



Cowal and Trossachs Forest District Wind Farm – Bachan Burn CLG Minutes

Date: 29th January 2014

Venue: Royal Marine Hotel, Dunoon

Present: Laura Jeffrey (LJ) (PNE WIND UK), David Pool (DP) (Forestry Commission Scotland), Katherine Newlands (KN) (PNE WIND UK), Kirsty Leiper (KL) (MHP Communications), Alastair Mackinnon (AM) (Dunoon Community Council), Eleanor Stevenson (ES) (South Cowal Community Council), Alan Stewart (AS) (South Cowal Community Council), Iain MacNaughton (IS) (Sandbank Community Council), Fulton McInnes (FM) (Hunters Quay Community Council), Susan McInnes (SM) (Hunters Quay Community Council), Robert Aldam (RA) (Kilmun Community Council).

1. Welcome and introductions

KL welcomed all those present and asked everyone to introduce themselves briefly. Those present introduced themselves and explained their roles and responsibilities within their own groups, as follows:

AM – Representative of Dunoon Community Council

ES – Representative of South Cowal Community Council

AS – Representative of South Cowal Community Council

DP – Forestry Liaison Officer (FLO), Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS)

LJ – Project Manager, PNE WIND UK

KN – Communications Manager, PNE WIND UK

IM – Representative of Sandbank Community Council

FM – Representative of Hunters Quay Community Council

SM – Representative of Hunters Quay Community Council

RA – Representative of Kilmun Community Council

KL – Account Director, MHP Communications, and Chair

2. Apologies

KL advised that Bute Community Council (BCC) and Inverkip and Wemyss Bay Community Council (IWCC) were invited to attend. Due to the distance IWCC requested that they were provided with minutes. KL also advised that BCC were due to dial in by conference phone/video conferencing. However, due to being unable to hold the meeting in the Hunters Quay Hotel, this was not possible.



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3. Overview of PNE WIND UK and Forestry Commission Scotland partnership

KN provided an overview of the proposals and the FCS partnership. She advised that most of those present attended the drop in session, and were aware of the background to the plans. KN provided a short background to PNE and an outline of the consultation to date.

KN advised that PNE would be looking to formally exhibit the proposals in March/April 2014 and asked for input from members into this process. She also noted that a second exhibition would be held prior to submission, once all of the studies had been completed.

KN provided a short introduction to the CLG highlighting that PNE often created CLGs to act as conduits of information between the developer and the community.

4. Outline of Cowal and Trossachs Forest District Wind Farm – Bachan Burn proposals

Moving on specifically to the proposals, LJ provided an overview of the two proposed layouts. She explained the differences between the two plans in terms of height and turbine numbers.

LJ went on to explain the scoping process and the environmental impact assessment (EIA) that PNE was undertaking.

AM asked the name of the Scottish Government department that would consider the plans. LJ explained that it was the Energy Consents and Deployment Unit (ECDU).

KL asked if anyone had any questions regarding the information that they had heard.

AS said that it was unlikely that people in South Cowal would be able to visually see the proposals as they currently stand.

IM suggested that people may see those involved in the CLG as supporting the application and aligned with the developer. KN responded that the CLG was not a supporters group but a forum for project discussion. RA added that he did not want to be a part of a liaison group.

KL asked all present if they wanted to participate in a liaison group. FM advised that he did not like the use of the word liaison. Those present suggested alternatives including communication, consultation and community group. To which FM responded that none of the suggested names were respectful and that he did not want to be seen to be liaising with PNE. FM added that whilst the community needed to be kept informed it needed to be in a different manner to 'liaison'.



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AS suggested that the group would help the community councils feedback information to the community.

KL asked those present, that if they were not happy with the name, that they could agree on a different name for the group and advise PNE of the name. It was agreed that those present would come back to PNE with an alternative name.

AM said that the community would view the PNE proposals as already decided, that they were presenting the project as it stands and that is what would be going ahead to planning. LJ responded that this was not the case, and that PNE was currently undertaking a number of studies to inform the final proposals. LJ continued that PNE/FCS had agreed that this site was suitable for a wind farm and a planning application would be submitted for the site. However, the final design was yet to be determined as this was dependent upon the EIA.

RA highlighted that because the land was owned by FCS, he felt that the Scottish Government would certainly decide on a positive outcome. LJ said that this was not the case and that the project would undergo the same scrutiny as any other wind project. AS suggested that it would only go to the Scottish Government if it remained above 50MW. FM said that he felt PNE were keeping it about 50MW to ensure that the Scottish Government did make the decision. LJ explained that throughout this process Argyll & Bute Council would be a statutory consultee, and should they object to the plans there would be a hearing of the proposals. LJ also confirmed that the proposals in their current form are the maximum with regards to tip heights and turbine dimensions and would not increase above that proposed in the scoping report.

FM asked for clarification on the scoping process, LJ explained the scoping process and the responses received informed the EIA to be undertaken and highlighted that the studies currently being undertaken informed the plans prior to being finalised.

IM highlighted that the community councils present were there to represent the local communities and that, Sandbank Community Council had previously commented on proposals in the area. He explained that this was due to the result of a survey undertaken amongst local residents. IM also highlighted that this was due to concerns on landscape and visual impact and also the impact on tourism. RA also added that this is why the Scottish Government reporter turned down the previous application.

AS highlighted that he felt these were reasons why they needed to participate in a productive group as representatives of the community to ensure that their views are represented. IM added that those present needed to voice the feelings of the community, for or against the proposals.



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Discussion returned to the group name. SF highlighted that the name of the CLG is not acceptable in its current form, with particular reference to 'liaison'. AS highlighted that those present needed to agree a name for the group. KL requested that everyone conferred following the meeting regarding the name and agreed on what they felt would be appropriate. KL proposed that upon circulation of the minutes she would cc all members into the email, to allow them the opportunity to get in touch and discuss the name.

IM suggested that all community councils undertake a survey locally regarding views on the plans. The methodology of such a survey was discussed, and AM provided information regarding potential funding from CARES for such activity. FM added that the problem with such a survey would be that it could reach people that are from outside the area.

AS highlighted that before such a survey could be undertaken the plans would need to be known. RM also added that a survey should be per community council area. IM said that if the community councils were to undertake such a survey, that it would have to produce concrete verifiable data. IM also said that the community council undertake their own EIA statement, and that potentially they could find enough endangered species to stop the proposals. LJ confirmed that all studies would report the species that are found on site and that all information would be made available to the public via the Environmental Impact Assessment, which would be considered by the decision makers and made available to the public via the ES (except for the confidential annexes).

RA asked when the met mast will be installed onsite and when it would be up and working. He also asked when the application would be lodged. RA noted that he understood that there is a clear requirement that all calculations must now be from recent up-to-date data that is made available in a manner for all to see and understand. RA also stated that he felt 12 months was the minimum acceptable time for calculating the "cradle to grave" figures that are required to be submitted with the planning application.

LJ highlighted that PNE would have a year in March, following the impending installation of the mast and explained that there is wind speed data available from other sources. LJ also explained that an application can be submitted without 12 months wind speed data from the met mast.

DP summarised that it was clear that landscape was a clear consideration for the community, and requested any further feedback or concerns. IM requested information on the felling of the trees and the species which would be used for replanting. DP explained that there would be some felling onsite, and that restocking was being considered. He also highlighted that generally the FCS would put back more native species than are currently in place and that PNE would have to comply with the Control of Woodland Removal Policy and agree Compensatory Planting terms prior to submission of the proposals. LJ also highlighted that the FCS Conservancy is a statutory consultee in this process and that PNE would need to submit forest management plans with the application. IM agreed that this was a positive



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point. LJ explained that a number of lessons had been learnt from earlier wind farms and that there were a number of stricter regulations currently in force. IM confirmed that he walked in that area and wanted to protect native species.

IM highlighted that there is a lot of social deprivation in Dunoon and that tourism is a big factor for consideration. AS asked if anyone had quantified the effects on tourism. He added that there had to be quantifiable data. KL agreed to provide links to previous studies on tourism. LJ explained that there would be a tourism study undertaken.

AS asked what the benefits of the wind farm are for the community. LJ explained the various options including community benefit and the opportunity to take the community benefit as a equity stake or invest into the project. LJ noted that advice on the three community options was available on the FCS website but that PNE are restricted in terms of what they can discuss due to the Financial Services Authority rules. IM asked if the £5k per MW would be fixed or negotiable. LJ explained that this would be fixed.

AS also asked about the opportunities for local contractors. KN explained that PNE would always ask the main contractor to employ locally and that in the meantime local company information could be supplied to PNE.

AS asked about the colour of the turbines, and LJ explained that this is something decided by the council, although they are normally grey.

5. Terms of reference

KL circulated the Terms of Reference to those present. It was agreed that the name would be under discussion and that members would consider the terms of reference in their own time.

6. Scope of membership

KL highlighted that there had been a number of requests to have two members from each community council present at each meeting and that there were also requests from other bodies to join the CLG.

It was agreed that two members from each community council would attend each meeting. It was also agreed that it did not need to be the same members going forward and RA requested that each community council could consider bringing an 'expert' from their community on subjects such as tourism and environment in their second seat. This was agreed by all present.

KL highlighted that the Cowal Marketing Group had requested to participate in meetings. It was agreed, that considering the flexibility with the 'second seat' that Dunoon Community



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Council could include Cowal Marketing Group within their remit. SM suggested that Cowal Marketing Group could be invited to a future meeting to provide a presentation on tourism and questions regarding the proposals including how they see the future for Cowal.

It was agreed that AM would discuss this with Cowal Marketing Group and Dunoon Community Council.

7. AOB

IM asked how PNE would take the plans forward and LJ explained the planning process for a 50MW or above application. KN also explained the consultation process.

FM asked about subsidies for the plans and LJ explained that there were no subsidies offered to wind farms until they started generating electricity.

IM asked about the mountain bike trails in the woods, and LJ explained that this type of feedback was very helpful and that PNE would look into opportunities to upgrade the tracks.