

Powering Scotland – Report by Marjory McGhie

The West Lothian and Falkirk Network recently met with Adrian Shaw, Church of Scotland's Climate Change Officer to discuss recent developments:-



“Fracking – sensible solution or disastrous development ?”

Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, is a technique designed to recover difficult-to-reach gas and oil from shale rock (compressed mud).

Eco-Congregation members, some with first hand knowledge of the energy industry, engaged in a rich and stimulating evening of conversation.

Here are some snippets of information that I picked up:

- Putting aside the financial costs of recovery, we cannot obtain energy (ie gas, electricity, oil, nuclear, renewable solar, hydro or wind) WITHOUT some additional cost to our health and surrounding environment.

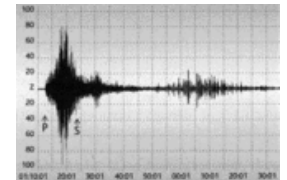
France has opted for nuclear power stations. In the United States, the last order for a new plant was placed in the 1970's. This is attributed to public concerns over health, environmental worries and fears about the security of nuclear facilities. However, unlike fossil fuel plants, which spew tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, nuclear power plants don't produce smoke. But there is the significant issue of radioactive waste, which isn't biodegradable and is extremely dangerous. Most plants store **nuclear waste** in steel-lined concrete basins filled with water, where it **remains radioactive for thousands of years.**



- **The French energy company DART** is currently test drilling for onshore gas in Central Scotland. Each test site is the size of 6 football pitches. DART is just one of the companies bidding for a drilling licence. There are 53 licences on offer across Scotland.

- **Airth Coal Bed Methane PUBLIC INQUIRY** is currently taking place at Inchyra Hotel, Falkirk. (March/April)
Inquiry Session 1 (of 4) looked at the following:
Geology (potential instability, potential methane migration and fugitive emissions, naturally occurring radioactive material (NORM), old mine workings, potential for hydraulic fracturing)
Hydrology/hydrogeology (private water supplies, possibility of drawing water from more than the coal seam, possible dewatering of local aquifers)
Gas delivery and water treatment facility (disposal of waste water, gas compression and treatment)
There will be 4 Hearing Sessions to follow. **Eco-warrior, Jo Hirst of Avonbridge/Torphichen Parish Church is campaigning hard AGAINST the issuing of drilling licences by local and central governments.** If you want to join her, e-mail her at jo@hirford.freeserve.co.uk.

We're looking at potentially **carcinogenic chemicals** being pumped into the rock seams which then come out in the waste water. Some United States householders claim that shale gas leaking into their drinking supply caused tap water to ignite. In addition, two small earthquakes of 1.5 and 2.2 magnitude hit the Blackpool area in 2011 following fracking in North England. Yes, it's fairly insignificant but in the longer term this Richter scale may increase.



- "Shale gas is not the solution to the UK's energy challenges," says Friends of the Earth energy campaigner Tony Bosworth. "We need a 21st century energy revolution based on efficiency and renewables, not more fossil fuels that will add to climate change."

“**All that Gas**” Church of Scotland Blog - 7 March 2014 – Summary
“So where should we get our gas from? Should we import it from far away and not worry about how it is produced or bite the bullet and develop new onshore resources in Scotland? This is a tough one and all of us need to be part of the solution,” states Sally Foster Fulton. Read more at:

http://cos.churchofscotland.org.uk/blogs/church_and_society/2014/03/07/all-that-gas/#sthash.PkDaaA1J.dpuf