

Transition Stratford Transition News

Member Newsletter Spring 2014

Going to Extremes

Welcome to our Spring members' newsletter. Our next Quarterly General meeting on 27th April gives us the opportunity to discuss the more extreme methods of energy extraction currently being explored to satisfy our power wants.

To kick off our theme Roger Matthews introduces our guest speaker Paul Mobbs and provides a bit of background to what we hope will be an interesting and stimulating discussion.

I do hope you can join us to continue the theme when we meet at the Ken Kennett Centre, Justin's Avenue CV37 ODA, next Sunday 27th April. As usual we start at 1pm with a bring and share lunch and the meeting starts at 2pm.

Tanya Butchers

On behalf of Transition Stratford Steering Group



EXTREME ENERGY – GETTING THE FACTS STRAIGHT

We hear a lot about fracking – the unconventional drilling for oil and gas through the use of hydraulic fracturing – and the Government is very keen on it, but what are the facts?

On Sunday 27 April, Transition Stratford will be hosting a meeting to hear more about the pursuit of fracking and other forms of extreme energy from Paul Mobbs, a freelance environmental researcher who has been working on unconventional gas and oil for the last five years.

As Paul will explain, fracking is just one of a number of unconventional technologies that are being pursued as gas and oil from conventional wells becomes more difficult and expensive to extract. In addition to fracking, where a combination of water and chemicals is injected into shale formations at high pressure, there are other technologies such as coal-bed methane and underground coal gasification.

South Warwickshire is a potential target for extreme energy extraction. The Government is currently auctioning licences for petroleum exploration and development – chiefly to look for shale gas – across most of south Warwickshire, including under Stratford upon Avon itself. And an area north east of Stratford is currently the focus for proposals for large-scale underground coal gasification.

Evidence from other countries shows that these technologies come with environmental problems, such as pollution, which regulation finds it difficult to control. (The British Government claims that regulation in this country will somehow avoid the problems that have appeared in other countries with similar regulatory systems.) Underground coal gasification, while not as well known as fracking, is particularly worrying because it has yet to be managed successfully on a commercial scale – despite a history of over 80 years of trials and pilot projects.

The Government and the oil industry put forward the argument that Britain needs to accept extreme energy extraction to make up for the depletion of conventional oil fields in the North Sea. We're told that shale gas will reduce energy prices and improve energy security for the country. It's said that vast amounts of oil and gas lie in shale formations under Britain; shale will provide energy well into the future.

The experience of the United States, which is often cited in support of these claims, suggests that the impact of shale is much exaggerated. It's true that gas prices fell in the United States a few years ago as oil companies rushed into the market, but having suffered an estimated \$35 billion of losses, the companies have scaled back production and prices are rising again. In Britain which, unlike the United States, is well connected to world gas markets, shale production will have no effect on market prices – something even industry leaders admit. And the experience of the United States is that the amount of oil and gas that can actually be extracted is much less than the forecasts made before drilling starts: in fact it's suggested that shale gas extraction will start to fall in the United States in the 2020s – so the boom will have lasted just a couple of decades.

Roger Matthews.

Community Energy Update

Have you heard about the latest share offer from Community Energy Warwickshire. Phase 2 of their Solar-Powered Hospitals project has now launched. More information about this exciting opportunity is available on their website at www.cew.coop/

In other news

Film Fridays – Our season of Film Fridays draws to a close with a screening of “Manufactured Landscapes” on Friday 2nd May at Lifeways Centre, Albany Road, Stratford-upon-Avon. The film focusses on the work of artist Edward Burtynsky who travels the world photographing landscapes created by human hands. More information on the film is available here:

http://www.edwardburtynsky.com/site_contents/Films/Manufactured_Landscapes_Film.html . Our films are always free but tea and cake is £2. The film starts at 7.30pm (refreshments from 7pm).

GardenShare – if you haven't yet taken the plunge and still want to try your hand at growing your own but haven't got any growing space and would like some our GardenShare team still have a few plots looking for willing growers. Contact Joy via admin@transitionstratford.com or come along to the Quarterly meeting if you'd like to know more.

HarvestShare – Planning is well under-way for this year's HarvestShare but there's still time to get involved with the organising team so if you are interested contact Roger via Roger@transitionstratford.com or talk to him at the Quarterly Meeting.

And Finally,

We do our best to stay in touch via email, Facebook, Twitter and the Transition Stratford website but please make sure we have your current contact details as we have a few emails that bounce back each quarter. If you know you have changed yours recently or have suddenly stopped hearing from us please get in touch by e-mailing us at Admin@transitionstratford.com or writing to us c/o 108 Shipston Road, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 7LR.

A few print copies of this newsletter will also be available at Sunday's meeting.