



**Freasdail Wind Farm
Community Liaison Group (CLG)**

**Monday 10th September 2012
Whitehouse Village Hall**

MINUTES (Unconfirmed)

Attendees:

Linda McCrae	Local resident
Alistair McCrae	Local resident
Zofija Sloan	Local resident
Margaret Pratt	Local resident
Derek Pratt	Local resident
David Bridge	Local resident
Robin Nolin	Kintyre Turbine Watch
Lee Bastow	West Kintyre Community Council
Kenny Soudan	Local resident
Sarah McDonald	Local resident
Hugh McDonald	Local resident
Phil Connor	Local resident
Angus Smith	Local resident
Rachel Anderson	RES
Louise Davis	RES
Rhona Macalister	RES (minutes)

1. Introduction

RA opened the meeting and thanked everyone for coming.

The minutes were handed out to the group and RA asked if there were any comments relating to the minutes.

The minutes were approved.

2. Freasdail Wind Farm Proposal Update

LD explained that RES plans to submit the planning application for Freasdail Wind Farm at the end of September, 2012.

LD noted that there were no specific comments or suggestions relating to the wind farm layout and design in the public exhibition questionnaire responses. However, there were generic comments about the effects of the development e.g. landscape.

LD explained that due to this, the wind farm design still stands at 11 turbines with a 100m tip height.

LD noted that the main issues highlighted in the questionnaires were around landscape and visual impact.

LD stated that the Environmental Statement for the proposal will be left in a local amenity where everyone will be able to have access to it.

PC asked what the height of the met mast is.

LD confirmed that it is 80m high.

PC stated that the turbines would be 20m taller than the met mast.

LD agreed.

LM asked if the turbines can be made smaller.

LD explained that RES has looked in to this but the type of turbines that RES, as a commercial scale developer, tends to procure (for quality reasons) start at around this size. LD explained that manufacturers are producing larger turbines in this day and age and that the choice is a balance between landscape and economics.

AS asked what the purpose of the CLG meetings are.

RA explained that generally community liaison groups are made up of representatives from the local community councils so they can feedback information to their communities. However, for this project it has only been West Kintyre Community Council that have attended meetings so far. As the community has been interested in attending the meetings, the meetings have mainly been made up of local residents.

RA explained that the aim of the group is to provide a forum for discussion and the exchange of information. It is also set up to create and maintain channels of communication between representatives of RES and the local community.

AS asked if the meetings are about information exchanging rather than RES endorsing the project to the community.

RA confirmed that the group is not set up to endorse the project and that it is an open and transparent process.

LD noted that the information shared and gained from the CLGs will go in to the community consultation report that is submitted to the council with the planning application.

DB stated that comments expressed in the CLGs should be included in the consultation report and if the comments are that the wind farm is not wanted then these should be included.

PC stated that himself DB and AS are the three residents that live closest to the project.

DB explained that he has written to his local community council twice about his opposition to the proposal but he is yet to receive a response.

LB stated that the community council is aware of his letter and that their role is to information gather and will include the community's opinion on the proposal when they write their response.

RA explained that at the moment, all comments about the project should be sent to RES and that the deadline for comments is Friday, September 14.

RN asked if as a result of the public exhibition consultation process and the feedback received, has RES made any changes to the proposal.

LD stated that RES has not made any changes, as there had not been any specific requests from the community to make changes to the layout/design.

AS asked if the CLG and community consultation is a requirement.

RA stated that it is a requirement under the planning act to consult with the community council and to hold one event. RES has gone beyond this is its consultation programme.

AS asked if RES is therefore not dependent on the input from the community at the CLGs.

RA explained that RES feels it is important to hold CLGs and will feed all comments from the meetings in to the consultation report.

PC stated that he does not want the wind farm full stop.

LD explained that his comments will be included in the consultation report.

PC added that it has come across very clearly that the community does not want the wind farm either.

AS asked how long the CLG meetings will go on for if the community has expressed that they do not want the wind farm.

LD stated that if the community do not feel the CLGs are needed then the meetings do not need to continue.

DB stated that the wind farm had first been discussed four years ago and that he was never told about it when he was building his house. If he had known about it he would not have built it.

LD explained that four years ago RES did not know whether they would go ahead with the project or not as initial studies were still being undertaken.

PC asked how long the mast has been up.

LD explained that it has been up for six months.

RN stated that he had asked RES at the Blary Hill Wind Farm exhibition in Glenbarr if the community did not want it then would the company walk away and that the answer he got was 'no'. He then asked what the purpose of the CLG is if no-one want the wind farm.

AS stated that local residents have issues with the environmental impact of the proposal and the size of it but RES seem intent on going ahead with the proposal.

AS continued by saying that the planning department has the final decision and not the community so what is the point of these meetings.

LD explained that the meetings are set up to give out information to the community about the proposal. LD noted that at other CLGs people have specific questions they want to ask about the proposal and that RES host the meetings to answer these questions.

DB noted that it is an obligation to consult.

RA explained that it is a part of the planning process to consult with the local community councils and to hold one event as a minimum. She also added that RES is not required to hold the CLGs and that RES goes beyond what is required in terms of community consultation.

RN quoted from a letter that was written to Mike Russell MSP from Angus Gilmour, Head of Planning and Regulatory Services at Argyll and Bute Council about Blary Hill Wind Farm.

RN read out the quote which says that the area is "unsuited to wind farm developments."

LD explained that she is aware of the letter but this information has not been communicated to her and that information is not included in the local plan.

LD explained that she had met with Richard Kerr, the planning officer at Argyll and Bute Council and he had fed in to the Blary Hill proposal.

DB stated that the planners have said that they do not like the Freasdail Wind Farm proposal.

LD stated that the planner will look at all the information submitted in the planning application and will make a decision based on it.

RA stated that there are separate meetings for Freasdail Wind Farm and Blary Hill Wind Farm and if there are any questions about the Blary Hill proposal then these can be answered at the end.

PC applauded RES for holding the meetings and said he was happy that the company has consulted with the community even though he doesn't support the wind farm development.

PC asked how much information RES can issue about subsidies and the cost for consumers.

LD noted that she has a good general document that explains how subsidies work and that she will email it to him.

PC noted that he was looking for information on every KW energy produced and how much is subsidised and how much is paid by the consumer.

LD said she will try and answer this question and will email him a response along with the subsidy document.

PC said he will try and disseminate the information to local residents.

3. Exhibition feedback

RA explained that the questionnaire analysis from the public exhibitions will go in the minutes.

RA read out the results of the questionnaires.

Freasdail - Exhibition feedback.

RA went through the Freasdail Wind Farm public exhibition questionnaire analysis.

Exhibition dates:

- Friday, August 24, 2pm - 8pm, Whitehouse Village Hall
- Saturday, August 25, 10am - 3pm, The Victoria Hall, Campbeltown.

- 33 people attended the Whitehouse Village Hall exhibition; 15 people filled in a questionnaire.
- 36 people attended the joint project exhibition in Campbeltown, 6 people filled in a questionnaire about Freasdail Wind Farm.
- Therefore, we received 21 completed questionnaires about the project.

Question 1: Before coming to the public exhibition how would you describe your knowledge of the proposal for Freasdail Wind Farm?

	Total
Know a lot	0
Know quite a lot	6
Know a little	10
Know very little	2
Know nothing at all	3

Question 2: Having attended this exhibition, to what extent do you feel we have increased your understanding and information about the wind farm proposal?

	Total
A lot	5
Quite a lot	9
A little	7
Very little	0
Not at all	0

Question 3: Thinking about the proposal for Freasdail Wind Farm, are there any particular issues that concern you?

	Total
Yes	9
No	5
Undecided	6
Other*	1

***One person did not fill in this section.**

Question 4: If you answered 'yes' to the above question can you let us know your main concern.

Out of the nine people who answered 'yes', everyone left a comment. The comments included concerns about views from properties, the number of wind farms in Kintyre and decommissioning of the wind farm.

Question 5: which of the following describes your reaction to the proposed wind farm?

	Total
Support	4
Neutral	8
Object	5
Other*	4

***two people noted that they were in between neutral and object, one person noted that they were between neutral and support and one person left this section blank.**

Question 6: comments or suggestions.

Of the 21 people who filled in a questionnaire, ten people left a comment or suggestion. Several comments were in relation to the number of wind farms in Kintyre. One comment left was in relation to community benefit and how the money could be used. Several comments were in relation to the view of the wind farm from certain properties.

Question 7: Do you support renewable energy development?

	Total
Yes	18
No	0
Undecided	1
Other*	2

*two people did not fill in this section.

Question 8: If you support renewable energy, do you support the development of wind farms in appropriate locations?

	Total
Yes	14
No	1
Undecided	4
Other*	2

*two people did not fill in this section.

Question 9: What do you feel are the best ways for us to keep you informed about our proposal for Freasdail?

Email was voted the most popular method of informing the public.

Demographics

Community Council area	Total
West Kintyre	10
South Knapdale	1
Tarbert and Skipness	7
East Kintyre	0
Gigha	0
Other/not stated	3

Age of respondents	Total
Under 18	0

19-24	0
25-39	5
40-49	2
50-59	4
60+	10

Length of time lived in the area	Total
Less than a year	1
1-4 years	1
5-10 years	2
10 years +	16
No response	1

Gender	Total
Male	10
Female	11

Community benefit questionnaire.

18 people filled in the separate community benefit questionnaire.

% of respondents who ranked the idea of a discount electricity scheme as a 'good' or 'great' idea	71%
% of respondents who would sign up to a discount electricity scheme if it was offered and if they were eligible	71%

Of the 18 people who filled in the community benefit questionnaire, four people left a comment. Some people questioned how it would work and who it would benefit. One person commented on how the community fund should be spent and how it could possibly be distributed.

RA explained that RES is exploring a discount electricity scheme as a form of local benefit on top of the community benefit fund.

DB asked why a public exhibition was held in Campbeltown.

LD explained that the planner had asked them to hold one there.

AM asked if the owner of the forest and the land is planning on attending any of the CLGs.

LD said that he has been invited to attend the meetings.

LM noted that she was surprised that investigations around the potential for a wind farm at Freasdail started four years ago.

MP stated that the landowner would have surely been aware of it four years ago.

LD explained that it didn't mean that RES would have approached the landowner four years ago as RES was undertaking initial investigations before approaching the landowner.

PC asked if the connection between Kintyre and Hunterston did not go ahead then would the project fall through.

LD stated that she believes it is underway.

MP asked how long the construction of the wind farm would take from start to finish, especially in relation to the disruption on the road.

LD explained that construction takes around 12 - 18 months and that some forestry would need to be taken out and moved during this time.

MP stated that previously she has been held up behind turbines parts being delivered for around 40 minutes in Campbeltown.

LD explained that the roads are currently being upgraded in Campbeltown because of this and hopes that they will be finished by the time Freasdail Wind Farm goes in to construction, if it gets consented.

RA explained that when the turbines are delivered RES will be able to pin point the times when the turbine parts are likely to be delivered.

RA said that the local community would be kept up to date on the delivery times.

LM asked if the felled trees will go down the new roads.

LD said that they would.

LD asked the group where the best place to leave the environmental impact statement for everyone to have access to it would be.

LM said that it could be left in Whitehouse Village Hall.

LD agreed that this would be a good option.

MP said that they could arrange for the hall to be open at a certain time for people to view it.

LB asked when RES's consultation process will end.

RA said that it ends on Friday, September 14.

LB asked if there is also an opportunity to submit comments to the council three weeks after the application goes in.

RA confirmed this and said that it would also be in the local paper.

MP asked if the planning application will include information about roads.

LD said that it would contain everything; planning application, environmental impact statement and the community consultation.

MP asked if SNH had been involved in the proposal.

LD said that RES has met with SNH on a number of occasions but they do not offer their opinion formally until the planning application has gone in.

LB asked if the four people who said they supported the project (in the questionnaire responses) were from Whitehouse.

RA said that she will be able to find this out for her.

LB noted that it is hard to gauge people's opinions on the proposal and would prefer that a door to door survey was conducted.

LD said she and RA did go door to door and also sent out a newsletter where people were able to fill in a questionnaire.

SMcD said that not everyone got a door to door visit or got the newsletter.

LD said that local addresses were gained from another means separate from the Royal Mail database but on comparison the Royal Mail included more addresses.

RA noted that people can leave their email addresses after the meeting so that meetings dates, minutes e.t.c. can be sent out.

LB stated that there should be a better way of gauging the community's opinion before the consultation period ends on Friday.

LB noted that she would like a better idea of who wants the wind farm and who doesn't.

LM asked if this was up to the community council.

LB stated that it is hard for the community council to do this and she would prefer that the community conducted a survey themselves.

LB noted that people who support the wind farm are less likely to turn up to meetings and voice their opinions.

PC asked why wind farms are not up the top of hills away from sight and that wind farms are just about profits for the companies involved.

RA explained how RES finds a wind farm site using a Geographical Information System.

RA explained that there are lots of factors that RES considers when choosing a wind farm site; for example the potential grid connections, cultural heritage designations, wind speeds, local and national designations, ecology and proximity to houses.

RA explained that once all of these factors have been investigated and assessed then the actual area in Scotland that is suitable for wind farms is in fact quite small.

DB stated that if RES went along with the local plan for Argyll and Bute then they would see that Freasdail is not in a preferred area.

LD explained that RES is highly experienced in developing wind farms and have a different opinion to the council in this case.

LB asked if RES will appeal if the wind farm is rejected.

LD said that it would depend on the reasons for refusal.

LD noted that RES would also take in to consideration the cost of appealing.

LM asked if RES had asked what people's opinions of the wind farm were when they knocked on people's doors.

LD said that they didn't ask people opinions as they did not think it was fair to ask this question as it was often the first time people had heard about the proposal.

LD explained that the newsletter questionnaire was an opportunity for people to submit their opinions on the wind farm.

DB stated that the newsletter questionnaire was full of leading questions.

LD said that the community then needs to conduct their own survey as people will doubt the results of RES's questionnaire results.

RN stated that if a local community survey was conducted then it could be passed to the community council and included in their consultation response.

4. Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be held on Monday, October 22 at 7:30pm, Whitehouse Village Hall.

It was noted that the date could be changed depending on the date that the planning application is submitted.

5. AOB

There was no AOB.