

30 April 2021

Dear County Councillor,

**Re: Egdon Resources UK Ltd's application PL/0037/21 "For a side-track drilling operation, associated testing and long-term oil production" at Biscathorpe in the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.**

We write as members of the Lincoln Climate Commission to express concern about, and to object to the above planning application.

The Lincoln Climate Commission <https://www.lincolncclimate.org.uk/> was set up with support from the City of Lincoln Council as a result of representatives of the University of Lincoln, Siemens in Lincoln, City Council, and Transition Lincoln meeting with leaders from the Leeds Climate Commission, with a view to drawing together stakeholders from all parts of our community to take appropriate practical action in response to climate change, and to be politically independent to 'hold to account' our Councils.

In view of growing public awareness of the urgency of the 'climate and ecological emergency', it ought not to be necessary to rehearse the copious scientific evidence already authoritatively catalogued in the devastating reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) of 2018 & 2019<sup>1</sup>, and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) of 2019<sup>2</sup>. These justify scientists' reference to the present day as 'the sixth mass extinction'. In addition, just a few more recent items / statements should suffice by way of illustration of the emergency:

- Sir David Attenborough's television series and his statement that "*We face the collapse of everything that gives us our security*".<sup>3</sup>
- Archbishop Justin Welby's assertion that "*climate change is the greatest challenge that we and future generations face*"<sup>4</sup>, and the Church of England's General Synod assertion that "*the global climate emergency is a crisis for God's creation, and a fundamental injustice*".<sup>5</sup>
- Sir James Bevan, CEO of the Environment Agency in his "Wolf at the door" speech to the insurance industry on 23 February 2021<sup>6</sup> where he said "...the climate emergency... is the main thing because it affects everything else, more than anything else... Runaway climate change won't just kill the insurance industry, though it will. It will kill our economy, our people and our planet. Much higher sea levels will take out most of the world's cities, displace millions, and make much of the rest of our land surface uninhabitable or unusable. Much more extreme weather will kill more

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people through drought, flooding, wildfires and heatwaves than most wars have. The net effects will collapse ecosystems, slash crop yields, take out the infrastructure that our civilisation depends on, and destroy the basis of the modern economy and modern society... If that sounds like science fiction let me tell you something you need to know... over the last few years the Reasonable Worst Case (scenario)...has actually happened, and... getting larger.”

- At the *Moana: Water of Life* conference staged by the Diocese of Lincoln and the University of Lincoln in September 2019, Nobel prize-winning climate scientist Professor Elisabeth Holland said that ‘scientific conservatism... has sold us out’ – in other words, even the IPCC reports might underestimate the severity of the emergency. This can be illustrated by reference to the rapid rate of melting of the polar ice-caps<sup>7</sup>. The loss of land-based glacial ice, together with thermal expansion of warming oceans, is a major contributor to sea-level rise. We should note, as Prof Edward Hanna points out in his presentation<sup>8</sup>, that large areas of Lincolnshire’s farmland are in danger of flooding due to sea level rise (never mind river banks being breached such as we saw at Wainfleet), as are the world’s most populous cities. At the same conference, Professor Mark Macklin of the University of Lincoln commented ‘it’s too late’ (not because there’s nothing we can do, but because there’s been a lack of political will, and even if we halt emissions immediately, warming will continue because of the level of CO<sub>2</sub> already in the atmosphere).

This is not doom-mongering nor alarmist. It’s simple science that we must take account of, if we have any regard for future generations and the poorest and most vulnerable of our fellow humans now.

The implications are that, *as fast as possible*, we must wean ourselves off dependence on fossil fuels. Scientists estimate that most of the world’s known fossil fuels must NOT be burned. So to explore for and to extract new sources of oil from Lincolnshire is utterly incompatible with keeping within the internationally agreed goal of limiting global overheating to 1.5 degrees. There is no shortage of fuel to supply our needs while we make the necessary RAPID transition towards a zero carbon economy. We do NOT need fossil fuels from the rocks under Lincolnshire. Egdon’s estimated production from Biscathorpe was less than 0.03% of UK consumption – this at a time when the government’s declared aim is to phase out reliance on fossil fuel. It is hard to see how ‘new oil’ is consistent with the government’s recent announcement to reduce emissions by 78% by 2035. Instead, we should invest our efforts and resources into renewables and into mitigating and adapting to the effects of warming.

In view of the above, it is hard to see how allowing oil extraction in the Wolds AONB is consistent with the County Council's vision as set out in the Green Master Plan, and the zero carbon target.

In addition to the overwhelming climate emergency, significant local matters strongly suggest that the planning application should not be passed. The drilling site is close to the River Bain and the Viking Way, loved by locals and visitors alike. Will tourists be attracted to our beautiful countryside if they are interrupted with heavy traffic on county roads? That river and its tributaries are a rare habitat, and the subject of The Lincolnshire Chalk Stream Project.<sup>9</sup> The County Council and East Lindsey District Council have a duty of care to protect these unique chalk stream ecosystems.<sup>10</sup> Accidents do happen and risks cannot be eliminated, so there is concern for the potential contamination of the water supply / chalk stream habitat and consequent loss of biodiversity.

We are aware that the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust has objected to the application: is the application really consistent with the local Biodiversity Action Plan? We are aware that the local Donington-on-Bain Parish Council said the application represented "a significant industrialisation of the Lincolnshire Wolds within the AONB", which would jeopardise the local plan which said "the highest level of protection" would be given to the AONB. They see no benefits to their local economy or community. They see it as a threat to their communities' health and prosperity from local tourism. These local concerns should be respected.

We respectfully ask that County Councillors consider the concerns of the local community, the serious issues of potential threat to biodiversity and amenity, and the over-riding concern due to the existential threat of climate change. We urge that you turn down the application.

Yours sincerely,

Grant Anderson, Head of Space Strategy, Planning & Sustainability, University of Lincoln  
The Rt Revd Dr David Court, Bishop of Grimsby, Diocese of Lincoln  
Mel Cowell

Peter Crowther, Education Consultant, previously Head of Science at Bishop Grosseteste University

Drs Clive & Mary Cummins, Independent Environmental Consultants

Nigel Curry, Visiting Professor at the University of Lincoln

Rebecca Forster, Sustainability Manager at the University of Lincoln

Alex Foxley-Johnson, Lincoln Climate Commission Communications Subgroup Chair  
Edward Hanna FRMetS, Professor of Climate Science and Meteorology, University of Lincoln  
Philip Jackson  
Richard Jones, Managing Director, Amelio Solar Energy  
Steve Kemp, Executive Director, OpenPlan  
Fen Kipley, 13 Green UK  
Dr Andrew Kythreotis, Senior Lecturer, School of Geography, Lincoln Centre for Water and Planetary Health - College of Science, University of Lincoln  
Prof Mark Macklin, Distinguished Professor of River Systems and Global Change and Founding Director for the Lincoln Centre of Water and Planetary Health (LCWPH), University of Lincoln.  
Mike Newton  
Matt Parr  
Christopher A Pugh, student at University of Lincoln, Co-Chair for the Lincoln Climate Commission Research Sub-Group  
Meryl Shirley B.A., PGDipSW, MBA  
Geoff Stratford, founder member of Lincoln Climate Commission  
Richard Tibenham MCIBSE LCC LCEA, for Greenlite Building Physics  
Simon Tooke  
Anna Tsartsari, Director BE Design  
Steff Wright, CEO Gusto Group

- 1 IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C (2018) <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/> and IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (September 2019) <https://www.ipcc.ch/srocc/>
- 2 IPBES The global assessment report on BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES 2019 [https://ipbes.net/sites/default/files/inline/files/ipbes\\_global\\_assessment\\_report\\_summary\\_for\\_policymakers.pdf](https://ipbes.net/sites/default/files/inline/files/ipbes_global_assessment_report_summary_for_policymakers.pdf)
- 3 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/cwypr2kdxvwt/david-attenborough>
- 4 <https://vimeo.com/359740285>
- 5 <https://www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/news-and-statements/general-synod-sets-2030-net-zero-carbon-target>
- 6 [https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/watching-the-wolf-why-the-climate-emergency-threatens-us-all?fbclid=IwAR2bxwTCvFchXSRy9oJdC7roBhiFL-Wf\\_DgXcxYKY\\_olKe8vC8ZHkxjbW7g](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/watching-the-wolf-why-the-climate-emergency-threatens-us-all?fbclid=IwAR2bxwTCvFchXSRy9oJdC7roBhiFL-Wf_DgXcxYKY_olKe8vC8ZHkxjbW7g)
- 7 See paper by Prof Edward Hanna of Lincoln University et.al referenced in this article: <https://www.ecowatch.com/ice-sheets-greenland-antarctica-warming-2619507205.html>
- 8 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f614OFSNJK4>
- 9 <https://www.lincswolds.org.uk/chalk-streams/lincolnshire-chalk-streams/the-lincolnshire-chalk-streams-project>
- 10 [https://www.lincswolds.org.uk/library/chalkstreams/GeneralDocuments/2019\\_07\\_26\\_LCSP\\_FINAL\\_SAP.pdf](https://www.lincswolds.org.uk/library/chalkstreams/GeneralDocuments/2019_07_26_LCSP_FINAL_SAP.pdf)

