



Press Release from Frack Free Coastal Communities (FFCC) North Yorkshire

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Controversial Fracking Plans to be decided at planning meeting in Scarborough

Yesterday, North Yorkshire Council has confirmed that councillors will consider the planning application from Europa Oil and Gas to construct a gas drilling rig in Burniston, near Scarborough on Friday 30th January, 2026. The meeting will take place at 1.30pm at Scarborough Town Hall.

Since Europa submitted their planning application last year, there have been over 1600 objections logged due to serious concerns about the controversial method of proppant squeeze – a low volume form of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) - being used to release gas from the rocks. The majority of objections cite worries about pollution, potential seismic events, environmental impact and the long term impact of using more fossil fuels leading to Climate Change. Along with both local and national objections submitted to North Yorkshire Council, including from **Friends of the Earth**, the local Parish Councils of **Burniston, Cloughton, Newby and Scalby** and **Scarborough Town Council** have all unanimously registered their strong objection to this application. **Scarborough and Whitby MP Alison Hume** has given her full support to the local campaign to stop fracking on the North Yorkshire Coast and held meetings with constituents and represented their views to Parliament.

Last month, Frack Free Coastal Communities' Prof Chris Garforth wrote to Minister Michael Shanks about his opinion expressed in a Westminster Hall debate in December, 2025 that proppant squeeze procedures have been used in the UK for several years and that low volume fracturing only carries low risk, and that this should not be seen as fracking and will not, on current evidence, be covered in the 'fracking ban' promised by Ed Miliband.

Professor Garforth pointed out that "The weight of legal and scientific opinion, as has been widely reported in recent months, backed up by the lexicographers of the Oxford English Dictionary, comes down firmly on the view that 'fracking' refers to all hydraulic fracturing in any rock formation (not just shale), whatever the volume of fluid and proppants and chemicals used. The OED points out that 'frack' and 'fracking' are simply abbreviations for 'fracture' and 'fracturing.'" He reminded Mr Shanks that the fracking which caused earthquakes in Lancashire in 2017 and 2019 used significantly **lower volumes** of fluid than Europa are proposing to use at Burniston.

He went on to say, “Research commissioned by the Oil and Gas Authority (now NSTA) in the wake of the Lancashire earthquakes concluded that it is not possible to predict the seismic response to hydraulic fracturing in relation to site characteristics, fluid volume, rate or pressure; and that where induced seismicity has occurred, mitigation measures have shown only limited success¹”.

Prof Garforth states that,

“Taken together, this evidence shows that low volume hydraulic fracturing has caused harm and that it is not possible to predict or effectively mitigate against the risk of such harm in other contexts.”

He urged Mr Shanks to recognise that the term ‘fracking’ applies to all hydraulic fracturing operations; and to reconsider his view about the scope of the legislation to ban fracking in light of the evidence referred to above.

Because of the overwhelming scientific research, it is clear that North Yorkshire Councillors will need to consider the high risks of this planning application and see it for what it is – fracking in order to generate huge amounts of money for Europa share holders and not for the benefit of the residents of Scarborough. Residents fear they may be used as guineapigs if the potential risk of earth tremors causing damage to their closely situated homes is not fully and robustly considered with at the very least, a comprehensive seismic survey being undertaken prior to the application being considered.