



## Talladh-a-Bheithe Wind Farm CLG Minutes

### Talladh-a-Bheithe Wind Farm Community Liaison Group

**Date:** 13 May 2014

**Venue:** The Georgetown Hall, Bridge of Gaur

**Present:** Alexander Grosset (AG), Linda Entwistle (LE), George MacDonald (GM), Craig Wallace (CW), Ron Dekker (RD), Louise Hardwick (LH), Bob Benson (BB), Douglas Wynn (DW), Kirsty Leiper (KL)

#### 1. Welcome and introductions

KL thanked all those present for attending and advised that the agenda had been compiled based upon questions or feedback from other group members following the previous meeting and also to discuss the forthcoming exhibitions.

KL distributed the newsletter and posters advertising the exhibition and requested that these be circulated locally. It was also agreed to circulate a pdf copy of the poster to allow it to be circulated via email.

#### 2. Apologies

KL advised that she had received apologies from William Millar.

#### 3. Matters arising from minutes of previous meeting/approval of minutes

KL circulated the minutes of the previous meeting and provided RD with a copy of the March minutes for display in the store. KL also advised that she would provide a copy of the April minute once it had been approved at this evening's meeting.

LE advised that there was talk at the previous meeting regarding the holiday homeowners and how big a voice they were given. LE clarified that she felt they got as big a say as other local residents. KL advised that rather than amending the previous minute this point would be contained within this evening's minutes.

AG also noted that he wanted an undertaking from Eventus that the company and any successors or subsequent owners would retain the same commitment to community benefit. CW advised that this was possible to arrange and such an undertaking could be attached to any Section 36 or deemed planning permission, or the land that is the subject of the application.



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### 4. Exhibition update

KL advised that the exhibitions would be taking place the following week and that at the start of the meeting she had circulated posters for display locally. In addition, KL agreed that she would be sending the poster to CLG members for circulation locally.

CW advised that the exhibition would be displaying the photomontages that would be submitted alongside the application. He noted that these presented the worst case scenario and that there would also be a computer model available at the events to provide bespoke wireframes from viewpoints and individual properties / locations.

LE said that she felt there was still blissful ignorance regarding the exhibitions taking place. KL advised that they were being advertised in the local press and that the details are contained in the newsletter which is being circulated locally.

BB said that he felt people would engage at this round of exhibitions. He elaborated that he felt people are waiting to hear what the final plans are like and what stage the proposals are at.

BB continued that the developer needed to be clear as to what the development meant for the community from environmental impact to community benefit implications.

BB also said that there were questions regarding tourism issues.

CW confirmed that this is information that people will be able to find out more on at the public exhibitions.

BB highlighted that there are ongoing concerns regarding turbine noise and the assessment of this. He also noted that the community would be keen to hear about the impact on the Loch and the surrounding environment.

CW said that the 'headlines' from the EIA Process and surveys to date will be available at the exhibitions and that a variety of members of the project team will be on hand to answer any questions.

BB also said that it would be good to know the likely timescale for construction. DW noted that there was the potential for the project to go to Public Local Inquiry. BB continued that it would be beneficial to know the timescales for when the community benefit was likely to kick in and also the peak times for transport.



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CW said that it might be useful for the CLG for him to talk through the transport options and the consenting process right now. CW continued that currently the application had going through the Scottish Government stage 1 gate check process.

CW explained that this allowed the applicant to discuss the plans with the case officer and allowed opportunities for statutory consultees to provide input into the methodology and content of the Environmental Statement.

CW continued that prior to submission the application would go through gate check two, which would check that the application had complied with all of the criteria and assessments requested. DW questioned whether this meeting would involve the community and CW advised that there is due process following submission for the community to comment.

CW said that notifications will be placed in the press when the submission is made advising of the process to submit representations and that there will be a further advert upon receipt of the first consultee response.

CW noted that Perth and Kinross Council has slightly longer to respond, generally six months, and that they have to consider all statutory consultee comments. CW explained that only when the Scottish Government have the Perth and Kinross response (assuming this is within the statutory timeframe) can they begin to consider the proposals and respond to the applicant with requests for further information. CW highlighted that it may be likely that the Scottish Government request additional information or clarification which may be submitted by way of an addendum to the EIA and proposals. He also clarified that if there is a Public Local Inquiry it could add months or years to the process.

CW said that this is particularly complicated and that whilst there are further documents on the Scottish Government website, he would happily provide the CLG with a flow chart detailing this process. DW confirmed that would be helpful.

DW explained that he understood it to be 28 days from the registration of the plans for the community to make substantive comments and that if these comments are made then, they can be challenged.

DW also noted that there are a volume of documents for the CLG members to work their way through following submission.

KL highlighted that post submission, when the documents are available for review in the public domain, she could arrange a CLG meeting to talk through the documentation. KL also highlighted that normally the documents are placed in an easily accessible public location for people to read them. CW also explained that the adverts would detail the price of purchasing the full



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documentation and the CD containing all of the documents. CW also noted that the documents would be available to download online.

BB asked about how the CLG group members could access them and it was agreed that a CD would be provided in addition to a copy of the non-technical summary. KL noted that the community council is also normally provided with a selection of documents and the CD, and this would ensure there were a range of documents circulating locally.

KL asked the members to consider the location in which the documents should be made available locally. KL advised that CW needed to agree this with the Scottish Government. BB said that there may be space in the surgery but that the potential preference is accessing it by CD given the limited locations. AG noted that the hall was unlikely to be an option as it was not open all of the time and people would have to contact the key holder for entry.

LE suggested that the library van may be an option, however it was noted that this would not provide ample time to digest the materials. DW questioned whether the library van would allow someone to check out the materials. CW advised that the purpose of placing the document somewhere central was to allow people to readily access it during normal business hours.

LH suggested that the documents be placed at the Rannoch Hotel. AG said that it may be better in the Manse Hall, in that the minister stays next door. He did think that the ideal place would be the doctors surgery.

GM asked where in the surgery it could be kept and LE said that this was something that she would have to discuss.

BB said that the best option is to make the CD as cheap as possible.

Moving on CW said that he would talk through the transport scenarios that would be presented at the exhibition.

CW explained that there are two options, coming in at Dalwhinnie and going down the loch by barge and coming in by rail to Bridge of Gaur.

CW highlighted that there are implications of both routes and that Network Rail is confident that a workable solution could be found. CW noted that the developer is currently developing the detail of the options and commercial arrangements with a view to retaining some flexibility and achieving the right commercial terms.

CW highlighted that both of these options would minimise traffic on the local roads as much as possible.



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GM asked if there was an agreement in place with Lord Pearson. CW explained that contact had been made with Rannoch Barracks however there was no agreement in place at this stage.

LH asked about the machinery and how this would get to the site. LE raised concerns about driving down the loch and being faced with traffic for the site. CW explained that a full transport management plan would have to be produced to minimise disruption.

DW asked about the length of the blades and whether these would fit under the underpass at Dalwhinnie. CW explained that he was not able to confirm the exact length of the blades, but would find out this information for DW. CW also advised that he appreciated the underpass at Dalwhinnie was tight and that they may have to go over the railway.

DW asked if craning the blades over and under a live railway was acceptable to network rail and CW said that on the basis of discussions to date in principle it was.

AG said that the forestry trucks currently go in convoy and that this concerned him. CW said that if consented the transport movements would be governed by conditions requiring the development of a detailed transport plan with legal recourse if this is not complied with. As such, should the community have any problems with transport they can be reported to the council. KL clarified that it was also likely that the CLG would still be functioning as a method of communication during construction and that this would also be a way in which to communicate programme for works, transport movements and to gather any concerns.

DW said that he was concerned regarding the delivery of the towers either way. He asked how big the sections would be and CW explained that the towers can be divided into different sizes and this is dependent upon weight and dimension restrictions according to different transport modes.

DW also noted that he felt this would require a major realignment of the road and that it would be a tragedy if this happened. CW advised that on the basis of assessments to date this was not the case, and at pinch points there is scope to use temporary over sailing of corners or structures, and using temporary surfaces on corners allowing ease for transportation.

DW asked if this would be in place throughout the lifetime of the wind farm. CW explained that the transport plan would look into this further. DW also noted that the frog stone cannot be moved.

DW said that there would be a reluctance to cut turbines for transportation. CW explained that this is often undertaken and that there are a number of ways of transporting turbines in smaller sections.



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### 5. Community Council meeting

KL highlighted that the community council meeting regarding the proposals was taking place and highlighted that the developer would happily provide information should it be required.

CW asked who would be speaking at the meeting and AG said that there isn't a presentation as such, but that the meeting would be hearing from Nan Johnston from Dunkeld and Birnam Community Council regarding her experiences with developers and DW would also be presenting his information.

AG advised that he had invited Local Energy Scotland to present but they were unable to attend.

AG noted that if people had questions regarding the plans that they would be referred onto the exhibition but that he wanted people to get an impression of what is happening regarding the proposals.

CW said that the developer had concerns that there was the potential for information being presented on the basis of perception rather than fact. AG highlighted that if there is an opportunity for questions then the responses will be purely factual. AG also noted that the speakers would not be answering technical questions.

GM said that the meeting is being held to gauge general feeling. BB noted that he felt it was slightly 'cart before horse' and premature being ahead of the final round of exhibitions. DW responded that it was being held to make people aware of the process and LH said that it was to make people aware of the wind farm. BB responded that it should have taken place after the second exhibition.

DW said that there has already been an exhibition on the proposals and GM said that it is being held to measure community feeling and feed this back to the developers. BB continued to note his anxiety about the meeting and GM said that it won't be the only meeting. LE said that she felt the meeting was not balanced whilst GM said that it is part of the community council's liaison with the community.

CW asked GM and AG what he could provide to help inform the meeting.

DW said that the meeting is to be fair and balanced. He noted that the developer had already presented information and that he felt the developer is not going to tell us all he thinks until the application is submitted. DW continued that the timescale is short and that the meeting is to inform people of this.



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KL questioned whether the community council meeting would be balanced. AG explained that DW would be presenting the facts in a neutral manner and that he didn't anticipate the meeting to be a for or against affair. AG explained that he wanted the community to be aware of the development proposals and that there are transport options and solutions.

LE asked AG if it is a forum where people will be able to get their questions answered. BB also said that in all fairness it will be difficult for DW to maintain a neutral position. DW responded that personally he had been in much more difficult positions.

BB said that following the exhibitions the community council should hold a meeting and tie down key speakers to discuss the facts.

AG said that he needed to find out who will put their heads above the parapet and participate. AG said that he maintained his position that the community council could not support a sub group.

LE said that her understanding was that the speakers were to explain all aspects of wind farms and then the community council make up its mind. AG said that was still the objective, but that Local Energy Scotland and CARES were unavailable to participate. AG also said that the community could benefit from Nan Johnston's experience and that they know what CW and KL have to say.

LH said that people needed to know key facts and that the meeting needed to encourage people to attend the exhibition.

DW also said that the developer is not going to tell the community precisely what the transport options will be and is unlikely at this stage to volunteer information. CW advised that he would communicate any information at this stage and with regards to the transport options, he had advised to the best of his knowledge where this was at present.

AG said that running in parallel to the proposals is the issue of community benefit and it is quite hard to communicate this. AG questioned whether Eventus would take the project all the way through to operation and CW responded that this cannot be guaranteed, but that a binding agreement can be put in place prior to construction which will guarantee the agreed community benefit. DW noted that he felt the consent could be sold on. CW confirmed that an agreement can be put in place to secure the community benefit and that he was very encouraged by Eventus's enthusiasm and positive approach to exploring community benefit and community ownership models and the willingness to bring forward a commitment to enter into an agreement.

## **6. Questions and comments from the community**



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DW questioned Eventus's experience in wind farm developments. CW explained that Eventus had a range of experience throughout Europe in the development and operation of wind farm developments. CW also explained that it was common practice to put into place a local project team which is what Eventus have done here.

DW noted that he felt the community risked the application coming in and having limited time to respond. KL noted that she was aware that DW was an objector to the proposals and highlighted that DW had already sent an email to the developer making them aware of his position and objection and his plans to actively oppose the proposal. KL highlighted that DW had agreed for this email to be circulated to CLG members in the interest of transparency. DW confirmed that he had already circulated the email to a number of the members.

DW said that with this application there are going to be tensions. He highlighted concerns regarding the use of the SNH wild land consultation and said that he felt the developer should have already told the CLG that they were involved in the consultation. DW said he was concerned that this information was not volunteered to the group and that they should have briefed the CLG on steps taken to influence wild land area 14.

CW responded that the submission to the consultation had commenced prior to the public consultation for the project and that the results of the consultation were due in the near future.

RD highlighted that the previous meeting had raised the issue of noise. CW said that he had looked at the environmental response and that the separation distance between the turbines and habitable properties was at a distance that did not trigger the requirement for a detailed noise assessment.

LE asked if, given the response, the powers that be will consider doing something now. LH asked if CW was categorically saying an assessment would not be undertaken. DW also highlighted that they could ask the local authority to request one. CW agreed that they could get the local authority to request one and confirmed that he would feedback these points to the developer.

AG highlighted that the difficulty the community is finding is that the area is very quiet and LH said that there were concerns with low frequency noise. AG said that low frequency noise travels and LH said that there were reports on health relating to low frequency noise.

DW also said that turbine design stresses noise reduction and that there is the tendency to think in relation to objections that noise is in a category which is not of a concern. DW said that on noise objections there is the likelihood that they won't be taken seriously.



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CW highlighted that there are various studies and advice notes available on noise, but Scottish Government and Perth and Kinross Council had not requested a detailed noise assessment be undertaken.

DW noted that the community can ask for a noise assessment to be undertaken and BB said that they would have to make the case if they wanted to change their minds.

DW said that he was concerned that noise and tourism were issues that would be brushed aside.

### **7. Future meetings**

It was agreed that the next CLG would take place when the hard copy submission documents were available. KL agreed to update the CLG on progress.