



Vale of Pickering Environmental Baseline Monitoring – Community Drop-In Event, 19th April, Kirby Misperton, N. Yorkshire

The British Geological Survey (BGS) and its partners are carrying out an environmental baseline monitoring programme across the Vale of Pickering in N. Yorkshire. A key contribution to the success of the project so far has been the support from the local community. With the project having been underway for 6 months we decided to provide an opportunity for the community to find out more about our work and for us to thank those that are supporting us. This opportunity was in the form of an informal drop in event to find out what monitoring is being carried out, what we have found and to provide an opportunity to speak to the team who have been carrying out the work. It was held at Kirby Misperton Village Hall on the 19th April 2016.

We ran the event from 3pm - 7pm, the aim being to give as many people as possible an opportunity to come along. In total we had 40 visitors fairly well spread over time period. I managed to welcome nearly everyone personally as they came in, give an outline of the project and answer any immediate general questions. Visitors came from across the Vale of Pickering, not just Kirby Misperton, including Ampleforth, Pickering and Malton. Most were residents but some identified themselves as parish councillors/clerks. Third Energy also visited as did Envireau Water (their monitoring consultants). There was also a representative from Flamingo Land and representatives from Frack Free Ryedale, who introduced themselves as such. We also had a number of landowners who own boreholes that we are sampling or on whose land we've recently drilled boreholes. All were happy with the way we have been engaging and communicating with them.

For the event we had an area set out for each monitoring work package (water quality, air quality, radon in air, soil gas, seismicity, groundwater motion) and one specifically on the geology of the area. Each was manned by a couple of people to talk about the different activities, show some of the results and demonstrate the equipment we are using. For each activity we also handed out a one-page flyer that people could take away to read more about the topic. The display on the local geology had samples of the rocks found in the area, a microscope camera to show the fossils in the limestone and a computer showing the 3D model we've produced as part of the project.

As people left we invited them to fill in a form and provide comments. In total we had 13 sets of comments. I have included a few below but all were positive. The team found it a very rewarding experience and I was very pleased at how long people stayed. Everyone was with us for at least an hour and quite a few for more than 90 minutes.

From my perspective and the questions I was asked, there was genuine concern about the unknown, a feeling of not being listened to and the difficulty in understanding what information should be believed, as so much appeared to be contradictory.



Other questions focussed on wanting to understand more about what we were doing, but there were questions and comments about regulation, the regulators and industry. Our response in these situations was to listen and explain how our work fits in, and that we're not regulators. If required, I outlined the different role(s) of the regulator(s) and directed them to ask the questions of them, as appropriate. We were very clear on our independent role and the importance of the work irrespective of the outcome of the decision making process. A number of people asked me how BGS and the project was funded. However, no one said that that they thought what we were doing wasn't worthwhile. They were genuinely interested in hearing about what we are doing and pleased we were doing it.. I think that was clearly reflected in the time they spent with us and many asked us to repeat the event again at a later stage. A number also asked about how our results would be taken into account and/or considered by the regulators.

Selected representative comments:

"Extremely interesting – more understanding of our immediate environment. Encourages me to look into our geological area more. Will look at our landscape in a different way when out walking, which we do often"

"Excellent. Very informative. Good materials and descriptions and explanations"

"This was an excellent event. Your scientists took trouble to explain their research to us and we were convinced that they are doing an excellent job."

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