



NOTES OF COMMUNITY INFORMATION AND PLANNING MEETING

10TH November, 2017

Over 100 people attended the meeting from Preesall, Knott End, Fleetwood, Stalmine, Hambleton, Pilling and Nateby. The meeting was well attended by Councillors from Preesall, Fleetwood, Pilling, Wyre Borough Council and Lancashire County Council which was appreciated by those who came. People had mixed levels of information and knowledge about Halite Energy Group's plans, with some new to the area and the issue and others who had been following the development for ten or fifteen years.

Information provided

At a recent Community Liaison Panel Meeting in Fleetwood in October 2017 Halite Energy Limited announced that construction on plans to store gas in 19 underground gas caverns in Preesall and Wyre would start from January 2018¹.

No Gas Storage and other speakers provided an overview of: the gas storage plans; an update on recent developments; and an overview into research into the finances for the company Halite Energy Group.

Residents were invited to share their concerns, information and ideas for next steps. The No Gas Storage group is setting up a network of community monitors to identify issues that could slow or halt the development as well as to ensure that any development is undertaken safely, in accordance with regulations, and that local people's concerns are taken into account. Residents were invited to volunteer.

Concerns raised

1. How to stop the gas storage project

There was a lively discussion with disbelief and anger that the plans were going to go ahead. Several residents complained about the way the decision by Minister Lord Bourne was "fast tracked" by the Government despite numerous aspects having been over-ruled. Three ministers at the highest level had turned down Halite's plans before Lord Bourne approved them. There were questions about legal challenges.

Several councillors were concerned about the possibility of protests, which they were not in favour of. Their approach would be to speak to Halite to try and get the best deal for the community. An activist on fracking issues said the community had been fighting gas storage for 15 years and could

¹ Notes from the meeting can be found here: <http://www.halite-energy.co.uk/our-project/community-liaison-panel/>





still stop it. Some residents were interested in direct action and others not. A Lancashire County Councillor from Fleetwood expressed support the residents of Knott End and Preesall.

2. The size of the development

The new Halite caverns would be 100 metres across and almost big enough to hold the Eiffel Tower from top to bottom. The number of communities and area affected by the development is huge. 600 houses had recently been built in Fleetwood not far from the site of the proposed seawater pumping station. The people who moved had not been told the size of the storage project. The houses' original plans were in keeping with a country park.

3. Brine and pollution

A coastguard, said Halite's claim that the 2.3 kilometre pipeline for discharge of brine off Rossall would protect from tidal drift into Morecambe Bay was "ludicrous." A Councillor from Pilling mirrored concerns that salt from the Rossall pipeline would be taken by the tide into Morecambe Bay, and said this needed to be monitored.

A marine biologist was surprised to hear that water for swilling the caverns was being pumped from the fish dock. The dock contained 15 non-native species whose larvae could be released into the marine environment. These would out-compete the native species, killing invertebrates. The fish that ate the invertebrates would be affected, and this would have a knock-on effect for local fishermen. There would also be brine pockets where fish would be affected. She was surprised that the Halite plans were not mentioned by the large number of statutory environment bodies, such as those governing Morecambe Bay's marine conservation zone, and the protected areas for birds.

A scientist from Fleetwood had concerns the computer modelling used to design the brine outflow had been done 10-15 years ago – before the Cleveleys and Rossall sea defences were built. Since then, there had been changes in currents, and a new island had formed 2 km offshore which was becoming a sanctuary for seals. Brine would potentially come straight across.

A resident from Cemetery Lane said that Halite's staff were already out doing surveys for the new road. Three fields would be affected, including one which was a habitat for the brown hare and others which were used by rare seabirds.

4. Safety of the area after previous salt mining

A Lancashire County Councillor reminded people that 104 old brine caverns were being maintained by Halite to keep them stable. The new Halite caverns would be 100 metres across and almost big enough to hold the Eiffel Tower from top to bottom. He said he was concerned about how these would be maintained once Halite had finished the project.

One resident said she was the great-great-great granddaughter of a Preesall mining engineer. There was a honeycomb of caverns in the area, and some subsidences were so deep that they could more





than swallow Blackpool Tower. She was also told that mercury was stored down some of the brine-wells.

A scientist from Fleetwood was concerned about the caverns. The storage pods would contain huge amounts of gas. How much of this could they lose before they knew they had lost it and took action? Answering a question about faults, he said that Halite were saying their caverns would be constructed in virgin salt-beds but the company would not know whether there were small faults, or if the salt was broken up by thin seams of other material, until they started drilling into the salt-beds 250-700 metres below the surface.

A Knott End resident reminded the meeting about the underground gas escape from a storage site which took place in Kansas a few years ago².

5. Other gas developments

Several residents raised the issues of the recently passed gas power station in Thornton and the LNG plant at Anglesey, as well as fracking and the link to the national transmission system. Professor Peter Styles from Keele University a pro-fracking scientist had previously said that underground gas storage and fracking were not safe together. Seismicity was a major concern for the land surrounding the gas storage as well as the gas storage itself.

6. Role of the group in monitoring

A councillor from Pilling Parish Council updated on the Community Liaison Panel. Their role was to feed back about what Halite was doing and when. There would be four meetings a year for the next 5 years. She said her understanding was that in some states in America there was a restriction on preventing this kind of development within three miles of a densely populated area. She said they had an important role as a group to keep Halite on their toes because the development involved “our homes and our livelihoods.” She was also concerned about the impact on the storage caverns of fracking and seismic activity. Individuals had a role to play too in reducing demand and consumption.

A Councillor from Preesall said the community should use the liaison panel to “hold Halite’s feet to the fire.” No Gas Storage should work with the company as much as it could, and make sure they did what they said they were going to do. He was concerned about the loss of salt as a resource. He recommended the group read through past materials from the public inquiry as there was a lot of information there.

A mass letter-writing campaign was suggested.

² <http://www.ogj.com/articles/print/volume-99/issue-15/transportation/effects-of-hutchinson-kan-gas-leak-can-be-worldwide.html>





Future Dates

27th November: Community Liaison Panel: Claire Rimmer Quaid attending for the group.

28th November: Fleetwood Town Council meeting with report-back

1st December: Next community meeting at the Knott End Golf Club

7th December: Wyre Borough Council meeting update from Halite.

8th December: Next community meeting in Fleetwood (venue to be arranged).

Next steps

The group agreed to meet regularly to keep each other updated. The next meeting will be 1st December at 7.30pm at the Knott End Golf Club. This will provide feedback on the next Community Liaison Panel where Halite should give another update on the plans as well as going into more detail on brine and other issues of concern.

There will also be a meeting on 8th December in Fleetwood (venue to be confirmed).

Monitoring work will continue on the conditions that have been fulfilled so far and concerns.

Contact Claire Rimmer Quaid: clairequaid@yahoo.co.uk for more information

