

## Reading Friends of the Earth Press Release – 29<sup>th</sup> October 2016

### Endangered species - and people - protest against Barclays Bank

On Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> October campaigners from Reading Friends of the Earth and Berkshire Greenpeace staged a protest against Barclays Bank in Broad Street, Reading.

Barclays funds fracking company Third Energy who recently got approval to frack for shale gas in Ryedale in Yorkshire – despite thousands of local objections.

Fracking involves injecting high pressure water and chemicals into bore holes to fracture the rocks to extract the gas. Drilling rigs and pipelines have to be installed, tankers bring water and chemicals, and when the gas begins to flow the contaminated water has to be disposed of. There are particular risks of escapes of methane - a potent contributor to climate change – and of groundwater contamination.

The campaigners argued that the fracking process is disruptive and potentially dangerous to local communities, and that fossil fuels should stay in the ground to avoid worse climate change. They delivered letters to the Bank Manager asking Barclays to end plans to frack in Yorkshire.

Bowler-hatted bankers waving cash – one of whose human mask had slipped to reveal their true identity – were confronted by a Polar Bear, an Arctic Fox, and an Orangutan – all animals threatened by climate change.

John Booth of Reading Friends of the Earth said:

- “We joined many groups around the country opposing Barclays Bank who are continuing to exploit fossil fuels. Barclays should stop funding fracking.
- “Not only can fracking put the health and homes of nearby people at risk and harm their local environment, it also undermines efforts to tackle climate change. As one of the richest countries in the world Britain should be leading the way in reducing energy consumption not offering tax breaks to frackers.”

Brian Woodgate of Berkshire Greenpeace added:

- “To stay within safe levels of global warming, 80% of fossil fuel reserves need to stay in the ground.
- “Gas production from each fracking well drops off after 2 years, so new wells are drilled to keep up production, like brooms in *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice*
- “Even Lord Brown - head of frackers Cuadrilla - has said fracking won't bring cheap gas as it will be sold at the international market price”

– ENDS –

**Pictures:**

Bankers and protesters face off in Broad Street:



It's behind you! Three complacent bankers unaware of the Orangutan:



The mask has slipped –the Bear is angry – and the Banker is beaten!



**Notes:**

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**Reading FoE web-page:**

[www.readingfoe.org.uk](http://www.readingfoe.org.uk)

**National campaign web-pages:**

<http://gofossilfree.org/uk/stop-barclays-fracking/>  
<https://www.foe.co.uk/blog/barclays-don-t-frack-my-home>