



Anti-Fracking Update

Love Leitrim

ANOTHER *Leitrim Guardian* rolls around and it's hard to believe that three years ago fracking was an unknown word in this area, now most people in Leitrim and the wider North West are familiar with the word. The widely reported protest in the UK during the year has also helped to bring fracking and its effects into mainstream debate. Locally it's been another busy year in the anti-fracking campaign for the Love Leitrim group and the wider network of anti-fracking groups. There have been some disappointments during the year but there has also been some positive news for the campaign.

Some of the low points have

■ Declan Synott & Christy Moore



■ Tractors assemble at Manorhamilton Mart prior to the anti-fracking tractor run

included strong political support for shale gas extraction in the UK, where test wells have been drilled. This combined with the progress towards fracking in Northern Ireland have increased the likelihood of test wells being drilled in Fermanagh in the near future. While it was expected that the exploration companies with licence options in Ireland would apply for the next licence stage, an exploration licence, it was still a disappointment when it happened.

There has been positive news too; the second stage licenses have been put on hold until the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) has conducted a

study on fracking. Intensive lobbying by Love Leitrim and other groups resulted in 1300 submissions to the EPA and succeeded in including the effects on Human Health as part of this study. Recent lobbying of MEPs helped to ensure that fracking wells would be subject to stricter environmental

■ Tommy Tiernan

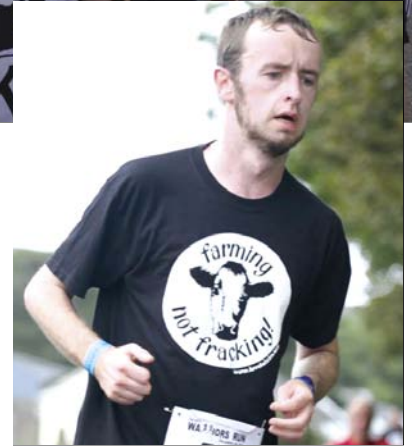




■ Love Leitrim Supporters with Jamie celebrating his completion of the Warriors run



■ Jamie Murphy with supporters at the Warriors run in Strandhill



controls. A constant stream of bad news from the USA concerning the economics and negative environmental effects of fracking has helped to strengthen the case for the anti-fracking groups.

Locally, Love Leitrim has continued with its awareness raising campaign. Some notable highlights during the year include:

A tractor rally to coincide with the G8 summit in Fermanagh, organised by local farmers and Love Leitrim Members, Michael Gallagher and Paul Ferguson,

was a huge success and a great demonstration of support by the local farming community. The tractor run from Manorhamilton Mart to the Ballroom of Romance in Glenfarne attracted great support from local farmers with almost 60 tractors turning up



■ Daisy the 'anti-fracking cow'

for the event. The very heavy Garda presence, which included

the Garda helicopter, seemed farcical given the festive atmosphere with the tractors festooned with balloons and posters. The gathering at Glenfarne was addressed by farming leaders from north and south of the borders, with the IFA pledging support for the anti-fracking movement.

■ Eleanor Shanley & Pat Fox



■ Martina Dunne Lambe

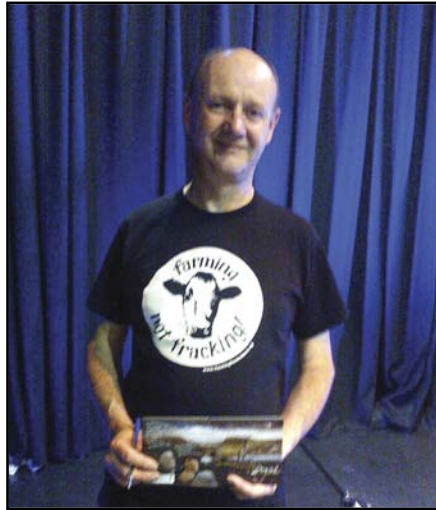


Love Leitrim were delighted to win the Communities Initiatives award in the Save our Planet awards 2013, this award recognised the work of the *Love Leitrim* group over the last three years bringing awareness of the dangers of fracking to Leitrim and surrounding areas.

Dervilla Keegan, *Love Leitrim's* Public Relations Officer was instrumental in garnering support from high profile public figures for the anti-fracking campaign, pictures of Christy Moore, Glen Hansard, Sharon Shannon, Tommy Tiernan and many other musicians wearing an anti-fracking tee shirt gave support and encouragement to all involved in the movement.

Jamie from *Love Leitrim* in his 'football not fracking' tee shirt was a familiar sight on the backroads around Manorhamilton training for the Warriors Run in Sligo, where he raised much need funds for the group.

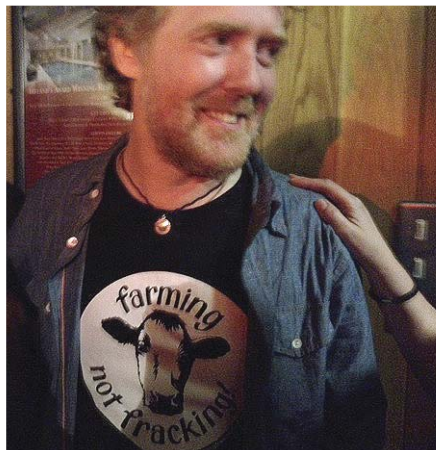
There was a huge turnout in Leitrim Village to hear Annie Kia from the Lock the Gate Alliance in Australia tell the story of how their movement prevented fracking in the Northern



■ **Brian McDonagh from Dervish**



■ **Paddy Casey**



■ **Glen Hansard Below: KILA**



Rivers Area of New South Wales. This heart-warming and very humorous account of how a local community campaign developed and trained in non-violent confrontation, and took on the might of the oil and gas companies. Stories of drilling rigs movements, supported by hundreds of police, confronted with choirs, Christmas trees planted in the roads and knitting grandmothers sitting on the road had the hall in stitches. The ultimate success of this campaign combined with the message that local communities united against fracking can have great power gave great hope to many people in Leitrim and surrounding counties.

In the background *Love Leitrim* members worked tirelessly, planning strategy, meeting with members of other groups, lobbying politicians, raising funds and carrying out the hundreds of unseen tasks that are required to maintain momentum in this fight to preserve our environment.

If you wish to learn more or just keep up to date with what's happening visit — www.Loveleitrim.org