

To frack or not to frack should not be the question: the ethics of energy supply in the 21st century

Professor Zoe Shipton



7.30 p.m 7th October, 2015
Main Lecture Theatre, (3.25)
John Anderson Building
University of Strathclyde

Biography

Zoe Shipton is a Professor of Geological Engineering in the Department of Civil Engineering at Strathclyde University. She works on the link between faulting and fluid flow in applications such as hydrocarbons, CO₂ and radioactive waste storage, and geothermal energy, as well as the structure of modern and exhumed earthquake faults. She also conducts research into quantifying geological uncertainties and the perception and communication of risk and uncertainty. She is chair of the Tectonic Studies Group of the Geological Society of London, and is a member of the Royal Society and Royal Academy of Engineering working group on “Shale gas extraction in the UK: a review of the scientific and engineering evidence”.

She is also interested in communication of geological risk and uncertainty to the public and policymakers.

<http://www.strath.ac.uk/staff/shiptonzoe/>

Abstract

All energy sources have an impact on the environment and on local communities. By consuming energy, either directly as gas, electricity or petrol consumers, or indirectly through the embedded energy in the food we eat and the clothes we wear, we are contributing to environmental and community impacts. Recent debates around fracking for shale gas have posed the question “should we frack in the UK or Scotland”? However these debates (and others including around wind and nuclear) are often framed as a yes/no question and avoid considering the environmental and community costs of not fracking (or building wind farms or nuclear power stations). Is it ethical to continue to have yes/ no debates that do not consider the energy landscape in a broader sense? What is the best way to provide heat, power and transport for a growing population with the least environmental and social impact?