



DON'T DRILL THE HILL

A Voice for Leith Hill

November 2017



Welcome to our third Newsletter full of up-to-date information about local campaigns against oil-drilling. 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

RED LIGHT FOR OIL TRAFFIC

Wednesday October 18th marked a huge victory in the fight to stop drilling on Leith Hill as Surrey County Council once more sent Europa's Traffic Management Plan (TMP) back to the drawing board. The TMP shows how the company plan to bring site construction and drilling traffic through Dorking and up Coldharbour Lane. It's the final Council approval needed to start work on the site and has been strongly contested by local residents and recreational users of the area.

Councillors demanded consultation with local residents and organisations, plus a cohesive traffic plan from the gathering point at Cobham motorway service station to Leith Hill. The present plan focuses entirely on managing traffic flow from Knoll Road to the drill-site and Councillors deemed that this was insufficient.

'A Voice for Leith Hill' thanks everyone who knocked on doors, handed out leaflets, emailed friends, wrote letters and contacted the Council. Your efforts were hugely important as they helped Councillors realise how many people opposed Europa's plans.

The decision gives us some breathing space, but it will be back before the Council soon – keep in touch for details of how to object. We will also continue our street by street outreach in Dorking and surrounding villages—coming to a street near you soon! If you can help with door to door canvassing, please get in touch via info@voiceforleithhill.co.uk.



Angry protestors stuck red tape over their mouths and demonstrated outside County Hall. "We were forbidden to raise our objections to the revised Traffic Management Plan," said Vicki. "The oil company had made several changes but they weren't enough. We weren't allowed to speak because speakers had been allowed on the original Plan. We were gagged by red tape." ITV London News, BBC Surrey Radio & Radio Jackie plus national and local newspapers carried the story.

NEWS FROM THE PROTECTION CAMP

Almost exactly one year ago the camp on Coldharbour Lane sprung into existence. We held a special event to mark the anniversary with pedal-powered music and workshops which covered topics from compost toilets to legal rights around protest.

People are always welcome for a cuppa and chat.

For details of our upcoming special events and workshops, see the Leith Hill Protection Camp Facebook group.



MEP CALLS FOR SANCTIONS OVER BROCKHAM PLANNING BREACH

Keith Taylor MEP for South East England says Angus Energy misled authorities over Brockham drilling & oil production consent



Responding to the news that Angus is seeking retrospective permission for the side-track well they drilled at Brockham in January without planning consent, Keith said:

"Finally after nine months of misleading shareholders, councillors, the Environment Agency and the Oil and Gas Authority, Angus Energy has finally admitted that it drilled at Brockham without the proper permission. The Oil and Gas Authority gave the final go-ahead for oil production at the site just days ago on the basis that Angus had all the necessary planning permissions in place. That consent must now be rescinded.

"The situation highlights that the Government's so-called 'Gold Standard' drilling regulations are little more than a joke shared between Ministers and the oil and gas industry. The regime for regulating and monitoring oil drilling clearly isn't fit for purpose. Had there not been a small but dedicated group of campaigners resident at the protection camp on the site then this breach might never have even come to light in the first place."

"Retrospective permission must not be waved through. An extremely alarming precedent will be set if Surrey County Council and the OGA allow Angus Energy to get away with this flagrant breach; action and sanctions must now be swift and effective."

The Gruffalo Blues: a story for children of all ages

One day a Dad from Dorking made a magical guitar from a tree. He started to play it but felt very sad when he thought of the beautiful trees around Leith Hill that would be cut down because people want to drill for oil. So he wrote a song to his friend the Gruffalo. He asked it to tell the Forestry Commission (who are renting land to the oil company) how wrong this would be. Their job is to protect woodland and show other people how important the woods are, not help oil companies make money.

People with lovely voices came to help and started the Leith Hill Community Blues Band. And now we have the Gruffalo Blues. Turn up the volume and hear it at

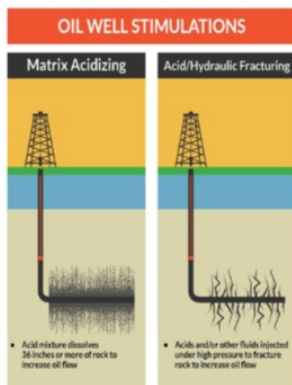
<http://www.leithhillblues.co.uk>

Events

Nov 10th: Screening of inspirational film *The Bentley Effect* at St John's Chapel Westcott 7.30.

Nov 20th 7.30 Leatherhead: Council for the Protection of Rural England: "Is the Weald the next West Texas?" Principal speaker Fergus Addison, who has worked for over 30 years in the oil & gas industry. Email cpre.surrey@btconnect.com for more information or to register to attend.

Dec 7th Gala Night: late night shopping, fun and festivities in Dorking. Email us to volunteer & help run a stall, give out leaflets etc.



Conservancy of Southwest Florida

A BRIEF GUIDE TO ACIDISATION

You've heard the word, now discover the meaning ... here's an easy-to-read guide written by a campaigner. For more details look at Kathryn McWhirter's research on 'Drill or Drop'.

Why does it matter? Explorations at Leith Hill are part of a new wave of 'tight oil' extraction across the SE. Oil and gas companies could make over 900 applications to drill the Weald. Many may want to acidise.

What is acidising? Acids can be used in three different ways:

Acid wash: used for many years, a relatively weak solution of acid, other chemicals and water is pumped into the well to shift debris from pipes. The well could be vertical or run horizontally for over a mile.

Matrix acidising: not confined to the well, it reaches into nearby rock to release 'tight oil' (trapped specks of oil inside the rock). A more concentrated cocktail of acid and other chemicals in fresh water—our drinking water—is pumped down the well and into the rock through holes in the pipes, where it reacts with the limestone to create narrow passageways through which oil may flow.

Acid fracking: where pressures are higher and far more water and chemicals are used. The acid fluid cracks the rock and penetrates much further.

This raises many questions:

a) how much of the mixture is left below ground? What happens to it?
b) how many wells would there be? We need to bear in mind that it's not just one well but a network radiating from the same pad, and then another pad a few miles away, and then another... Or possibly ten separate wells on one pad. That's 10 times the chance of accidentally drilling into a fault/leaks & spills/air pollution from flares/toxic waste.

c) where does the fresh water come from? An authoritative source states that it takes 56,000 litres of fresh water to acidise 30m of pipe.

d) ... and where does it go to? When it flows back, it will be extremely salty, possibly laced with heavy metals and mild radioactivity from the rocks and very hard to treat. It seems most likely that residues will be dumped at sea. We cannot see that any waste facility in the UK is currently able to treat it adequately.

The UK has no legal definitions of an acid wash, matrix acidising or acid fracking. Oil companies often seem to exploit this by applying for permission to acid wash when they intend to matrix acidise, or worse.

THE FIGHT AGAINST OIL

Back in 2008 Europa Gas & Oil applied to carry out an exploratory drill at Bury Hill Woods on Leith Hill. 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 community group that feels that this beautiful woodland area needs a voice.

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 the last 3 years.

WEALD WIDE WATCH

Brockham: Angus Energy announced on 23rd October that they had received all permissions to drill. On the 26th they changed their minds and decided to seek retrospective planning permission from Surrey County Council. See front page: **MEP CALLS FOR SANCTIONS**

Billingshurst (Broadford Bridge): A 12 month extension to operations was approved in September. There have been several delays caused by a 'washed out' well and issues with cement bonding. Residents have recorded evidence of unauthorized weekend work at the site.

Horse Hill (Gatwick): On October 18th UKOG were granted permission for further drilling and extended flow testing.

Markwells Wood (Portsmouth): UKOG have submitted new plans to drill and acidise in the AONB but they have not yet been published.

Balcombe (Sussex): Cuadrilla drilled a well in 2013. After huge protests they went quiet for years, but are applying now to West Sussex County Council for new permits. Look on Drill or Drop for updates.

Lidsey (nr Bognor): Angus Energy announced completion of the new well on Friday 13th October. They hope to start production as soon as their pump is mended.

And don't forget Albury, Godstone, Godley Bridge & Baxter's Copse (W. Sx), Isle of Wight. For more info on what's happening throughout the country go to the Drill or Drop website.

HOW YOU CAN HELP: It's time to step forward and send us an email.

- **Tell everyone,** write letters, display leaflets, posters and car stickers and **come to events.**
- **Join our food rota** to cook for the Protection Camp.
- **Volunteer** for our street-by-street surveys and information stalls.
- **Save annual leave** to show your support for any peaceful protest if and when work starts on the site.
- **Train** to find out more about your rights as a volunteer protestor or become a legal observer.
- **Find out more.** LHAG, A Voice for Leith Hill, Leith Hill Protection Camp, Brockham Oil Watch & Weald Action Group have excellent and informative websites and/ or facebook pages.
- **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!

Website: www.voiceforleithhill.co.uk / **Email:** info@voiceforleithhill.co.uk / **Facebook** A Voice for Leith Hill