

Fracking Matters Newsletter (14) – 27 October 2011



Information letter for whom fracking does matter and (some) updates on the website www.frackingfreeireland.org, with links to other (Irish) fracking websites

Upcoming events:

You are cordially invited to attend the first public **recitation by Veronica Kelly**, author of 'The Frack-in Lough Allen', of her **new poem 'Fracking Halloween'** in Murray's Vintage Tea Rooms, Ballinamore (opposite the AIB Bank) on **27th October (tonight)** at 9.00 pm.

Gig in Murray's Vintage Tea Rooms, Ballinamore on the 27th October from 7.00 pm.

7.00 - 9.00 pm - Three course meal served - booking advised.

9.00 - 9.30 pm - Veronica Kelly to give the first public recitation of her new poem 'Fracking Halloween'.

9.30 - 10.00 pm - Presentation by Louis McLoughlin.

10.00 - 11.00 pm - Nuada performing with the third member of their band.

11.00 - ?? .00 am - Irish traditional night of music, song and dance followed by informal seisiún

Bring your own bottle of wine, a small charge will be made for the glass.

Brian Rooney

Saturday 29 October 2011

There will be an anti-fracking awareness stall set up at the Hunters Moon Music and Arts Festival

<http://huntersmoonfestival.wordpress.com/> this weekend in Carrick-on-Shannon - Protect our Water - No to Fracking

The space being used for the arts/craft/info stalls used to be a bike shop, it's down the small alley way beside the Oarsman pub, off Bridge St.

If anyone from any other local anti-fracking groups have upcoming events - fundraisers - info nights - screenings etc.. coming up that we can

let people know about, just mail me and I'll have that info available for people - or if you have posters/tickets/flyers for anything even better. Also if anyone is free to help out on Saturday/Sunday between 12-7pm that would be great.

Contact: Leah Doherty doherty.lea@gmail.com

IRELAND FRACKING AWARENESS WEEK 14- 20 November 2011, (kick off 11 Nov)

Fracking Free Fringe Concert 11th & 12th November.

Ballinamore/West Cavan

A group of us from Ballinamore/west Cavan, are organising a major **Fund Raising 'Concert'**, because we expect that ultimately the campaign might have to go through The Courts - maybe the European Courts. This would entail legal and Specialist Witnesses and costs. Hence the need to begin to fund-raise. The Event will take place **from Noon to Mid-night on 12 Nov** next, in McGirl's, Ballinamore. Numerous national artists are already agreed to perform. These include Eleanor Shanley, Charlie McGettigan, **members** of KILA, and at 3pm "The Kings of Comedy", i.e., Kevin McAleer, Barry Murphy and Joe Rooney. Other confirmations are confidently expected. Full details are planned to be revealed on the **Fracking Free Fringe Concert** page on leitrimfestival.com, but at this stage we would like fellow minded people to begin to know and promote this event. This campaign will need all the funds it can get!

We have added any extra night to our Fracking Free Fringe Festival...we are putting on a **"Comedy Night" on the 11th November** and

addition to our fracking free fringe festival..This will take place at McGirls Bar in the "The Barn" at 9pm....

Comedian Aidan Killian who has performed from Tokyo to America with his latest show "taking the pill".

Ronan Grace who has been on the Dublin circuit for the last 4 yrs.

Andrew Gilmore who has supported Tommy Teirnan and Karol Spain and is any up and coming face in Irish comedy not to be missed! This event will be run as a fundraiser for our fracking campaign and donations can be made at the door. Organisers: Tracy Murray: freefringefest@gmail.com; Brian Rooney: brianroon@eircom.net

Cliffoney – 14 November 2011

- Aedin McLoughlin will present Shale Gas, Boom or Bust, at **CLIFFONEY**

HALL, Cliffoney, North Sligo, at 8pm on Monday 14th November. Organiser: North West Network Against Fracking contact:

Meg youthmardingo@gmail.com/086 3840245

Local Meetings

North West Network Against Fracking is meeting this Thursday (27 Oct) at 9pm in O Donnell's Pub, Cliffoney, North Sligo, to plan actions before the meeting, ie. flyers, posters.

The Carrick Against Fracking (CAF) group will be holding their weekly meeting in Burke' Bar, Bridge street, Carrick-on-Shannon on Thurs eve 27 Oct at 7 pm All welcom. Ring/txt John on 086 8127536

Added to the Web FFI

- Access to information about the environment <http://www.environ.ie/en/AboutUs/Access...heEnvironment/> (Web FFI useful links)

- Updated power point presentation from Sonya O'Dwyer andraiocht@hotmail.com <http://frackingfreeireland.org/info-to-download/power-point-presentation/>

A note from the Next Door Neighbours

Centre for Cross Border Studies (Web FFI Irish press/Fermanagh) <http://www.crossborder.ie/notes-from-the-next-door-neighbours/do-we-want-fracking-in-fermanagh/>

DO WE WANT FRACKING IN FERMANAGH?

How many people know what 'fracking' is? I knew little about this controversial new mining practice until a green-minded friend from Leitrim contacted me about it last month. Fracking is

short for drilling for natural gas by fracturing rocks to get access to it.

I understand that the process goes something like this: holes are drilled into so-called 'shale rock' – which is common all over north west Ireland – and a mixture of water, chemicals and sand is forced under pressure (using explosives) into the natural fractures in the rock, further widening them. When the water and chemicals are pumped out the sand stays behind, propping the fracture apart, thus allowing the gas to be extracted.

So far so good: another modern extraction process which may sound a bit hairy to the layperson but is necessary in an energy-hungry world. However the real problems arise when it comes to getting rid of the hundreds and thousands of gallons of water and chemicals used in this process. The experience in the US, where fracking is widespread, is not promising.

A recent RTE radio programme¹ reported on what had happened in Pennsylvania, where around 3,000 wells have been 'fracked' over the past five years. Here there are claims that chemicals from the process have seeped into the drinking water (although the gas exploration companies strenuously deny this). The programme quoted environmental scientists and ordinary citizens talking about how the estimated 500 chemicals used by the fracking companies could be dangerous to people's health if they entered the water supply, even in very small quantities.

The problem is that fracking is a young and rapidly evolving technology. Last year companies in the US had to change the type of concrete they were using in their boreholes because it was allowing the water and chemicals to leak out. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Preservation has said it expects a 'serious environmental concern' of some kind for every 150 wells drilled.

The other side of the argument is that there are enormous reserves of natural gas in what geologists call the North West Ireland Carboniferous Basin in counties Leitrim, Sligo, Cavan, Donegal and Fermanagh. This could represent 1.5 billion barrels of oil equivalent (BOE, the basic unit used to measure gas production), worth €94 billion at current oil prices, though it could be much more if those prices keep rising. At a time of ever increasing oil prices and declining world reserves, and on an island with very few mineral resources, can we afford to ignore this gold well under our feet in one of the most economically under-developed parts of Ireland?

This was an argument frequently heard during the ugly and long-running Corrib offshore gas confrontation in north Mayo, so it probably won't go down too well in Leitrim, Sligo and Fermanagh. In the first two of these counties it has become a live issue, especially around Lough Allen in Leitrim, where an exploratory well was first drilled 50 years ago but where the gas that was discovered was deemed to be too expensive to extract...until now.

Two companies – the Australian Tamboran Resources and the Lough Allen Natural Gas Company – have been granted onshore gas exploration licences in the area. Tamboran's chief executive estimates the chances of success at 75 per cent. The companies are currently taking rock samples. Once these are analysed, they can drill bore holes, followed by proper test drilling, which could involve fracking, in two years. Proper commercial drilling could be four years away, or more.

Shale gas has only become commercial in the past decade. Its share of the natural gas market in the US is expected to increase from 5 per cent to 45 per cent within 20 years. The production of shale gas has been endorsed by President Obama and was the subject earlier this year of a *Time* magazine cover with the heading: "This rock could power the world."

However a powerful US documentary shown around Leitrim and Sligo over the summer paints a darker picture. *Gasland* chronicles the environmental degradation and health problems caused by the contamination of water supplies by fracking chemicals. These include dizziness, headaches and even irreversible brain damage, according to an environmental health scientist, Dr Theo Colborn, quoted in the film.

The New York State Assembly has now banned fracking despite strong pressure from the gas industry. The French Government has suspended

all onshore exploration for shale gas until conclusive proof has been produced that it won't harm the environment. The Canadian Government has declared a two year moratorium on such exploration. In Britain a major fracking operation near Blackpool in Lancashire was suspended in June following two small earthquakes which the British Geological Survey said were likely to have been related to the mining operation.²

It is maybe too easy to blow up stories of water contamination and minor earthquakes into a full-scale environmental panic. All the facts have not yet been fully aired, a process not helped by the less than forthcoming attitude to public information by the exploration companies. However in the north west an alliance of green and community activists is already busy organising meetings and raising money for possible court actions. This is starting to turn (with the usual hiccups!) into a cross-border campaign, with onshore gas exploration licences having also been granted to four companies in Northern Ireland, including Tamboran in the Fermanagh area. The governments in Dublin and Belfast need to tread very carefully – and have another long look at the environmental and health impacts of fracking – if they don't want to be faced by a cross-border version of the deeply divisive Corrib gas dispute.

Andy Pollak

'A Note from the Next Door Neighbours' is sent to everyone on the Centre for Cross Border Studies e-mail list on a monthly basis. If you have friends or colleagues who would like to be added to the mailing list for 'A Note from the Next Door Neighbours', please send their details to crossborder@qub.ac.uk. or call **+44 (0)28 3751 1550**.

Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/crossborderstudies](https://www.facebook.com/crossborderstudies)

OVERVIEW OF GROUPS/NETWORKS

Carrick Against Fracking

Meetings every week (Thursday) in Burke's Bar, Bridge street
Contact: John Cronogue jcronogue@gmail.com tel: 086 8127536

West Cavan: Shannon-Erne Protection-Alliance

Contact: Tom Hyde toseitheachain1@eircom.net

Ardcarne Against Fracking

Meetings every Monday in a pub in Cootehall
Contact: Leah Doherty (doherty.lea@gmail.com) 087 7409102 / 071 966 7360

Love Leitrim - Manorhamilton –

Weekly meetings on a Thursday at the Bee Park, Manorhamilton, 8pm.
chair: Bernie Meehan berniemeehan77@gmail.com

Contact: Dervilla Keegan (dervybird@hotmail.com) 086 165 7424

Kiltibrid Antifracking Action Group - julieanngale@eircom.net

Sligo/Glean

Contact: Kate Wilson tulipsandoysters@eircom.net

North West Network against Fracking -group on facebook (Sligo North)

by Meg Rybicki youthmardingo@gmail.com 0863840254

Ursula Schweiger islandview12@yahoo.ie

Magdalena Jozwiak gajesia@gmail.com 0863255986

Paul Soffe psoffe@yahoo.co.uk

Paul Gibson (kinloughnofracking@gmail.com)

Brian Sweeney sweeneymusic@yahoo.com

Przemek Jozwiak josphik@gmail.com 0861927909

Lucy Cooke lucyman123@googlemail.com

and many others

Cliffoney

Meetings on Thursdays at 9 pm in O'Donnell's pub, main street

contact: Meg Rybicki youthmardingo@gmail.com 086 3840254

Kinlough

Meetings Wed at 8 pm Community Centre

contact kinloughnofracking@gmail.com, Paul Gibson

Sligo South

Contact: Brian Rooney brianroon@eircom.net

Talamh task group - research/legal group

contact: John and Val Bailey bailey.john45@gmail.com

Telephone information/tree service is available.

- contact John and Val Bailey: **071 9643989**

bailey.john45@gmail.com

- contact Brigit Beemster: **071-9163669** frackingquestions@hotmail.com

A **research** and information group is working on a Presentation about gains and losses and lots of figures to be held in November brigitbeemster@hotmail.com

Power Point Presentations

Fracking : Aedín McLoughlin Ph.D.

Glenwood Research- glenwood.research@gmail.com

Fracking: Rob Doyle -

SAC/Environment: Sonya O'Dwyer - andraiocht@hotmail.com

Websites:

<http://nofrackingireland.wordpress.com>

tel: 087 7409102/ 0862575784

<http://frackingfreeireland.org>

tel: 0719181916

<http://what-the-frack.org/>

tel?

<http://www.frackaware.com/wordpress/>

tel? (Fermanagh website)

Blogs:

<http://www.facebook.com/nofrackingcavan>

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Carrick-Against-Fracking/246513672047924>

<http://www.facebook.com/WhatTheFrack>

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Stop-Fracking-Fermanagh/133710973389744>