



A message from the “Don’t Drill The Wight” Campaign Committee

Dear Candidate,

Firstly, good luck in the forthcoming elections, it is a challenging time at present and likely to remain that way for the foreseeable future. It is hard work being a councillor and we applaud your commitment to working for the good of the Island community.

Our elected representatives will carry a weight of community expectation and a duty of care to do what is needed to protect our Health, Communities, Economy, Environment and threats from the Climate Emergency.

The local economy relies heavily on tourism and agriculture, both of which require the landscape, water sources and biodiversity to be supported, protected and preferably enhanced. There are also the wider considerations of national and global necessities to reduce carbon dependency and its associated emissions. The Island's environment is undoubtedly our key asset, simultaneously attractive and fragile. It is vulnerable to the ravages of extreme weather, flooding, coastal erosion and unstable geology, giving rise to events that we encounter on an almost daily basis.

There is much to do, time is short and decisions taken in the next four years will be crucial in setting the pace of change and success or failure of meeting the Island’s net zero carbon goals by 2030.

Within a few weeks of taking office there will be some key decisions to be taken by those that have been elected to be councillors.

We would like to draw your attention to three of these.

**1. Full Cabinet 10/06/2021 16:00 - Climate and Environment Strategy. ([See attached](#))**

This draft strategy document sets out how the council can both work to reduce its own carbon footprint and how it can influence the wider business and residential communities to reduce their carbon footprints. The proposed strategy is due to be discussed at the June cabinet meeting. It is vital that this issue gets the scrutiny, attention and priority required to implement its many recommendations as soon as possible without being watered down or rendered toothless.

*Key Objectives of importance to us are:*

- *Encourage climate awareness and ensure climate change is a factor in all decision-making.*
- *Ensure environmental monitoring standards are met.*
- *Introduce new planning conditions to protect the natural environment.*
- *Divest from fossil fuel funds.*

**2. Pension Fund Committee - 02/06/2021 10:30**

The IWC currently has over £16 million invested directly in fossil fuel companies – and we believe more is invested in organisations that directly promote the oil and gas industry. We have no evidence from Freedom of Information Requests that there is any commitment to divest further at this time.

**3. Planning Committee – UK Oil & Gas application to drill for oil west of Arreton (Date to be announced)**

The planning application to be considered is a proposed exploratory and appraisal drilling operation at a green field site, west of Arreton and to the north of Merstone for an initial period of 3 years. (This could be followed if successful, by a second exploration site outside Godshill and applications for 20 years of production from multiple wells.)

This is a proposal that runs counter to everything that we should be doing to meet our climate and environmental obligations. It will do environmental damage at every stage of its lifecycle, degrade the landscape, introduce unquantifiable and open-ended risks to the Island's water sources and generate extra HGV traffic, much of it oversized or classified as carrying hazardous goods.

This planning application is a complex and long-winded issue that is already the subject of 3,400 written objection comments from the public - the highest number ever for an application on the Island we believe - and has raised concerns from multiple statutory consultees.

A separate petition opposing this proposal is currently at 4220 signatures.

**For those getting to grips with this issue for the first time or needing a refresher, please see below a summary list of key reasons from our research, to highlight why the application should be refused.**

These reasons have been drawn from the documentation, current IOW Council Policies within the Island Plan and independent reports from consultees and science professionals.

1. Loss of green space and agricultural land - Industrialising the landscape, loss of visual amenity
2. Uses outdated, flawed geological and geophysical data for its drilling plans without up to date 2D or 3D seismic mapping as evidence of accuracy.
3. Requires a new road junction just below the brow of a hill on a busy cross island route.
4. Will generate extra traffic, much of it HGV and hazardous in nature
5. Introduces multiple sources of new pollution risks.
6. Is not a sustainable use of resources or economically beneficial to the Island.
7. Introduces major risks to indigenous water supply as the wells will be drilled through a major aquifer.
8. 24/7 lighting and gas flaring degrades the Dark Skies initiatives and creates air pollution.
9. Adverse impacts on native wildlife.
10. Goes against our climate change/carbon reduction commitments to tackle the Climate Emergency.
11. Will burden our emergency services with requirements to plan and resource for major incidents associated with site activity.
12. Leaves an uncertain legacy of decaying underground infrastructure and long-term liabilities for future clean up requirements.

**All of this to look for minimal potential amounts of oil, that are not nationally significant, representing just a few days worth of UK oil consumption.** Many of these points are supported by key statements in the Island Plan / Core Strategy 2011- 2027. A small selection of which are listed in Appendix 1. of this letter.

We would be interested to hear what you feel about these issues as a candidate for election as this will help us inform our supporters who are living in the ward you are contesting.

Please contact us at [info@frackfreeisleofwight.org](mailto:info@frackfreeisleofwight.org)

There will of course be a new Planning Committee created after the election, which will make the decision on the application later this year. The decision is not a political one. The Planning Committee acts like a court of law. Evidence is presented, weighed and judged against national and local policies and voted upon by the committee members.

**Please be aware that if you publicly condemn or support this specific UK Oil & Gas application you will be seen to have a 'predetermined view' and this will prevent you from being able to preside on the case if you become a member of the IWC Planning Committee.** However, **you can** offer a general opinion about expanding new UK onshore fossil fuel extraction sites during a global climate emergency or investment for the development of UK renewable energy without referencing this particular application. This is accepted under the rules of predetermination which are stated in the 2011 Local Government Act.

Thus, if you are hoping to be a member of the Planning Committee then you should heed these guidelines.

Kind regards and once again good luck.

DDTW Campaign Committee.

### Appendix 1

*3.2 "We want the Isle of Wight to become a world-renowned Eco Island, with a thriving sustainable economy and a real sense of pride and involvement, where residents and visitors enjoy healthy lives, feel safe and are treated with respect."*

*We will:*

*3.8 - Protect and enhance our Island's natural beauty. Create wealth whilst reducing our carbon footprint. Produce as much of our energy as possible from renewable sources*

*3.10 – Point 2. To ensure that all development supports the principles of sustainable development.*

*3.10 – Point 8. To protect, conserve and enhance the Island's natural, historic and built environments.*

*5.159 - As set out elsewhere in the Core Strategy, and in many other publications about the Island, the Island has high quality built and natural environments. It is these assets that the Council believes should be at the heart of the tourism offer on the Island.....*

*Environment SP5 - Development that has a demonstrable adverse impact on the Island's natural, historic and built environments should be avoided.*

*5.185 - These make the environment the Isle of Wight's main asset. Not only is the environment important for its own sake, but the natural, historic and built environments contribute significantly to the character of the Isle of Wight and it is important to the Council, residents and visitors alike that these are protected.*