

Application No: SDNP/16/04679/CM

Location: Markwells Woods-1 Well site, South Holt Farm, Dean Lane End, Forestside, Rowlands Castle, West Sussex

Proposal: Appraisal and production of oil incorporating the drilling of one side track well from the existing well (for appraisal), three new hydrocarbon wells and one water injection well and to allow the production of hydrocarbons from all four wells for a period of 20 years.

Core Purpose of the National Park:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area
- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park by the public

Chidham & Hambrook Parish Council met to consider this application on Tuesday Nov 1st and **OBJECT** for the following reasons:

DRILLING AND EXTRACTING OIL

- Insufficient information has been supplied about the activity of drilling horizontally for 1 km and no assessment offered of the possible impact
- UKOG has not conducted a 3D geological survey and has neglected to prove there are no risks in relation to drilling the proposed wells
- The proposal includes the use of acids and other chemicals which may pose significant risk to the environment should an accident or spillage occur.
- Not all the chemicals have been fully disclosed as part of the public consultation e.g the chemicals used in the ‘drilling Mud’ to lubricate the drill as it makes its way underground
- There has been little research into the toxicity of chemicals used in the acidisation process. The geology of the area (chalk) is naturally fractured and there is concern regarding the migration of chemicals to the aquifer through the drilling process or spillage

WATER AND GROUND WATER

- The ground water from this area flows south west towards Bedhampton Springs which are also supplied by other aquifers in the chalk. Portsmouth Water relies on these springs to supply water to thousands of homes and businesses across the area in Hampshire and West Sussex.
- Portsmouth Water have objected to the application in its current format as it does not identify all potentially significant effects that the proposed works may have on groundwater or how adverse effects would be mitigated.
- UKOG admits that ‘potentially contaminative’ chemicals will be stored and used on site, acids would be injected into horizontal wells, and the water injection well would ‘involve drilling through the chalk, which could result in the loss of fluid circulating within the chalk’.
- Should the water in the aquifers become contaminated by any of these processes the impact on the environment could be long term or irreversible. The risks of such contamination to the water supply from an acid, chemical or oil spillage, however small are unacceptable.
- UKOG have made it clear that should a serious contamination occur they have no public liability insurance against such risks.

TRAFFIC

- The increase in Heavy Goods Vehicle movement (12 hours a day and Saturday a.m.) would be detrimental to the core purpose of the Park
- Such increases would pose risks to walkers, cyclists and horse riders who use the road frequently for recreation.
- Broad Walk, the proposed access road is too narrow to accommodate a car and HGV at the same time.
- The proposed traffic route to the site in Horndean (Emsworth Common Road and then Whichers Gate and North) presents several traffic hazards, including a 7-ton weight limit and a ‘blind’ hump back bridge.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASPECTS

- The impact on the landscape will be considerable. The site will be worked 24 /7 with lighting used throughout the night during well testing and production phases. This will cause light pollution and have an adverse effect on local residents.
- The 37m high drill rig will be visible from several viewpoints locally and on the Downs.
- The 10m high flare stack would remain on site for up to 25 years causing a negative visual impact.

NOISE AND VIBRATION

- There will be industrial drilling rigs working at the site 24/7 : “the predicted noise levels at night may significantly exceed current levels of background noise on a calm night, but levels remain well within night time noise limits”. This is unacceptable in a quiet, tranquil area.

WILDLIFE ,NATURE CONSERVATION and HERITAGE

- There are likely to be adverse effects on bats due to excessive night time light spill. Three rare bat species , including Bechstein’s bat , have been sighted in the area.
- Vibrations of drilling and emissions from flaring gases will affect reptiles and disturb badgers and birds.
- There are minimal and inadequate proposals to mitigate the impact on wildlife.
- The impact on conservation is in direct conflict with the first core purpose of the National Park
- There are three Grade 2 listed buildings in close proximity (less than 750m) from the site. Stansted Park is 850 m to the South.

CLIMATE CHANGE

- This application is counter to the recently produced South Downs National Park Authority Climate Change Adaptation Plan which is clear in its aim to ‘seek to promote the conservation and sustainable use (*of land, water and living resources*) and to ensure that these essential natural services are protected and enhanced now and for the future’
- The extraction and use of oil will contribute further to the rise in carbon emissions and make it more difficult to reach our legally binding climate change targets.

OTHER

- UKOG have not demonstrated, despite being required to do so, that there are exceptional circumstances for the proposal and that it is in the public interest.
- They have not explained why Markwell Woods is the most appropriate site compared to other sites located outside the National Park and why these have been discounted.
- If this application were passed it would set an unwelcome precedent for oil extraction in the National Park
- If UKOG are right in their prediction of 100bn barrels of oil beneath the South Downs we could be facing hundreds of oil wells stretching across the Downs.

In conclusion Chidham and Hambrook Parish Council feel they have demonstrated that this application is directly incompatible with the aims and core principles of the Park and would urge the South Downs Park Authority to REFUSE