

AUDITION NOTICE



READ THROUGH	Tuesday 19 November 2024, 8pm in the Studio
AUDITIONS	Tuesday 3 December 2024, 2pm in the Theatre Sunday 8 December 2024, 2pm in the Theatre
FIRST REHEARSALS	Wednesday 29 January 2025 Rehearsals are on Mondays, Wednesdays & Thursdays, with Sundays from 2 Feb
PERFORMANCES	27 March – 5 April 2025 at 7.45pm Matinée: Saturday 29 March at 2.30pm
DIRECTOR	Gail Bishop gail.e.bishop@gmail.com
PA	tbc
	Scripts available from Gail

“Everything that people take for granted could end tomorrow. That dark nightmare, that awful thought: one day the lights are going to go out. What if you can't read your email? Can't charge your phone? Can't iron your shirt. Can't take a hot shower? And all because we failed to be self sufficient in energy.”

Professor Elizabeth Blackwood had hoped for a quiet retirement with her husband, Jack... but that was until Deerland Energy had earmarked their pretty village of Fenstock as a place to “explore for shale gas”. She’s now on a mission to stop them, by whatever legitimate means are necessary. But Deerland Energy aren’t fazed by Elizabeth: she’s just another ‘mad old biddy’. Besides, they’ve hired smooth-talking PR guru Joe Boxberg to show the locals how fracking will bring them prosperity. The local Councillor and Chair of the Planning Committee is struggling to pay for his Mum’s care home costs; perhaps an offer that’s too good to refuse might be mutually beneficial? And how far will Elizabeth and a ragged band of protestors go to keep fracking out of Fenstock? A petition? A letter to their MP? A march? Or is the situation now so dire that it calls for full scale civil disobedience and rioting?

This is a sharp, funny and timely satire about the issues surrounding climate change and how we power our homes, vehicles and electronic devices. We live in a time of Just Stop Oil and Extinction Rebellion routinely disrupting our travel plans and throwing soup over artworks to draw attention to their cause. We’ve seen in the news where some politicians have put local and national interests aside for their own personal benefit. And when the energy companies promise us that they’re making commitments to building a sustainable future, how many unsavoury facts are being obscured by a glossy PR campaign? Academics, NIMBYs, hippies, politicians, businessmen and spin doctors all collide in this brilliant comedy with fantastic roles for a variety of ages.

Please note: Script contains frequent use of strong language

CHARACTERS AND AUDITION PIECES

Audition pieces in bold are for the character listed

Audition pieces in italics are primarily for another character, but you may be asked to read in

ELIZABETH – playing age 65+

Large role. Retired Professor of Medieval History at Durham University. Fiercely intelligent, full of gumption and she'll be damned if she's going to let fracking go ahead and spoil her local countryside. Used to believe in writing letters to MPs but has lost confidence in authority and finds herself engaging in acts of protest. *In the first scene, Elizabeth is apprehended by security and forcibly removed from the auditorium. We'll be working with a fight director in order to choreograph this safely and effectively.*

Audition Pieces:

P25-26: "He seems OK ... Yes, Jack, you make some tea."

P37-38: "He doesn't bite, you know... and write a letter to The Times."

P66-67: "I don't need your help, thank you very much... Especially when you don't see it working."

P98-99: "And then, along came fracking... destroying the planet."

JACK – playing age 65+

Medium role. Elizabeth's bewildered irascible husband. Just wanted a nice retirement of gardening, holidays, a quiet life. But now his wife has taken up the fight against fracking with gusto and his peace has been shattered. Despairs of what has happened to his local village. Feels out of place in the local pub. Flummoxed by modern technology.

Audition Pieces:

P25-26: "He seems OK ... Yes, Jack, you make some tea."

P47-48: "Jenny! How wonderful!... Ah the raging fires of youth, eh?"

P50-51: "Your wife's a very clever woman... Cheers."

90-92: "Right. Let's take a look. Hmmm... Aw. Cool."

JENNY – playing age 45-50*

Small/medium role. Friend of Elizabeth from the local anti fracking committee. Very jolly and terribly middle class, but throws herself into protesting with the same enthusiasm as arranging a village fete. Is in an age-gap relationship with the younger Sam.

Audition Pieces:

P37-38: "He doesn't bite, you know... and write a letter to The Times."

P50-51: "Your wife's a very clever woman... Cheers."

SAM – playing age 23ish*

Small/medium role. Stoner vibes. Pagan, vegan, your stereotypical protester - or "protector", as he prefers to be called! Is in an age-gap relationship with the older Jenny. To be doubled with **Young Man** in first Town Hall Scene.

Audition Pieces:

P47-48: "Jenny! How wonderful!... Ah the raging fires of youth, eh?"

P50-51: "Your wife's a very clever woman... Cheers."

90-92: "Right. Let's take a look. Hmmm... Aw. Cool."

**there's room for a little flexibility on ages, but it's important that the age gap between Jenny and Sam is enough to warrant some surprise that they're in a relationship (she's probably old enough to be his mother), but not so wide that it seems completely implausible that they're together.*

JOE – playing age 35-50

Large role. Smooth talking adviser from PR firm, Moxley Biggleswade. Has burnished the reputations of everyone from dictators to arms dealers, and has 0 qualms with this, providing they're paying him a shedload of money. Can be disgustingly charming and confident when it suits him, but if things aren't going his way, he has a nasty, volatile temper and will verbally pulverise anyone who provokes him.

Audition Pieces:

P14-15: "Hate all this PR stuff... And that's what we're going to give them."

P26-28: "Hal, great to see you... wedge him into an opera seat."

P30-31: "So let's do this now. Malik?... Sure. Bye."

*P57-58: "Deerland use Bond-it-Tite, do they? ... you could buy this f***ing restaurant."*

P66-67: "I don't need your help, thank you very much... Especially when you don't see it working."

P95-97: "They're from Frack Free World... Ahhhhhh."

MALIK – playing age 20-50

Medium role. "The IT Guy" at PR firm, Moxley Biggleswade. Spineless and complicit - to begin with. But as it becomes increasingly clear what Deerland Energy are planning, he begins to find his moral compass. Call him brave or stupid, but he even finds the courage to stand up to Joe. Quite fancies Emma.

Audition Pieces:

P30-31 "So let's do this now. Malik?... Sure. Bye."

P72-74: "Hey. Good to see you both... Page 12, there you go."

P95-97: "They're from Frack Free World... Ahhhhhh."

HAL – playing age 60ish*

Medium role. CEO of oil company, Deerland Energy. An old-school oil man. Measured and pragmatic. Sees fossil fuels as a necessary part of the modern world (because you can't do everything with renewables). Doesn't really understand how PR works, and he is visibly repulsed by Joe's prolific swearing.

Audition Pieces:

P26-28: "Hal, great to see you... wedge him into an opera seat."

P30-31 "So let's do this now. Malik?... Sure. Bye."

P72-74: "Hey. Good to see you both... Page 12, there you go."

EMMA – playing age 25-35

Small/medium role. Hal's PA at oil company, Deerland Energy. Nepo baby. Quietly confident and entitled, she is absolutely in this job because one of Daddy's friends works in the oil industry. Hal might be her boss, but she's definitely the one calling the shots. To be doubled with **Young Woman** in first Town Hall Scene.

Audition Pieces:

P10-12: "Okay, find me a scaffolder... It's true, he's not exactly sprightly."

P72-74: "Hey. Good to see you both... Page 12, there you go."

COUNCILLOR NEVILLE PILBEAM – playing age 64ish

Restaurant scene only. Small speaking role, but has a lot of lines in this scene. Chair of the Planning Committee. Carrying a bit of extra weight around the middle. A rather curmudgeonly man who feels a bit out of place in a high end restaurant, and is caught between this wretched fracking debate and keeping his sister happy (as she pays the bills for their Mum's care home).

Audition Pieces:

P52-53: "What's Fig Delight?... I thought you might, sir. Thank you."

P57-58: "Deerland use Bond-it-Tite, do they? ... you could buy this f*ing restaurant."**

WAITER – playing age 20-60 (any gender)

Restaurant scene only. Small speaking role, but has quite a few lines in this scene. Works in a high end restaurant where Joe has brought Councillor Pilbeam for some persuasive schmoozing. Almost certainly sees these backroom deals on a regular basis and is more than content to be paid for their discretion. Has some delicious comedy lines: think Rowan Atkinson in 'Love Actually' in the "would you like it ... gift-wrapped?" scene.

Audition Pieces:

P52-53: "What's Fig Delight?... I thought you might, sir. Thank you."

LADY MAYOR – playing age 40-50

First Town Hall scene only. Small speaking role, but has a lot of lines in this scene. Exasperated when technology goes wrong. Could be doubled with **Jenny**.

Audition Pieces:

P7-8: "Everyone remain seated ... Marvellous."

LORD AVONS – playing age 50+

News broadcast only. Likely to be done as video or sound recording. Chairman of the Environment Regulation Authority. He owes Joe a favour, as Moxley Biggleswade have previously helped to "disappear" some rather unsavoury allegations of misconduct.

Audition Pieces:

P93: "This authority takes very seriously... Thank you."

POLICE OFFICER – playing age 20-60 (any gender)

Last Town Hall Scene only. Small speaking role. Has come to make an arrest. Could be doubled with another member of cast, e.g. **Malik**.

Audition Pieces:

P99: "Elizabeth Blackwood... Do you understand?"

NON-SPEAKING ROLES

PROFESSOR DAN WAKEMAN – playing age 50-60

First Town Hall scene only. Non-speaking role. Male Professor of Energy Studies at Baleford University. Being paid by the energy companies to find benefits of fracking. Could be doubled or played by stage crew in costume.

TECHNICIAN – playing age 20-50

First Town Hall scene only. Non-speaking role. Quite irked at the way they are spoken to by the Lady Mayor, so a couple of "barely contained rage" facial expressions welcome! Could be doubled or played by stage crew in costume.

TWO SECURITY GUARDS – playing age 20-60

First Town Hall scene only. Non-speaking roles. Will need to apprehend and remove Elizabeth from the auditorium. Could be doubled or played by stage crew in costume.

ONE OR TWO POLICE OFFICERS – playing age 20-60

Last Town Hall scene only. Non-speaking roles. Could be doubled or played by stage crew in costume.