

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Residents to lobby planning committee as Burniston fracking application finally heard

Photo opportunity: from 12 pm, Friday 24th April, outside Scarborough Town Hall

Scarborough, 13 April 2026: Frack Free Coastal Communities and Frack Free Scarborough are urging residents to attend a lobby outside North Yorkshire Council's strategic planning committee meeting at 12 pm (midday) on 24th April. The lobby will call on councillors to reject Europa Oil & Gas's application to frack at Burniston.

The planning application, originally scheduled for decision in January, has attracted more than 1,600 objections from local residents, local MP Alison Hume, parish councils including Burniston, Cloughton, Newby & Scalby and Scarborough Town Councils, and Friends of the Earth, among others.

Professor Chris Garforth of Frack Free Coastal Communities said:

"Councillors have a clear choice: reject this reckless scheme – or ignore the voices of the 1,600+ objectors who refuse to let our community become a testing ground for the serious risks to health, homes, environment and climate that fracking brings."

He also highlighted serious concerns about the planning process itself:

"We've had to formally complain about systemic failures in how the council has handled this application. Their response has been inadequate, so we're now escalating to stage two of the council's complaints procedure. A 'yes' vote based on a fundamentally flawed process would be unsafe and indefensible. This only strengthens our call for councillors to reject this application."

John Atkinson from Frack Free Scarborough added:

"We call on everyone who cares about Burniston, Scalby, and Cloughton, about our coastal communities and about climate change, to join us on 24th April. Councillors need to see and hear the strength of opposition to this dangerous plan. This is our chance to make our voices impossible to ignore."

Lobby and photo opportunity

- 12 pm, Friday 24th April 2026

- Outside Scarborough Town Hall, St Nicholas Street, Scarborough
- Planning committee meeting begins at 1pm

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Notes

Application Europa (planning application NY/2025/0030/ENV) wants to carry out a 'proppant squeeze' at Burniston, a process functionally identical to forms of hydraulic fracturing not currently permitted in the UK but that exploits a loophole related to fluid volume.

While the UK's Petroleum Act 1998 defines 'associated hydraulic fracturing' by a fluid volume threshold of over 1,000m³ per stage (or 10,000m³ in total), hydraulic fracturing has been linked to induced seismic events at fluid volumes below that threshold, including a 2.9 magnitude earthquake at Preston New Road in Lancashire.

Proppant squeeze shares other environmental and public safety risks with banned fracking practices, including: producing and burning fossil fuels during a climate emergency; groundwater contamination as the high-pressure injection process creates unintended pathways for pollutants; atmospheric pollution and methane (a potent greenhouse gas) emissions; chemical leakage, as a significant volume of fracturing fluids, which contain toxic chemicals, may remain in the subsurface.

Procedure Frack Free Coastal Communities consider the response to their formal complaint alleging systemic failures in the handling of Europa's planning application to be inadequate. The campaign group is escalating the complaint to stage two under the NYC complaints procedure. The complaint, which was submitted to North Yorkshire Council in March 2026, included concerns about inadequate consultation processes and transparency. It highlighted concerns that the council has failed to properly consider the risks and impacts of the proposed development on the local community as required under their own minerals and waste policies. They also failed to challenge the company on errors and contradictions within their application pointed out 12 months ago.

Decision An earlier hearing date, in January 2026, was postponed after central government accepted campaigners' argument that it should consider 'calling in' the planning decision for central government determination as a matter of national relevance. Government eventually handed the decision back to North Yorkshire Council. FFCC and FFS believe the decision should have been made nationally.

Frack Free Coastal Communities FFCC was formed by residents of the coastal villages north of Scarborough in 2024. It aims to give voice to local opposition to drilling and fracking for gas in the area. As part of the Friends of the Earth Action Network, it is committed to the wider vision of a socially just society living within the ecological limits of our planet.

Frack Free Scarborough Frack Free Scarborough was established over a decade ago to fight the threat of fracking across the UK, including at Kirby Misperton near Pickering. The group actively opposes oil and gas exploration in the interests of social justice on a liveable planet.