting info@voiceforleithhill.co.uk

SAVE THE TREES



"Please say yes!" Local children present our petition

Twenty iconic trees in the historic sunken lane are now protected by law. Mole Valley District Councillors voted unanimously to set up a Tree Preservation Order in response to a petition from A Voice for Leith Hill.

Tree Preservation Orders protect amenity trees at risk.

"We're delighted that the Council has made this order, after a long campaign and raising over 2000 signatures," said Sarajane Ferris, of A Voice for Leith Hill.

"These veteran trees on this historic lane can't speak for themselves so the community has given them a voice. They face damage and disturbance from the hundreds of heavy lorry movements that the oil drilling threatens".

The group raised funds to commission a tree report by Furlonger Tree Services, an independent arboriculturalist, which said that healthy beech and oak trees "were at risk from damage and any loss would harm the character and appearance of the historic environment in the lane."

Maximum penalties for breaching a Tree Preservation Order are an unlimited fine from the Crown Court and a £20,000 fine from the Magistrates' Court.

THE PROTECTION CAMP IS STILL HERE – AND WE'VE ROLLED OUT THE RED CARPET FOR VISITORS

The Leith Hill Protection Camp was set up in 2016 as a front line of defence for the hill, and originally occupied the intended drill site off Coldharbour Lane. It took two days in June to evict us, after a dawn raid by specialist climbing and tunnelling bailiffs. Although the iconic 'Cathedral in the Woods' was destroyed we simply moved across the road.

The camp is currently raising awareness of what's happening and keeping an eye on Europa's activities. We love visitors and everyone is welcome for tea and a chat round the fire. From Dorking you'll find us on the left hand side, around half a mile back from Coldharbour village. We're planning a special Equinox Warmer event at 6pm on Friday 22nd September. For more info join Leith Hill Protection Camp on Facebook.

HISTORY OF THE FIGHT AGAINST OIL

Back in 2008 Europa Gas & Oil applied to carry out an exploratory drill in Bury Hill Woods in the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Green Belt. Coldharbour and Dorking residents were astounded. Local parish and district councils, the National Trust, the local water authority and thousands of individuals objected to the proposal. Despite this and the tireless work of local lobby group **Leith Hill Action Group**, permission was eventually granted by the Govt. Planning Inspectorate in 2014.

A Voice for Leith Hill started with a picnic on the proposed wellsite in 2015. It's a non-political community group which felt that this beautiful woodland area needed a voice and decided to raise awareness locally and nationally through a series of events.

Following approval in 2014, Europa have had to submit detailed plans for development and every word and drawing has been scrutinised by LHAG, A Voice for Leith Hill and other groups. Inconsistencies and inaccuracies have been exposed and this fight has continued for 3 years.



Huge lorry + narrow road = Coldharbour Lane + big damage

AND NOW?

Europa still need to gain planning approvals relating to traffic management and fencing, as well as Environment Agency permits. If they are granted, then unbelievably we could soon see the first huge lorries attempt to drive up our historic sunken lane to the site.

Several planning applications may be heard on 18th October in the SCC planning meeting at County Hall, Kingston.
Contact info@voiceforleithhill.co.uk



Fri 22nd: Equinox Event at Coldharbour Camp, evening.

Tues 26th: Social Gathering, Lincoln Arms, Station Rd: 7pm. All welcome.



Lidsey—then Coldharbour? **WE SAY NO!**

Weald Wide Watch

Oil companies are expected to make over **900 applications** to drill the Weald in Surrey, Sussex, Kent and Hampshire. Stephen Sanderson of UKOG said "This type of oil deposit ... depends on drilling your wells almost back to back so it becomes ... an industrialised process". So, Europa's explorations at Leith Hill might be part of a much larger plan. The view from Coldharbour could one day be very different... instead of bonfire smoke, we'd see gas flares belching from drill sites.

Brockham: Angus Energy drilled a sidetrack without permission from Surrey County Council. SCC's lawyers have upheld the planners' view. Angus's application for retrospective planning permission for the installation of other site facilities is being heard at the SCC offices, Kingston, on Wednesday Sept 13th.

<https://brockhamoilwatch.org>

Billingshurst (Broadford Bridge): UKOG have drilled this summer and are seeking a one year extension. The local community holds regular 'cake at the gate' blockades. See them on Facebook.

Horse Hill (Gatwick): A consortium including UKOG explored for oil. A temporary Protection Camp was set up and 'slow walk' protests took place. Residents complained of headaches, nosebleeds & water pollution. The consortium has now applied for an extension.

Markwells Wood (Portsmouth): UKOG have for now withdrawn their application to drill and acidise after Markwells Wood Watch crowdfunded an independent hydrogeological report.

Balcombe. Cuadrilla drilled a well in 2013. After huge protests they went quiet for years, but have just applied to the Environment Agency for new permits.

Lidsey, nr Bognor: Angus Energy have just brought a drilling rig onto the site (see pic) and can go into immediate production. Europa no doubt hope to use this rig at Leith Hill.

And don't forget Albury, Godstone, Godley Bridge & Baxter's Copse (W. Sx), Isle of Wight ... see <https://drillordrop.com> for full info.

Now's the time to take a deep breath ...

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- **Tell everyone.** We have leaflets, posters and car stickers.
- **Display posters and car stickers.**
- **Come to events.** There's our lovely family event—a Community Picnic at Leith Hill Tower on Sat 16th Sept.
- **Write emails and letters.** Tell Surrey County council your objections to 1,400+ HGV movements up Coldharbour Lane. Write to your local paper. Email friends, your MP, councillors, local political parties, etc.
- **Contact Europa's suppliers** to ask them to pull out. They have Facebook pages and websites.
- **Volunteer** for our street-by-street surveys and information stalls.
- **Train as a Legal Observer**, to support protest and peaceful direct action. 23rd September, all day. FREE.
- **Let us know your bright ideas**
- **Donate money, skills, time.**
- **Find out more.** LHAG, A Voice for Leith Hill, Brockham Oil Watch, Weald Action Group all have excellent and informative websites. You can also join the Leith Hill Protection Camp Facebook group for updates.
- **Do you have any special skills?** Social media / organising events / PR / woodworking / design etc etc...do you like talking to people? Don't be shy!

Please email info@voiceforleithhill.co.uk for materials, to book a place on the Legal Observer course or find out more. Or leave a message on 01306 889278.