

What is PROTECT DUNSFOLD?

Protect Dunsfold Ltd is a registered company, formed in 2019 by a group of local people concerned about the environmental impact of UKOG's (UK Oil and Gas) application to drill for oil and gas on the edge of our village.



Four of the Protect Dunsfold Directors.
From left to right Darcey Finch, Phil Travis and Chris and Von Lindesay

Since then, we have been working with local councils to oppose the planning application and, with the help of the Good Law Project, a not-for-profit organisation that uses the law to fight for a better, greener world, we have succeeded in our application for a judicial review which will challenge the government's decision to allow this development to go ahead.

We value the rural environment around Dunsfold, but the bigger picture is ensuring the future quality of the environment and our planet for our children and grandchildren, recognising the severe impact of the climate crisis if steps aren't taken NOW. And a move AWAY from using fossil fuels is a key part of that.

It is worth noting that in the UK less than 2% of UK demand for oil is met by onshore wells, and much of that is exported to be refined in Europe. What's more the Dunsfold well is on a proposed oil field previously explored by the big oil companies in the 1980s. They abandoned exploration as the projected oil or gas deposits were not commercially viable.



THE EFFECTS THIS WILL HAVE FOR YOU:

3 years of traffic disruption:

In the first 18 months it is projected that over 9,000 HGV movements will need to turn at the very narrow entrance to High Loxley Road and there could be a further 27,000 other traffic movements. As the HGVs (predominantly tankers) are large and slow and because Pratts Corner is a notorious blind bend, there will have to be extensive traffic cones, temporary traffic lights and other traffic control measures at Pratts Corner/ Dunsfold Common Road.



Tankers arriving at a UKOG drilling site.



Environmental Impacts:

UKOG admits that the exploratory drilling could result in nearly 29,000 tonnes of carbon emissions and about 60% of this is from the flaring of gas. UKOG expects to be flaring gas for just under 100 days during the testing phase, disturbing the night skies and particularly harmful to Dunsfold's important population of endangered bats. The exploratory drilling will require the use of acidisation chemicals mixed with water. As this is an area of water scarcity we believe this will necessitate large tankers transporting water to the site. The operation has the potential to leak and contaminate the local underground water supply, including a local aquifer.



A Bechstein's bat

Landscape and countryside:

The 37 metre high drilling rig and surrounding compound will amount to industrialisation on our doorstep. The exploratory drilling by UKOG would be in an area bordering the present AONB and highly visible from well known beauty spots like Hascombe Hill. Creating the entrance to the drill site will involve removal of mature hedgerows and replacing them with ugly and intrusive security fencing on a beautiful small rural lane.



Negligible contribution to UK energy security:

UKOG is relying on 2D seismic data which is at least 30 years old to define the sub-surface at the Loxley-1 location. These days the blue chip oil and gas companies all use 3D seismic data. A retired senior geophysicist has described UKOG's approach to exploration as similar to 'a surgeon performing keyhole surgery without x-rays'. So, all this local disruption and destruction has a far lower probability of finding any oil or gas in commercial quantities than UKOG makes out. Their grossly over-hyped project at Horse Hill, once described by UKOG as the "Gatwick Gusher", is producing far less oil than expected, together with significant volumes of water. If commercial amounts of oil or gas are found at the Loxley-1 well, UKOG would then need to apply for further planning permission for construction of an export pipeline and production facilities, so the actual likelihood of any product coming on the market anytime soon is negligible and its value by then only a guess.

Nil opportunity to local economy:

Job opportunities for local people will be few, apart from in security. In the meantime the prospect has already damaged local businesses.

A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

The latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is stark about our chances to stop the world from warming by more than 1.5C. If our planet is to survive, there's no future for coal, oil and gas. Yet, despite both Waverley Borough and Surrey County Council rejecting UKOG's proposal, their decision was scandalously overturned by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities which gave permission for the exploratory drilling to go ahead. We were delighted when the High Court finally gave permission for Protect Dunsfold to make a legal challenge against that decision. Our court hearing will take place on 8 June.

Protect Dunsfold's challenge takes forward two legal arguments. The first relates to the inconsistency in decision-making by the Secretary of State, who gave the Dunsfold drilling site the go-ahead on the same day that he refused permission for a comparable site in Ellesmere Port. Greenhouse gas emissions were the most significant factor against permission being granted, with the Secretary of State stating that "every tonne of carbon contributes to climate change"- yet when it came to Dunsfold, a different decision was reached.



The second argument relates to the drilling site being on the edge of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). National policy requires planning decisions to give great weight to "conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty" in AONBs. The reasons for departing from this requirement were never fully explained.

"The idea of drilling on this beautiful area continues to be inappropriate - what's more **UKOG's** data and mapping of the sub-surface is sparse, old and simply not detailed enough."

Jeremy Hunt, Conservative MP for SW Surrey
and Chancellor of the Exchequer



Jeremy Hunt and Waverley Councillor Steve Williams at the 'Toe to Toe' Event, 8 January 2022.

"We remain extremely concerned that any oil exploration at the Loxley site will lead to irreversible harm to our environment, to local businesses and to local people. Our position has not changed: we remain absolutely opposed to it in any form."

Steve Williams, Waverley Portfolio Holder for
Environment and Sustainability, Green Party

"The science is clear - we should not be approving any new fossil fuel sites. In a climate crisis, proposals like those for Dunsfold must be turned down, and instead there should be a focus on renewables and creating a sustainable future."

Jamie Peters, Climate Campaigner, Friends of the Earth England



Use this QR link to visit our website to donate to our cause or simply find out more about all the points raised in this leaflet. Please join our fight to protect Dunsfold.

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PROTECT DUNSFOLD

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO PROTECT OUR VILLAGE AND THE WEALD