

# Concern over previous local gas exploration

By Fiona Heavey

A new exhibition 'Lets Talk about Fracking' opening in Carrick-on-Shannon this weekend has brought up fresh concerns over previous efforts to explore for gas locally.

Stephen Rennicks a local artist involved in the Trade Residency Art Programme believes drill holes explored by US company Evergreen Resources Inc in Glangevlin, Co Cavan have been left "un-maintained." The location of one of the drill holes explored in Glangevlin sits on a Cavan County Council yard, but the council take no responsibility for the maintenance of the well.

Mr Rennicks said that in his course of research he uncovered Evergreen Resources Inc, quarterly report on 13 August 2002 where they state, "The Company has completed fracture stimulation operations on five of its six tight gas sand wells in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

"Bottom hole pressure tests and production tests on all five wells are currently being performed. Evergreen expects to complete the testing of these wells and set temporary bridge plugs at the end of 2002's third quarter."

Mr Rennicks questions what the fracture stimulation process involved, as we now associate the word fracture with



A Cavan County Council green hut pictured at the site of the 2001 gas exploration by Evergreen Resources in Glangevlin, Co Cavan. Photo by Stephen Rennicks

chemicals. Evergreen Resources exited all operations in 2003, having never developed any commercial wells.

Mr Rennicks said inside the container in Glangevlin "are rusting well heads" which he believes to be the 'temporary' bridge plug which the company said they would fit. Mr Rennicks has raised the question of maintenance and who the responsibility for these exploration efforts fall to. He asks, "Is this how we can expect all exploration companies to behave?"

Cavan County Council have told the paper they are not involved in any maintenance on site.

Peter Cork senior Environmental Engineer with Cavan County Council said any exploratory works carried out

in place between the relevant company and the landowners concerned regarding the completion of the works."

Although exploration was due to take place in Leitrim, by Evergreen resources in 2001/02, Leitrim County Council have no details of the location or if any work did proceed.

They said such exploration does not require any grant of planning permission, and comes under the jurisdiction of the Department of Energy. Leitrim County Council said it "has no responsibility" to such a development, and any "health and safety issue" would be the responsibility of the developer/landowner.

The Department of Energy was contacted for information but failed to respond.

Local Councillor in the Glangevlin area John Paul Feeley said the site of the drilling in Glangevlin was on "the property of Cavan County Council."

He said he understood that the well was "capped with concrete." He said during exploration "there was so much gas coming out" and said there is "certainly a deposit" in the area. He said he understood the site was also used for exploration in the 1960s.

Cllr Feeley said over ten years ago the local community had been largely supportive of the exploration but now require more information on what the process of fracking will involve.

Some of the photos of this site in Glangevlin as well as other information form part of a Trade residency art programme opening in Carrick-on-Shannon this Friday, December 2 in two ground floor retail units of Mercantile Plaza, (opposite the Landmark Hotel) beside Cafe Lounge, in Carrick-on-Shannon from 5pm.

It will be opened by Declan McGonagle, the director of NCAD and there will also be a pres-

entation by Dr. Aedín McLoughlin of Glenwood Research.

The artists selected this year were David Spence, Brigitta Varadi, Stephen Rennicks and David J and their mentor was the New York based David Michalek. The group focused their project on raising awareness of the issue of hydraulic fracturing in Ireland.

They came up with the idea of a portrait and slogan campaign and took over 80 portraits of people, from Leitrim, Sligo, Roscommon and Dublin who at the very least wanted more of a public debate on the issue; including a few well known faces such as Charlie McGettigan, Duncan Stewart, Cathy Jordan and Steve Wickham.

For more information on the exhibit visit: [talkaboutfracking.ie](http://talkaboutfracking.ie) for the campaign and [engagecollective.wordpress.com](http://engagecollective.wordpress.com) which documents and archives their experiences on the residency.