Newdigate earthquakes “are natural” say three academic experts

UK Oil & Gas PLC chief executive Stephen Sanderson appeared on BBC Radio Surrey’s Friday evening Drive Time programme on March 1 to discuss the recent earthquakes.

Mr Sanderson wishes to reiterate to Surrey and Newdigate residents that new independent scientific analysis of the recent earth tremors has been conducted by experts at UK universities and by the British Geological Survey, all scientific institutions of high global standing. UKOG has fully cooperated with these institutions to provide the data necessary for analysis.

In a scientific paper under review for publication in the academic journal Seismological Research Letters, three leading independent experts in seismicity, Dr James Verdon (Bristol University), Dr Brian Baptie (British Geological Survey) and Prof Julian Bommer (Professor of Earthquake Risk Assessment, Imperial College) have developed a new and more advanced screening criteria for assessing whether seismic events are induced or naturally occurring.

Their approach provides a framework for considered and balanced assessment of all the available evidence via calculation of Induced Assessment Ratios (IAR).

They have applied this new framework to the Newdigate earthquake sequence and have concluded that: "The negative IAR values indicate that neither Brockham nor Horse Hill-1 is a likely cause for these (seismic) events, and they are therefore natural.”

A further report recently published by the British Geological Survey also arrives at a similar conclusion, stating **“Oil production has been ongoing for many years in the region, without any previous seismicity. Finally, although this is a low seismicity region, even by UK standards, earthquakes are not unprecedented here. Overall, we suggest that the events are unlikely to have been induced**.”

As a responsible and ethical organisation with employees living in the area, UKOG will continue to work with and provide necessary scientific data to such experts.