

Green Party urges Chester University to abandon fracking research centre



29 September 2017

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley has written to the Vice-Chancellor of Chester University urging him to drop plans to build a controversial new fracking centre at the university [1].

Warning that the university risks creating a 'white elephant', Bartley has called on the university to instead create a renewable energy centre and become the "research pioneers of the future".

Bartley's letter [2] comes before he joins demonstrators at two fracking sites next week [3]. On Monday he will join protesters at Preston New Road before travelling to Kirby Misperton on Tuesday.

Bartley said:

"The study of fracking should be consigned to the university's History and Archeology Department. The latest research suggests that it is an industry which has little future with mounting evidence that it isn't financially viable.

"Fracking is dirty, dangerous, and undemocratic – being forced upon communities against their will and against their interests. Mounting evidence suggests that it is not financially viable [4].

"With the price of renewable energy falling beyond anyone's expectations and the industry expanding rapidly, this is what research pioneers of the future should be looking at. Instead the university risks building a white elephant."

Notes:

1. <http://www.chesterchronicle.co.uk/news/chester-cheshire-news/fracking-research-centre-near-chester-13673204>

2. Dear Prof Wheeler,

I write to you in the hope that you will consider abandoning current plans to build a new fracking research centre at your university.

The study of fracking should be consigned to the university's History and Archeology Department. The latest research suggests that it is an industry which has little future with mounting evidence that it isn't financially viable.

Specifically:

1. The world has five times more fossil fuels in reserves than we can safely burn and setting up a whole new fossil fuel industry will only add to this problem.
2. Methane gas leakage from fracking threatens to be a considerable contributor to climate change.
3. Solar and wind energy are now cheaper than fossil fuels. We can continue that trend towards a greener, cleaner future but only if investment is being put into renewables, not fossil fuels and fracking. Friends of the Earth has calculated that the UK can move to generating three-quarters of its electricity from renewables by 2030.
4. The amount of reserves of shales gas in the UK remain uncertain whereas there is untapped power in our atmosphere – wind, solar, and wave – that we know exists.

With the price of renewable energy falling beyond anyone's expectations and the industry expanding rapidly, this is what research pioneers of the future should be looking at. Instead the university risks building a white elephant.

Yours,

Jonathan Bartley

Green Party co-leader

3. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-40953427>

4. Jonathan Bartley will be at Preston New Road on Monday from approximately 1.30pm to 3pm. He will be at Kirby Misperton on Tuesday from approximately 10am to 1pm.

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