

Report for meeting of

Thornton Dale Parish Council Meeting October 2013

Fracking I attended a very emotive and unbalanced meeting in Pickering on this subject presented by the Green Party. I would suggest anyone interested in this topic reads the report by Balcombe Parish Council – please email me for a copy. General gas update at Appendix to this report.

Superfast Broadband Despite what you hear in the news, we are getting on with this and superfast is now available in Thornton Dale.

Details of this can be found at <http://www.superfastnorthyorkshire.com>

Please note that you will have to change your contract, my personal BT bill was increased by less than £1 and was well worth it!

Silt in the Beck I have had some good reports about the state of the beck since the removal of the silt. This was a topic brought up at the recent joint Thornton Dale Ward PC meeting. The environment agency are trying to identify the source of the silt to prevent further silting up. I will be meeting with the EA and Forestry Commission mid-October to discuss this matter with residents.

Bus consultation All PC's have been informed about this consultation; I would appreciate any feedback on this matter. Please ensure it is very specific.

Joint TD Ward meeting This was a very lively and interactive meeting. Elizabeth Walton attended representing the Forestry Commission. Topics discussed were –

Viking Ebberston Common Well Head.

Landing Strip proposed for South Moor (Now rejected by NYMNP)

Silting of the beck.

Communication links with the FC

Update on Gas extraction in Thornton Dale

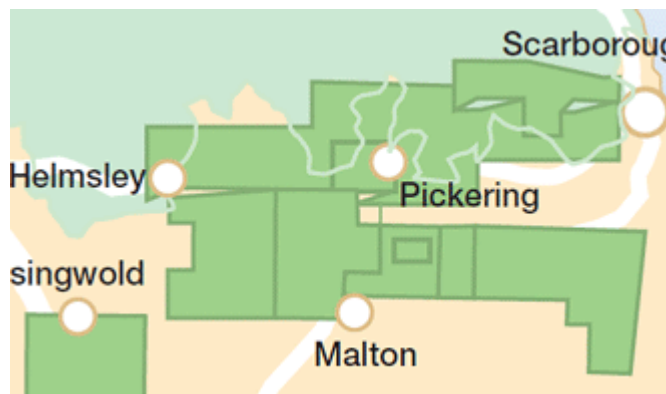
1. Fiction and Fracking.
2. Hurrell Lane Processing Plant.
3. The future of gas extraction.

Fiction and Fracking

Over the past couple of months, I have received several letters from concerned residents regarding Shale Gas Fracking in Ryedale. Some of these letters were lobby letters sent through a Greenpeace website and not specific to Ryedale.

I would like to take a few facts, add a little common sense and stir with a healthy dose of realism.

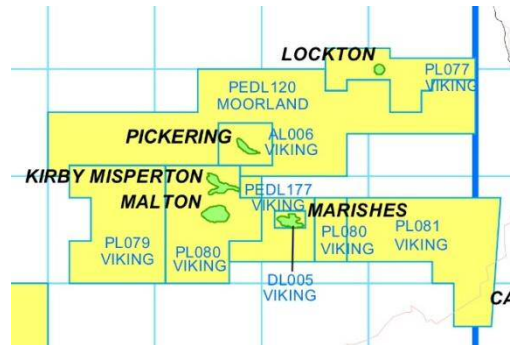
Below is a picture printed by The Northern Echo which has caused residents some alarm. The key to the dark green areas is marked "Areas where drilling licences have been issued for possible fracking"



This statement would have been more accurate and less alarming had it been marked *areas where companies hold current PEDL licences (Petroleum Exploration and Development Licences)* Taken in conjunction with the "Fracking" headline article in the Mercury "gas companies have snapped up the licences" it implies that these licences have been issued in haste and specifically for the exploration and production of shale gas in Ryedale This is not the case.

PEDL licences enable operators to explore for oil and gas and now allow them to appraise and produce shale gas, subject to the need for permission from NYCC (as the minerals planning authority) and any other necessary regulatory approvals.

Looking closer at the current Ryedale licences, we can see the names of the companies holding them and all but one are held by the same company "Viking"



The Viking wells feed the generating station at Knapton and this company is engaging with residents on their plans to expand gas production conventionally and sustainably, maintaining local employment. Many local residents have attended the recent public consultations informing us about their two current planning applications, none of which includes shale gas fracking. The other licence holder is Moorland, who last year gained planning permission (at appeal) to build a processing plant at Thornton Dale, this application again did not include any shale gas fracking.

Some of you will remember that I was a founder member of the AGHAST! group opposing the sour gas plant at Thornton Dale and I have been following issues associated with gas exploration closely. If we have a local gas recourse, then we should look to use it in a sustainable way ensuring the landscape is protected.

It is not my intention to enter into a debate on gas versus renewables here, but I do think we should focus on what we have now which is a situation where two companies hold licences, neither of which was applied for with the intention of shale gas fracking, and both with recent planning applications which do not include shale gas fracking. Of course we cannot guarantee that things won't change in the future, but for the time being, let's face what we do have, and not what we might.

Update on the Hurrell Lane Sour Gas Processing Plant

There has been no recent update, but I am lead to understand that the application is up for sale.

The future of gas extraction in Ryedale

As already stated, currently there are applications in from Viking Energy / Knapton for conventional gas extraction and a new pipeline. It is important that we look at what is in the application and not in the fertile imagination of some groups.

This does not mean that we should be complacent about the possibility of shale gas exploration in the future, but we do need to look at the facts and not the fiction. The NYCC Minerals and Waste Local Plan is currently under review. This emerging plan (joint with National Parks and City of York) will contain policies addressing exploration, appraisal and development of shale gas and will ensure there are inbuilt safeguards. Our efforts should be put into supporting this plan by feeding our views into the public consultations which shape this document rather than scare mongering about something which may or may not happen.

May I assure you that I will be notified of all Minerals applications in North Yorkshire and keep you informed and updated.

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