

**Community Liaison Committee Meeting and Site visit to West Newton A**  
**Thursday 09 September 2021**  
**19.00hrs to 22.30hrs**

**Circulation List:**

John Hodgins (Director, Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited)  
Tom Selkirk (Country Manager, Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited) - attended meeting via Microsoft Teams  
Caroline Foster (Operations Engineer, Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited) - attended site visit & meeting  
Andy Sloan (Wells Manager, Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited)  
Stephen Croft (Site Technical and Local Liaison, Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited) - attended site visit & meeting  
Sarah Blanchard (Resident Representative, Aldbrough)  
Geoff North (Representing Aldbrough Parish Council) - attended site visit & meeting  
Deborah Stabler (Representing Burton Constable Parish Council)  
Ron Jagger (Resident Representative, Marton, Burton Constable Parish)  
Anita Howell (Representing Ellerby Parish Council) - attended site visit & meeting  
Harry Clark (Resident Representative, Ellerby) - attended site visit & meeting  
Lisa Brazier (Representing Humbleton Parish Council) - attended site visit & meeting  
Vanessa Nolan (Resident Representative, Humbleton) - attended site visit & meeting  
Annette Ford (Resident Representative, Sproatley) - attended site visit & meeting  
Don Fields (Resident Representative, Sproatley) - apologies received  
Mark Hood (Representing West Newton Parish) - apologies received  
Matthew Grove (Resident Representative, Withernwick) - attended site visit & meeting  
Tom Copeland (Parish Representative, Withernwick) - attended site visit & meeting  
Simon Taylor (Representing Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited, Communications) - attended meeting

Graham Stuart MP, Beverley and Holderness - apologies received  
Cllr Jacob Birch, Ward Councillor, Mid-Holderness - apologies received  
Cllr John Holtby, Ward Councillor, Mid-Holderness  
Cllr Brian Skow, Ward Councillor, Mid-Holderness  
Parish Councils: Aldbrough, Bishop Burton, Ellerby, Humbleton, Sproatley, Withernwick - information only

**1. Introduction**

The last 'in-person' meeting of the community liaison committee was held on 29 October 2019. Several written updates to the community liaison committee, in lieu of a normal meeting due to COVID-19, were provided throughout 2020 and 2021. The notes, as always, were published at: [www.rathlin-energy.co.uk](http://www.rathlin-energy.co.uk).

As the restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic have still not been entirely lifted worldwide, a formal meeting was not arranged but the community liaison committee was invited to the West Newton A site for a site visit, followed by a discussion about the planning application, on Thursday 09 September 2021.

During the discussion it was decided, subject to prevailing COVID-19 restrictions, that more regular community liaison committee meetings will be reinstated, either 'in-person' or remotely. The committee indicated a desire to return to more frequent meetings.

## **2. Operations Update**

### **West Newton B**

Following the successful drilling of the West Newton B1z (WNB) well, the team at Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited (the team) mobilised testing equipment to the WNB site on 24 May 2021. A temporary bund was installed where the equipment with the potential to hold hazardous materials, such as hydrocarbons, would be placed. This was lined with an impermeable membrane and was classed as a secondary containment after the primary containment of materials (the tanks) followed by the tertiary containment of the High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) site liner.

The well test was conducted in a safe manner with no reported accidents and no Compliance Assessment Report (CAR) points following multiple Environment Agency permit compliance inspections.

The well was perforated in two separate intervals in the Kirkham Abbey formation. Hydrocarbons did not flow to surface naturally and the fluids in the well were lifted to surface using nitrogen followed by the installation of a linear rod pump. Different techniques were used on the well so as to clean up the near wellbore area from the previous application of drilling fluids (mud) and cement used to install the steel casing in the well.

During the testing programme, information was gathered which indicated the use of hydrochloric acid (HCL) may not be optimal to use for an acid wash/squeeze. The team sought consent and received approval from the Environment Agency to use additional products including a mutual solvent, which is soluble in both oil and water, and other organic acids (such as acetic acid). The mutual solvent is a pre-flush for the acid and the organic acids would be used in the same manner as the HCL previously approved. All uses were classed as 'de-minimus' in the context of groundwater by the Environment Agency.

During the nitrogen lifting and pumping of the well, hydrocarbons were recovered at surface and the produced gas was incinerated, with the addition of propane to overcome any non-combustible N<sub>2</sub>, by the ultra-low emission combustion units.

The information gained during the well test has proven very useful and the team will continue to analyse the results as well as conducting additional technical studies to inform future operations. It is believed that during the drilling and early stimulation operations that the formation suffered damage in the near wellbore area and this will be addressed by future operations in order to improve inflow from the Kirkham Abbey Formation.

The well is currently 'shut in' with pressure gauges inserted to record the build-up of reservoir pressure.

## **Inter-wellsite mobilisation (West Newton B to West Newton A)**

A revised Traffic Management Plan (TMP) was submitted to East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC) in June to allow for vehicles to move equipment directly from the WNB site to the West Newton A (WNA) site along Pasture Lane, Burton Constable Road and Piper's Lane. This route had already been assessed by traffic consultants and submitted as part of the WNA extension planning application.

However, it was determined that the route would need a slight upgrade to allow ALIVs (abnormal long loads) to turn from Burton Constable Road to Piper's Lane (similar to what has already been constructed on the other approach), so it was decided to send all abnormal loads along the previously approved routes.

Nothing else was changed in the TMPs which were approved by ERYC at the end of August. The use of the new route not only saved time mobilising between the sites but also reduced the traffic going through the villages of Marton, New Ellerby and Sproatley.

## **West Newton A**

Equipment has now been mobilised to the WNA site to recommence the testing operation that was suspended in 2019. The team plans to re-enter the well and to conduct a nitrogen lift and run a linear rod pump to lift the fluids out of the well. Any gas recovered will be flared in the ultra-low emission combustion units and any produced fluids will be collected and tankered from site to the appropriate Environment Agency approved disposal facility or, in the case of produced hydrocarbons, to a local refinery.

This current plan should take four to six weeks to complete. However, there are some contingency operations which may need to be undertaken, depending on the results from the initially planned activities. These additional operations may include re-perforating of the Kirkham Abbey formation. The well has been suspended for two years, and any additional activities may extend the operational timeline.

## **3. West Newton A planning application and field development plans**

On 17 December 2020, the team submitted an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Request to ERYC for the proposal: 'To construct an extension to the existing West Newton A (WNA) wellsite, test, appraise and produce from the two existing wells and drill, test, appraise and produce from up to six (6) new wells followed by decommissioning and wellsite restoration.' On 20 January 2021, ERYC issued a Screening Opinion which determined that the proposal did not constitute EIA development.

On 26 February 2021, a Screening Request was submitted by a local councillor to the Secretary of State for The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (SoS) to determine if the proposal did constitute EIA development. The SoS's Screening Direction was received on 09 June 2021. It determined that the proposal did not constitute EIA development.

The public consultation on the proposed West Newton A development was carried out online for a week in late March 2021. More than 370 people visited the consultation website. A summary of the most commonly asked questions was posted on Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited's website. Questions were also responded to directly from individuals who submitted them. The main comments from the consultation were regarding traffic volumes principally during production, as well as other matters such as noise, visual amenity and flaring. Many of the comments were addressed in the environmental reports which were subsequently submitted with the planning application.

The planning application was finalised, submitted (28 June 2021) and validated on ERYC's planning portal on 30 June 2021. The application is available to view on the ERYC planning portal under application number **21/02464/STFUL**.

<https://planningpublicaccesslive.eastriding.gov.uk/>

Information regarding the project is still available on the Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited consultation page at [www.rathlin-energy.co.uk](http://www.rathlin-energy.co.uk). However, it should be noted that some changes have been made to the final application following the consultation event including the reduction in maximum traffic numbers during the production phase (from 25 to 10).

<https://consultation-wna.rathlin-energy.co.uk/>

The planning application is expected to be considered at the ERYC planning committee meeting on 30 September 2021.

The discussion at the community liaison committee site visit held on 09 September 2021 noted that some issues raised during the public consultation were still of concern to local residents.

These include matters such as volumes of traffic, routes and suitability of some local roads.

The team gave an unequivocal commitment to work with the local community and ERYC to find constructive solutions to the community liaison committee's specific suggestions, such as: utilising alternating approved traffic routes to and from site to spread the traffic volume out, committing to capping production tanker traffic at 10 tankers/day and looking at ways to improve accessibility on the single-track roads for the use and enjoyment of all users.

The possible installation of public footpaths along Piper's Lane and Pasture Lane were seen as very good ideas proposed by community liaison committee members. The team said it will work with community representatives and the local highways authority, outside the current planning application [as part of its plans for a community fund], to support in the delivery of initiatives of this nature.

Community liaison committee representatives raised the question of a possible pipeline for produced oil rather than 'trucking' as proposed in the planning application. The team assured residents that once commercial production has been established, and the reserve size and daily rates were better understood, the pipeline option would be further evaluated.

Community liaison committee members said that they were concerned about the prospect of constant flaring during the production phase. The team indicated that any gas flaring for the WNA site is strictly designed for the testing and appraisal phase of the development and routine flaring has no role to play in the commercial production phase.

The team also indicated that, as part of the company's ongoing carbon reduction activity, any surplus natural gas recovered will be processed for the generation of electricity for use at the site and any additional power generated would be made available for consumption via the national grid network (subject to consent).

Clarification was sought over the planting scheme surrounding the site and it was suggested that trees could be planted on top of the bund to screen the site and leave a forest for future. The team said it would assess the viability of this – seeking solutions that can be incorporated following construction of the bunds. They said that the aim would be to make the site as unobtrusive as possible from a variety of visible points close to, and away from, the site itself.

A question was raised over the pre-application advice sought from ERYC's planning department. Specifically, there was a concern that hydraulic fracturing had been raised in the pre-application advice. The team restated that hydraulic fracturing forms no part of this planning application and that the WNA planning application supersedes any information submitted as part of the pre-application advice. Community liaison committee representatives were also reassured when the team reminded them that any future planning applications will always be subject to detailed local consultation and independent planning assessment before any projects are approved.

#### **4. Community Fund**

The team said that Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited has been operating at the WNA site since 2012 and has, over the years, made various contributions to the local community. As has always been stated, if the project gets to the point of commercial production, a more formal community benefit fund would be implemented.

As part of the WNA development Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited is proposing to implement a community fund which would be commensurate with the works.

Discussions are currently ongoing with the ERYC about how this might be implemented in readiness for wider public consultation with the community liaison committee and parish councils.

It is intended that the community fund would be available for community led initiatives to help improve local amenities as well as reducing the impact on those people directly affected by the work. These initiatives might include: traffic and road improvement schemes, support with energy conservation and energy efficiency projects, advancement of education in the locality of the site as well as being available to support with environmental protection or improvement.

## **5. Other business**

The team mentioned that local residents from the nearest affected communities (Marton and West Newton) had been invited to the site for a tour and question and answers session. During the site visits, all attendees received a comprehensive site induction by the team's Health and Safety Advisor, followed by a brief tour around the facility conducted by members of the site team. Information regarding the site extension application was available and various team members were on hand to talk this through.

## **6. Keep in touch**

The team urged community liaison committee members to continue to share these 'community liaison committee notes' via parish communication channels. All recipients are reminded to please address any questions or concerns directly to the Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited team at: [rathlinenergy@rathlinenergy.co.uk](mailto:rathlinenergy@rathlinenergy.co.uk). The notes are also published on Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited's website in the Yorkshire section at: <https://www.rathlin-energy.co.uk/yorkshire/>

Local residents are asked to contact the team with any questions, suggestions or concerns. All resident enquiries will be dealt with quickly and efficiently.

Thank you and best wishes

John

John Hodgins

Director

Rathlin Energy (UK) Limited