

From: ROWLEY, Lee
To: clerk@eckington-pc.gov.uk
Subject: RE: Fracking Eckington Parish
Date: 23 October 2022 16:46:08
Attachments: image001.png

Dear Emma,

I hope you are well. Many thanks for your recent email and for bearing with me for a few days whilst I was able to respond properly.

I am grateful for you giving me the opportunity to respond on this hugely important issue for both the Parish and for North East Derbyshire as a whole. Thank you to the Parish Council for setting out their position so clearly.

When I was elected in 2017, I made a commitment to North East Derbyshire that I would always oppose fracking if it came to our area. I also said, subsequently, that whilst I accepted that others took legitimately different views (other politicians and some trade unions), that I didn't think it would answer the energy challenges that our country faced. My position on both of these points remains the same now as it was in 2017 and 2019.

Before responding to some of the points in the letter, I hope I might be able to take a moment to address a parliamentary vote which happened on 19th October and which I know a number of residents may have concerns about. My vote has been mischaracterised and misrepresented as having voted "for fracking". The same happened in a previous vote several years ago. It wasn't true then and it isn't true now. I'm afraid many games are played in Westminster and procedural votes are used in a way to mischaracterise the position of MPs for partisan purposes. Wednesday's vote was a procedural one only (about whether to hold a subsequent debate on fracking in November) and it had no bearing on whether fracking went forward or not. My position on fracking has not changed and will not change.

Turning to your letter and, firstly, the motion. I absolutely can commit to your request that I support that a meaningful and appropriate local community choice must be given before any fracking or exploratory operations begin. I have been very clear with current Ministers that this is my view for a number of weeks and I will continue to be so. Indeed, just this week, and following discussions with the Business Secretary, the Government confirmed for the first time that local communities would have a "veto" over whether fracking occurred – a significant improvement in the language used previously and I am glad the Business Secretary used the wording I suggested in this regard in his speech on Wednesday. Given that there is now likely to be a change of Government in the coming days, if the new administration wishes to pursue fracking, I will continue to push for the clear requirement that local communities make the final decision about what does or doesn't happen in their area on fracking. That, to me, is a better approach than blanket bans. Should that community consent process ever be needed in North East Derbyshire (and I hope it wouldn't), I would absolutely advocate, campaign and request that local residents do not support fracking in our area when they made their choice.

With regards to the points in your letter about how this consent should be arranged:

- **Assessment:** I will happily pass this on to the new Government should they wish to continue to pursue policy change in this area. I think there may be an issue of practicality here but I am happy to raise it.
- **Area of interest:** I have already spoken to the Business Secretary on the point that the area affected may be not linear. You are right that both geographical proximity and impact need to be considered in the round before asking an area if they wish to progress. I think this is an absolutely key point and you are right to raise it.
- **Incentives:** I agree with the need for incentives to be iron clad. On the point about insurance, this is a broader point that was never adequately answered in earlier considerations of fracking in this country and, whilst I am unsure of the answer here, I absolutely agree it needs to be revisited and clarified.
- **Planning:** I also prefer the retention of the current planning system.

I hope that the above is helpful. If the moratorium is to be removed, then my preference is, like yours, that any future policy is centred on local communities having the final decision. That is what I have been pushing for, working on and lobbying for in recent weeks and what I will absolutely continue to do, should it be needed, in the months ahead. My opposition to any fracking in North East Derbyshire remains absolutely consistent and I still remain of the view that this is not really a policy which will make any major benefit to the country as a whole. Nonetheless, as long as individual communities can decide that, then I am content to trust that the people of Eckington Parish and North East Derbyshire will say no should the question be asked. I hope it won't but, so long as we control our own destiny, we get to choose what happens in our area.

Many thanks,

Lee



Lee Rowley
Member of Parliament for North East Derbyshire

Eckington Business Centre, Market Street, Eckington, Derbyshire, S21 4JH | 01246 439222
128 High Street, Clay Cross, Derbyshire, S45 9EG | 01246 439222
House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA | 0207 219 4197

In line with data protection regulations, the Office of Lee Rowley MP processes your personal data for casework and policy enquiry purposes.
Please see our privacy notice at www.leerowley.co.uk
[Click here to sign up to receive Lee's regular e-newsletter](#)

From: Clerk Eckington Parish Council <clerk@eckington-pc.gov.uk>
Sent: 17 October 2022 11:27
To: ROWLEY, Lee <lee.rowley.mp@parliament.uk>
Subject: Fracking Eckington Parish

Good Morning,

Please find attached a letter on behalf of Eckington Parish Council regarding fracking.

Many Thanks

Emma

Emma Smith
Parish Clerk
07715 668815



Eckington Parish Council

UK Parliament Disclaimer: this e-mail is confidential to the intended recipient. If you have received it in error, please notify the sender and delete it from your system. Any unauthorised use, disclosure, or copying is not permitted. This e-mail has been checked for viruses, but no liability is accepted for any damage caused by any virus transmitted by this e-mail. This e-mail address is not secure, is not encrypted and should not be used for sensitive data.



Eckington Civic Centre
Market Street
Eckington
Sheffield
S21 4JG
Tel: 01246 432770
Mob: 07715 668815
clerk@eckington-pc.gov.uk
www.eckington-pc.gov.uk

17 October 2022

Dear Lee Rowley MP

RE:FRACKING

Eckington Parish Council, at our full council meeting held on 4 October 2022, passed the following resolution and agreed to write to you as our MP, requesting your continued support to oppose fracking within our Parish, and to Derbyshire County Council as the local minerals authority:

In light of the Governments recent decision to lift the moratorium on Fracking, Eckington Parish Council reaffirms in the strongest terms its position against fracking and declares its opposition to any application to allowing hydraulic fracturing within the boundary of Eckington Parish Council, which includes Eckington, Marsh lane, Ridgeway, Troway, Renishaw and Spinkhill.

Fracking will not produce enough gas to significantly affect the short term energy situation (price or quantity), it is not proven safe in a highly densely populated country such as England (with 12x the population density of the USA) and we have not got the road or pipeline infrastructure to support it without huge additional disruption.

We also believe that the long term use of fossil fuels must be reduced and that can be better achieved through improved insulation, energy savings and continuing the last 10 years of rapid increase in renewable energy production.

We do recognise that some of these matters are primarily for the local residents to decide, in particular the local impact of fracking operations, and we ask our MP to voice to government that a meaningful and appropriate local community choice must be given before any fracking or exploratory operations begin.

We have read your reaffirmation of your previous opposition to fracking within the Parish of Eckington and trust that we can work together on opposing on-shore fracking both locally and nationally.

We believe that the current media discussion about fracking is misinformed, and there is urgent need for public clarification regarding the many problems with fracking.

These misunderstandings include:

A - The claims that gas could be flowing within "a few" months. That may be the case, but the reality is it would be a meaningless trickle. To develop fracking to a sufficient level to make up even 10% of our current gas use would require many years and a massive industrialisation of our country, with hundreds or thousands of well pads and all the related infrastructure.

B - The claims that fracking within the UK land area would reduce the price do not stack up - gas is priced on a global market and even massive fracking in the UK would not significantly affect that price, meaning we get all the disruption and basically no benefit.

C - The implied suggestion that it is the best option for energy security is simply incorrect. The lowest hanging fruit in our energy crisis are insulation and smarter use of our gas supply. These not only are a quicker return on investment, but they will make other significant improvements in our residents lives, by ensuring they stay warm in the coldest weather. Reducing energy use is much better for the long term, by reducing carbon emissions, rather than increasing them by extracting even more fossil fuels - after all, a rational person would not turn up the heating and leave all the windows open to stay warm.

D - Fracking companies claim there is no evidence to suggest fracking poses a long term threat. The truth is there is also no evidence to suggest it does **NOT** pose a long term threat - there is simply an absence of sufficient relevant evidence - the frackers do not know if it is truly safe or not. Construction in the UK is largely brick and stone, and because the UK is geologically very stable, that has proven very effective. However, as we discovered from the mining industry, subsidence was caused by that industry, and resulted in huge costs and damage to private property including heritage buildings. Hydraulic fracking at a large scale is not a clearly understood technology. Calls for long term indemnity insurance to cover potential subsidence 50 or 100 years hence we were recently rejected by at least one fracking company, hardly demonstrating their own confidence in the science.

We also note the comments from government, and reports in the media, that fracking would only be contemplated where there was local consensus to proceed. There have been no details given. We reiterate that we do not support fracking within our Parish under any circumstances whatsoever, given the previous points, but if the government was to contemplate such a process, it must not be a tokenistic process. We ask that if the government did follow this course, you would strongly lobby for the following points:

- Prior to proceeding, a clear assessment should be undertaken to ensure that fracking was the best option, and was demonstrably and significantly more effective than measures such as local insulation programmes and energy efficiency improvements.

- Consent must be sought from all those affected, including by construction process and traffic, operational processes and traffic, pipeline and related infrastructure creation and operation, all residents and businesses and heritage

properties etc, that will have fracking operations under them, all those whose water supply might be affected, and all others who might also be affected.

- If 'sweeteners' were offered to those affected, there must be iron clad guarantees that those would be fulfilled no matter how much gas was produced. It would be clearly unfair to have all the disruption and risk, only to discover there is almost no gas and no benefit. Those 'sweeteners' would have to include long term (100+ year) subsidence insurance backed up e.g., by Lloyds of London to give long term assured protection.

- The usual planning approvals, such as requiring full clean-up when operations cease, should be backed up by suitably funded guarantees and indemnities, such that even were a fracking company to go bust, there will be sufficient funding to fully restore any area affected by fracking operations and deal with any long term remediation required.

We look forward to your response.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'ES Smith', written in a cursive style.

Emma Smith

Parish Clerk