Vale of Pickering Environmental Baseline Monitoring
Second community drop-in event, Kirby Misperton, North Yorkshire

The British Geological Survey (BGS) and its partners are carrying out an environmental baseline monitoring programme across the Vale of Pickering in North 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 over 18 months and 12 months after a previous community event, we decided to provide the community with an update on our monitoring activities.

As on the previous occasion, the event was in the form of an informal ‘drop in event’ to allow the local community to find out what monitoring is being carried out, what the results show with respect to their local environment, and to have an opportunity to speak to the team who have been carrying out the work. It was held at Kirby Misperton village hall, approximately one kilometre away from Third Energy’s Kirby Misperton shale gas site.

The event was held on a weekday and ran from 3pm – 8pm. The aim was to give as many people as possible the opportunity to attend. In total, we had around 40 attendees who came from across the Vale of Pickering area, including Kirby Misperton and surrounding villages, Pickering and Malton. The majority of visitors were residents (including a number of parish/town councillors). Representatives from local industry as well as groups campaigning against shale gas development also attended. A number of landowners who own boreholes that we are sampling or on whose land we have installed our own also attended. We invited all attendees to complete a feedback form and around half of those attending did so. All the comments were favourable and a representative selection are provided below.

The format of the event was very similar to the previous event with individual areas of the village hall set out for each monitoring work package (water quality, air quality, radon in air, soil gas, seismicity, ground motion) and one specifically on the geology of the area. Members of the project team were stationed at each area to describe the activities being carried out, demonstrate the monitoring equipment being used and explain the results. For each activity a one-page summary sheet was offered to visitors to provide more information 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 geological model produced as part of the project.

Selected comments:

“Very informative and helpful in understanding a very complex situation associated with KM8. Pleased to hear the level of baseline monitoring.”

“Very professional. Friendly and accommodating to all questions. Impressive impartiality. Good science.”

“Very useful and informative. Good written leaflets giving links etc. to enable us to look further into the information discussed.”

“Very helpful to understand more about the baseline monitoring. Especially the range of expertise you have and genuine transparency. Thank you.”

“Very good expo. Lots to learn. Some preconceived ideas debunked, the info from all contributors was excellent. I did learn a great deal about background monitoring. Thanks to everyone.”