

## LEAVE IT IN THE GROUND

Just as the world wakes up (again) to escalating threat of climate change, the Dorset coast and its unique marine environment is under threat from more oil exploration and extraction. This is no time to be developing more fossil fuel sites and threatening biodiversity.

In protest, Shaftesbury Extinction Rebellion (XR) and the Save Our Shores environmental groups are organising a pilgrimage along the footpaths of rural Dorset to the Jurassic coast at Studland. The walk will take place over three days on the 27th, 28th and 29th of September and is starting on the last day of the climate strike action called by Greta Thunberg and a week before the XR International Rebellion.

Corallion, a private oil company, reported in March that it had found “potentially substantial” reserves in Poole Harbour. The drill site is close to 58 marine and coastal protected areas, and the temporary rig was in clear sight of the coast, an area of outstanding natural beauty. The government issued the Dorset drilling licence despite a comprehensive campaign by local and national activists including Greenpeace and a letter to the Secretary of State signed by local businesses, organisations and others including Jane Goodall.

The pilgrimage to Studland is a journey and protest for anyone, or any group concerned about the continued investment in fossil fuel extraction. We want as many people as possible to join for all or any part of the route culminating in a mass gathering and a ceremony near Old Harry rocks on Sunday 29th September at 2.30pm.

The oil found in Poole Harbour will eventually be extracted by horizontal drilling from Wytch Farm in the Purbeck district of Dorset, already the largest onshore oil field in western Europe. Two further drilling licences were issued to Corallion in June 2019 for yet more offshore exploration near Poole Harbour and Perenco, the operators of the Wytch Farm have just commenced seismic testing near Kimmeridge and other Purbeck sites.

Other organisations are also challenging the decision to allow drilling using legal means, such as Neil Garrick-Maidment, founder and director of the Sea Horse Trust, who recently won a judicial review of the drilling licences issuing process and environmental impact assessment, after a successful crowdfunding campaign by local activists.

A statement issued by the Shaftesbury XR group, who came up with the idea of the pilgrimage said: *“We are in a climate emergency, drilling for more oil which we cannot safely burn is absurd.”*

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