



Unconventional Gas Free Zone Organiser's pack

Thank you for your interest in helping to make your area unconventional gas and fracking free. This pack contains:

- This 'Organisers Pack' to help run a campaign in your area
- The Friends of the Earth Scotland (FoES) 'Unconventional Gas and Fracking Policy Briefing' which you can copy and distribute – this can be quite technical. It has lots of references which you can follow in case you get any tricky questions
- The FoES 'Stop Coalbed Methane' A5 flyer. This is a better document to break people in and get them familiar with the terminology, and focuses on the immediate risk in Scotland. We can help make a last page which better deals with the implications in your local area
- Window posters you can copy and distribute
- A template for a community survey/petition
- A template letter to your community and local councillors, community councils and MSPs

Why be an 'Unconventional Gas Free Zone'?

As our policy briefing explains, unconventional gas extraction, such as coalbed methane or shale gas, carries numerous risks to the environment, health and climate. Fracking, or 'hydraulic fracturing' exacerbates these risks especially when used in coalbed methane extraction.

The industry has failed to demonstrate that unconventional gas extraction is safe for human health and our environment. Companies involved stand to make millions from gas, but will they be there to clean up the mess if things go wrong? The recent liquidation of Scottish Coal unfortunately suggests not...

There is currently a moratorium on unconventional gas across Scotland, meaning that no fracking or coalbed methane extraction is going ahead. The Scottish Government is looking into the health, environmental and climate change impacts of unconventional gas, as well as carrying out a public consultation while the moratorium is in place.

However, there is no guarantee that the Scottish Government will turn the moratorium into a permanent ban. The unconventional gas industry is spending lots of money trying to convince communities that fracking and coalbed methane are safe. The companies still hold licenses for unconventional gas exploration across Scotland, and will be able to apply for planning permission if the moratorium is lifted. As well as this, the current moratorium does not include underground coal gasification, and there are currently plans to apply for planning permission for UCG in the Firth of Forth area.

It is crucial that communities across Scotland let the Scottish Government know how unpopular the unconventional gas industry is. Only then will the Scottish Government turn the moratorium into a full and permanent ban of all unconventional gas activities.

The good news is that all around [the world people are coming together to say that they do not want these developments on their doorsteps or indeed anywhere. And increasingly, Governments are beginning to listen. Over 13 states and countries have implemented bans or moratoria including New South Wales, Ireland, France, Spain and Canada.](#)

Working towards and becoming a 'Unconventional Gas Free Zone' will not only raise awareness of the issues in your area, but also send a strong message to the Scottish Government that the industry is huge unpopular and holds no social licence anywhere in Scotland.

What's involved?

We suggest taking the following 5 steps to help you stay unconventional gas free:

Step 1: Community

The more people you get on board the more meaningful declaring your area unconventional gas free will be. For example, if 90% of people in your area sign up and object to planning applications for unconventional gas, it sends a very powerful message to local decision makers and it will be much more difficult for the council to grant permission.

- Organise an information meeting for your town, and/or a door-to-door survey
- Give people the policy briefing to read and poster to put in their window
- Ask them to sign the enclosed form to show their support for making your area unconventional gas free
- You can use the form as a petition to show your councillors and MSPs too. The more people in your area you can talk to, the better. Also ask people if you can keep in touch by email, text or phone, so that you can let them know about any developments
- Work out how many people there are in your area and what proportion of people you've spoken to i.e. "70% of people don't want coalbed methane..."
- Arrange a meeting for people who would like to help organise or be involved in the campaign.
- If you don't have time to go door-to-door talking to people, just delivering copies of the leaflets in this pack will help raise awareness

Step 2: Local schools, businesses and community councils

Ask schools, colleges, businesses, faith groups and existing community groups in your area to sign up to the campaign. Community councils get consulted on planning applications. Ask them to sign up, and to let everyone know when planning applications are coming up if they don't already. If you are holding an information meeting, make sure you invite representatives from all of these groups too.

Step 3: The Local Authority

Whether a planning application goes ahead or not is hugely influenced by what is in the Local Development Plan (LDP). If the local council writes an anti-coalbed methane and fracking stance into its LDP, companies will know that it will be harder to get planning permission to drill. Councils produce a new plan every few years. Local people will be consulted at various stages in the process. Check your council's website to find out what stage the process is at. You can ask to meet with your local councillors and show them the number of people who support the campaign in the area. Also ask people to write to their councillors individually.

Step 4: Communication

Tell other people about coalbed methane, fracking and underground coal gasification, and why you're against it. Talk to local journalists, explain the issues and try to get as many letters and stories in your local paper as you can. Once you've completed your survey and feel that a majority of people in the town are on board, hold an event where you declare your town an 'Unconventional Gas Free Zone' and invite the local media. Set up a Twitter account, Facebook page and a website/blog to make everyone aware that your area is unconventional gas free, give updates and promote your status.

Step 5: Object to planning applications

One of the most important things you can encourage people to do is to object to any planning applications for coalbed methane. There are four companies in Scotland with licenses to exploit unconventional gas;

Ineos, Reach Coal Seam Gas, Cluff Natural Resources and Five Quarter. The license areas extend into Clackmannanshire, Dumfries & Galloway, Falkirk, East Dunbartonshire, Fife, Kinross, North Lanarkshire, Perth, Stirling and West Lothian. Keep an eye on your local council's planning webpages for those names. If you spot an application for something related to drilling, ask everyone who has signed up to write a letter of objection. You will usually have 21 days to comment. Go to www.foe-scotland.org.uk/planning for advice on the planning system and how to object.

If there is an unusually large number of objections to a planning application, the developer may withdraw it, or the council may refuse planning permission. In Moodiesburn, North Lanarkshire, more than 200 people in the village objected to an application for drilling in the area, and the company withdrew the application.

FAQs

What if I don't get a majority of people on board?

If a lot of people in your area are in favour of coalbed methane and fracking, then it wouldn't be fair to declare your area an 'Unconventional Gas Free Zone' – you might have a fight on your hands!

This doesn't mean you can't keep working against CBM and fracking in your area by asking everyone who does agree with you to object to planning applications, write to their councillors and to spread the word.

Where can I find more information and resources?

Visit our website for up to date information:

www.foe-scotland.org.uk/fracking

Download extra Unconventional Gas Free Zone organisers packs:

www.foe-scotland.org.uk/resources

There is a lot of information about fracking from the USA, because it has been going on there for a number of years. There is even a film that has been made about the impacts of fracking on communities and the environment: www.gaslandthemovie.com/

There are a lot of references on our Policy Briefing which should answer a lot of your questions. And of course, do get in touch with us...

Contact us

This pack has been produced by Friends of the Earth Scotland for use by anyone wishing to campaign against unconventional gas extraction in their area. For more information, please contact:

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