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**PRESS RELEASE: Back Balcombe High Court bid to remove drilling threat**

***CPRE Sussex supports Frack Free Balcombe Residents Association in its fight to revoke planning permission for oil exploration in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.***

CPRE Sussex is backing a High Court bid to overturn planning permission for oil exploration in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Frack Free Balcombe Residents Association hopes the two-day hearing will result in Angus Energy's permission for oil exploration being revoked.

Residents have started a fundraising campaign to help cover legal costs.

**CPRE Sussex director Paul Steedman said:** "Despite having to fight for more than a decade, Balcombe's residents still refuse to be cowed by large energy companies and flawed planning systems. If planning permission is revoked at the High Court, it would be a significant victory in the fight to protect the AONB and residents' quality of life."

West Sussex County Council refused Angus Energy permission to do more testing for shale oil reserves in the High Weald AONB in 2021.

However, in February this decision was overturned by a Planning Inspector who failed to give weight to national climate change policy.

**CPRE Sussex chairman Dan Osborn said:** "The inspector who allowed this application on appeal totally misunderstood the view of the Climate Change Committee on future use of fossil fuels in the UK. The committee predicted oil and gas consumption would need to fall by more than 80% by mid-century if climate change was to be combatted. The inspector took this to mean oil and gas use was inevitable beyond mid-century and domestic supplies would thus be required. The committee said nothing of the kind and in fact urge investment in renewables."

CPRE Sussex opposes oil exploration and exploitation applications in Sussex in all their unconventional fracking and acidising guises.

The charity is calling for tougher regulation to reflect the incompatibility of onshore fossil fuel exploitation with the drive for cleaner energy, reduced climate change and an improved environment.

To donate to Frack Free Balcombe Residents Association's crowd funder visit [crowdjustice.com/case/stop-balcombe-oil](https://crowdjustice.com/case/stop-balcombe-oil)

Find out more about what CPRE Sussex is doing to fight fracking at [cpresussex.org.uk/what-we-care-about/fracking](https://cpresussex.org.uk/what-we-care-about/fracking)

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For press inquiries and interview opportunities contact [sheena.journalism@gmail.com](mailto:sheena.journalism@gmail.com).

**Notes for editors:**

**About CPRE Sussex**

CPRE Sussex is shaping a greener future for Sussex. Our priorities are:

- Beautiful landscapes, rich in nature and greener towns and cities
- Countryside and green spaces which are accessible to all, enriching lives and health
- Sustainable development for thriving communities
- Effective responses to the climate emergency

We engage with decision makers, influencing them and challenging them to protect the Sussex countryside and green spaces. We inform on environmental issues and empower individuals and communities with robust evidence to defend and enhance the green spaces they love. We believe in collaborating with others to ensure a greener future for our county. We research and provide advice on planning issues. Together we can shape a greener future for Sussex.