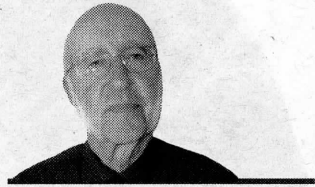


# David Moore: To frack or not to frack? An interesting question!



Currently, most if not all of our attention is focused on Horsham District Council's proposals for the construction of new homes over the next 20 years. The questions that interest us most are how many will be built and where will they be built.

As a result, we overlook some fundamental issues, which might determine the success or failure of these plans.

Fracking is one of those issues and it's one with potential benefits as well as serious risks.

Fracking is a process by which methane gas can be released from certain of the rocks beneath our feet and the South East has considerable potential for a future supply of gas.

The fracking process involves drilling boreholes and pumping large quantities of water, sand and chemicals into the ground in order to release the gas.

We all know that the South East is prone to water shortages so the first question that still has to be answered is, 'where does the water come from?'

It's likely to come from our own water supplies so how

viable a proposition is it for the people, who already live in the area or move into the area in the future?

The next question is what happens to the water and chemicals, which are pumped into the ground?

We know that most of the aqueous solution will be returned to the surface but how do we dispose of it?

We can't just dump it into the nearest river.

We're going to need large treatment plants to deal with the effluent.

Unfortunately, some of the solution, which is pumped into the ground, will remain there.

Can we be sure that it won't contaminate our supply of drinking water?

Finally, there's always

the risk that there will be some leakage of the solution from the boreholes into the aquifers, leading to major contamination of the water supply.

What do we do then?

The answer to the possible contamination problem is always the same.

Such incidents are very rare.

That may well be true but it's of no consolation to people if a problem does arise, especially in an area such as ours with its high population and the predictions that it will increase even further.

It's always easy to look at the worst case situation and one has to be careful not to carry the contamination type risk analysis to a ridiculous extreme.

However, in many ways the real problem is the great unknown.

How much of our water would fracking require?

Could Horsham District cope with the water demand that would be required with a large house building programme, requiring large amounts of water during construction, the needs associated with an increased population and the demands made by the new businesses attracted into the area?

Water is such an essential resource that we need to understand the potential benefits and risks concerning what might happen over the next 20 years with any course of action that we decide to follow.

What is the fall-back

position if something goes wrong?

We don't want people in 20 years' time to say, 'whatever happened to the beautiful town and countryside that used to be in and around this place called Horsham'.

We have to get it right.

*The Horsham Society is concerned about the past, present and future of the town.*

*It seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces.*

*Membership of the Horsham Society is open to anyone, who shares these concerns.*

*For more information, visit our website [www.horshamsociety.org](http://www.horshamsociety.org) or telephone 01403 261640.*