



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

**Monday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2012  
Whitehouse Village Hall**

**MINUTES (Unconfirmed)**

**Attendees:**

Councillor Anne Horn	Kintyre and the Islands
Brian Mearns	Tarbert and Skipness Community Council
Lorraine MacPhail	West Kintyre Community Council
Rob Reid	Kintyre Way
Margaret Pratt	Local resident
Derek Pratt	Local resident
Phil Connor	Local resident
Amanda Minshall	Local resident
Alistair McCrae	Local resident
Linda McCrae	Local resident
David Bridge	Local resident
Donald Clark	Local resident
Kenny Soudan	Local resident
Angus Smith	Local resident
Carys Smith	Local resident
Andrew Russell	Local resident
Patricia Russell	Local resident
Alister Oakfield	Local resident
Louise Davis	RES
Rhona Macalister	RES

**1. Welcome and introduction**

RM opened the meeting and thanked everyone for coming.

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

PC noted that he had asked for some information at the previous meeting which had not been sent to him.

LD apologised and said she would send him the information he requested.

**2. Freasdail Wind Farm proposal update**

LD stated that the planning application for Freasdail Wind Farm has been submitted to Argyll and Bute Council and validated.

LD noted that there are three copies available in Whitehouse Village Hall to view on a Tuesday and Thursday from 4pm - 8pm for the 21 day consultation period. The environmental statement

is also available at the Tarbert Post Office and Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay Area Office in Ardrishaig.

DB expressed that he does not find it feasible to review the environmental statement in Whitehouse Village Hall during the set opening times and would prefer a paper copy to view at home.

LD stated that she would be happy to expand the time the documents are available after the 21 day consultation period. A borrowing scheme could be worked out where people can take the documents home if the community agreed to this. LD noted that it would cost £250 to purchase the full environmental statement and it would be unfair to offer it at a reduced cost or free to one individual.

LD stated that RES had sent a copy of the environmental statement to DB free of charge on CD and that free CDs could be made available to local residents. LD noted that at the last meeting RES consulted with the group as to where the best place would be to keep the documents for everyone to view. The group agreed that Whitehouse Village Hall would be the best place.

AO asked if more copies could be made available to be shared by the local communities.

LD said she could order several more copies of the environmental statement. LD noted she had asked Argyll and Bute Council how many copies RES was to supply. LD was told that the documents were to be made available at two local amenities but that RES had decided to order and extra three to be held at Whitehouse Village Hall so the local community had their own copies to view.

BM noted that the three copies at Whitehouse Village Hall and the two extra copies could be shared by the local community.

MP asked if copies went to the community councils.

LD said she had spoken to the planner at Argyll and Bute Council regarding this and was informed that copies had been sent to them on CD.

LM asked if West Kintyre Community Council would get a hard copy.

LD stated that she did ask the planner how many hard copies to produce and then ordered the relevant number.

AR stated that he could not see the actual planning application when reading the environmental statement.

LD said that the application is required to be submitted electronically to the council. LD explained she had submitted it online along with a covering letter and filled in the standard form online. This can be found on the Argyll and Bute Council planning website.

AR asked if it would be likely for the environmental statement to change in order to keep up to date with any new visualisations or information.

LD said that it depends on the nature of the changes. If RES is asked for additional information then this will be made available on the council's website.

AR asked how this information would be available to everyone as it is very complex.

LD stated that a free CD with the full environmental statement could be sent to people who request one.

RM introduced the Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS) to the group.

RM explained that RES has been investigating different ways of building on the current community benefit fund that RES offers when a project is fully operational.

RM explained that RES has trialled LEDS at a wind farm in Wales and plans to roll the scheme out across all RES sites. The scheme would be additional to the £2,000 a megawatt community benefit fund and would take the total up to £5,000 a mega watt - with £3,000 a mega watt going towards LEDS.

RM noted that further information will be sent to households eligible for the scheme towards the end of the year. RM said that people can decide whether they want to sign up to the scheme or not - it is voluntary and is available to households regardless of their opinion on the wind farm proposal.

AO asked what determines the area that would benefit from the scheme.

RM stated that the methodology is being finalised but it would be a certain radius from the wind farm. Other factors in determining the precise area depends on the number of properties, site size, number of wind turbines and housing density around the wind farm. RM noted that the scheme would benefit those who live closest to the project.

AS noted that as people sign up for the scheme then surely RES will have an idea of the households who are in favour of the proposal and can use this information.

LD stated that under data protection RES will not do anything with the names of householders that sign up to the scheme apart from using the information to keep residents up to date on the scheme.

PC brought up the funding that RES has agreed to provide the Kintyre Way over the next three years and said he felt RES was bribing the community with the donation.

LD explained that at a meeting with the Kintyre Way the organisation had approached RES to request funding.

MP asked who initiated the meeting.

LD said that RES had approached the Kintyre Way initially to speak to the organisation about the wind farm proposal during the consultation process and at that meeting RES was asked if they would support the organisation financially. [Post meeting note: To clarify that the Kintyre Way approached RES regarding a meeting]

PC asked why RES felt they needed to support the Kintyre Way.

LD stated that from the meeting RES became aware that the Kintyre Way was in a financial crisis and was in danger of closing in 2013 if they did not find funding. At this point they had not been

given funding by the council. LD noted that local councillors had expressed that a strategic approach to supporting projects in the area was needed by wind farm developers. The Kintyre Way benefits the whole of Kintyre with regards to tourism and in turn supports the local economy.

PC stated that he was disturbed by the fact that RES had given the money and had heard that many walkers were against wind farms.

RR asked PC what evidence he had to support his assertion.

PC stated that he had read several blogs and internet articles about it.

AH stated that the Kintyre Way was in financial crisis and without the donation from RES the organisation would have been in serious danger of closing. AH noted that the funding from RES placed no obligations on the Kintyre Way, it was a straight forward donation.

DB asked if the funding will still be given to the Kintyre Way regardless of the outcome of Freasdale Wind Farm application.

RM confirmed this - RES has committed to funding the Kintyre Way £10,000 a year over the next three years.

AS stated that the Kintyre Way funding is not a charitable donation as the wind farm will be a 25 year imposition and schemes such as discounted electricity are just ways to sweeten the local community.

LD noted that there is a democratic process whereby people can make representations to the council about the wind farm. Argyll and Bute council will look at all the information that has been submitted and a decision will be made based on this.

DB stated that the questionnaire that was given out at the public exhibition was full of leading questions about community benefit and discount electricity.

RM stated that the questions about the community benefit fund and the local electricity discount scheme was a way of RES gauging how the community felt about the idea and it was separate from the main questionnaire.

DB stated that the local community do not want the wind farm.

LM stated that a survey was conducted locally independent of RES which showed there was some support for the wind farm and it was therefore untrue to say that everyone is against it.

PC noted that he does not have a problem with wind farms but has a problem with the one RES is proposing and trying to force on three local properties.

LD explained, as she had done so at previous meetings that many factors are taken in to account when selecting a possible site for a wind farm; not just the proximity to the road

AR stated that that it is difficult for people to comment on the wind farm unless they have seen all the information.

LD agreed and understands that some people need more information than others.

AR stated that there is evidence that shows that wind farm de-value house prices and asked if RES accepts this.

LD noted that it is a subjective matter - some people are pro-wind farms and some are against and this will therefore influence whether people choose to live near a wind farm or not.

LD said she had been handed a letter at the beginning of the meeting by a local resident regarding house prices.

PC explained the letter he received from an Associate at Strutt & Parker (Estate Agents) regarding wind farms and house prices and handed copies of the letter to the group. The letter notes there has been several studies on house prices carried out by pro-wind and anti-wind groups and explained in the Associate's experience and personal view that wind farms do affect house prices.

BM asked if RES had any further meetings planned with other organisations in the local area similar to what was held with the Kintyre Way.

RM said that RES had no further meetings in place at present.

AR asked if RES could clarify the structure of the organisation.

LD explained that in the UK, RES develops, constructs and operates wind farms.

AR asked what RES's association is with the Sir Robert McAlpine group.

LD explained that RES is a privately owned British company that grew out of Sir Robert McAlpine. Renewable Energy Systems Limited is the main operating company in relation to wind assets in the UK.

AR asked who the landowner is for the Freasdail site.

LD said that it is an absentee landowner. LD asked why AR wanted to know. She added that it was not her place to give out this information and that RES are the representatives for the proposed wind farm.

AR said that this information could be found out.

MP asked if groups within the community approached RES regarding funding would RES listen to them.

LD agreed that RES would listen and would be happy to meet them.

RR noted that some groups get funding from the West Kintyre Wind Farm trust.

DB stated that this is different as the wind farms have been approved whereas the funding for the Kintyre Way came from a wind farm that has not been consented.

LM stated that the funding of the Kintyre Way is separate from the planning application and the organisation can still object to the wind farm if they want to.

AR asked if RES has a grid connection.

LD said that RES does not have a connection yet but has started discussions with the grid operator. RES will submit an application for a grid connection post planning.

CS asked if there will be lights on top of the wind turbines.

LD said that the turbines will have infra red lights that would not be seen by the naked eye. Information about this is in the landscape chapter of the environmental statement.

### **3. Date of next meeting**

It was agreed by the group that a further meeting would be beneficial in 3-4 months time in case people have any further questions.

Post meeting note: The next meeting will be held on February 25, 2013, Whitehouse Village Hall, 7:30pm.

### **4. AOB**

There was no AOB.