



Richard Fuller CBE MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Please ask for: Laura Church
Direct line: 01234 718200
E-mail: laura.church@bedford.gov.uk
Date: 30th June 2025

Dear Richard,

Quarterly Update on Cleat Hill

Thank you for your letter dated 19th March 2025, apologies for the delay in responding however please see below responses to the questions you have raised below:

1. Is gas still leaking from the borehole?

There is still gas being emitted in small quantities around the top of the borehole.

At present it is not known whether this is caused by dissipation of trapped gas in the shallower geology or if there is still a leak from the deeper gas reservoir at 100m depth. The next phase of site investigation is intended to help determine if there is ongoing leakage from depth (works to commence 14th July 2025)

2. If so, what is the magnitude, form and dispersion of gas and what is the plan for mitigation?

The emission rate of gas is very low. It varies with rainfall and is not continuous. It occurs in pulses which is consistent with bubbles of gas forming in the ground and then rising to the surface. A maximum emission rate over the key emission area is about 263l/m²/h. The gas quickly disperses in the atmosphere and is below detection level 50mm above the ground surface. There are no gas emissions from the ground surface beyond a distance of 5m from the borehole. A draft emergency action plan has been drawn up to determine appropriate actions in the short term if gas concentrations found during the ongoing monitoring increase. In the very worst case venting boreholes would be drilled close to the well and connected to a gas extraction and flare. Long term mitigation will be determined once the next stage of site investigation and gas monitoring is completed. It could vary from simple occasional gas monitoring through to installation of a gas venting system. Chemical grouting of the ground to seal it is also an option.

3. Which agency has ultimate authority over the security of the borehole and measures taken, since October 2024, to secure the site?

Ultimately it is the landowner's responsibility. The Council continues to liaise with them.



4. The council has provided residents with alarms for their homes. Please can you advise the dates and circumstances of any alarms that have been set off since installation?

Since the alarms were installed in early December 2024 there have been no activation because of Natural Gas in resident's home. There have however been five occasions when alarms have activated in a home and support has been provided by the Emergency Services and Council to investigate

06.01.25 – false activation due to domestic aerosol product
06.01.25 – false activations due to applied gas during devise installation
13.02.25 - false activation due to domestic aerosol product
24.02.25 – faulty sensor head in the monitor (unit was replaced)
16.05.25 – gas leak on domestic boiler (support provided by Cadent)

5. What technical support or expertise has been provided to the council by the national government or national agencies?

(Coal Authority, BGS,) National Government has not provided any direct technical support. A number of agencies have provided technical support during the response and recovery phase of the incident and are members of the Technical Cell which is advising the Council. They would be the Coal Authority, BGS, HSE and Cadent (19.10.24 to 01.11.24).

The Council has also procured the services of MRSL and EPG to offer onsite monitoring and specialist advice, these are also members of the Technical Cell

6. What is the current estimate of costs incurred by Bedford Borough Council related to the incidents at Cleat Hill, and how much of these costs have been reimbursed by the national government?

The Council has not received any reimbursement as yet.

Yours sincerely

Laura Church
Chief Executive
Bedford Borough Council