

Clashindarroch Wind Farm Proposals

Open Meeting

Thursday, 18th November, 2004

Minutes/Notes

1. Chairman's Welcome and Introduction - Lilian Cameron

Welcome to everyone including our councillor, Joanna Strathdee, Friends of the Clash: Vicky Spencer, Jim Duffus, Allan Cherry, Richard Hammock and Lynn Rutter (the latter two had put up the fine display on Wind Farms), also welcome to representatives from AMEC, Alison Daugherty and Tom Brinnicombe.

Speeches would be allowed uninterrupted for maximum of 10 mins., pause for tea and written questions to be handed to her. All would be recorded if not time. Request to sign in on list with addresses, preferably e-mail, if a copy of notes of this meeting wanted, also requested donations towards the expenses of the evening in box provided (v. inadequate sum! AF)

2. Arguments for Wind Farms - Nick Carrol

(circulated sheaf of papers on 'Sticks' - images to show true cost of energy e.g. Iraq Kuwait war, Chernobyl & oil spills etc.)

- not an expert but interested in energy for a number of yrs. since visit to Centre for Alternative Energy in Wales.
- line drawings, still available from Alison Daugherty, who assures us, contrary to rumour, are not 'adjusted'.
- survey results presented by Amec seemed typical of results found elsewhere.
- meeting before Marr Committee in Stewarts Hall appalled him. Felt facts were misrepresented e.g. about possibility of hearing 'a deep thrumming sound in Rhynie' - only regret was not speaking but sent a letter to Huntly Express.
- checked his feelings against his neighbours, found them to be mainly in agreement; AMEC's survey had found roughly 70% in favour, so wrong to say 'everyone was against it'
- surely issues of road disruption, effects on water purity, salmon etc. can be resolved through dialogue and action e.g. efficient silt traps can be made to preserve water courses, as suggested by an ex forestry civil engineer friend.
- reality is that the generation of power by other means will happen.
- cost of energy has risen very dramatically for oil, gas and electricity e.g. oil to \$55 a barrel, generator diesel was 8p/litre in 1991, now 31p/litre - will cost more in the future - next year Britain to be a net importer of gas - do we have a sustainable future?
- Russian parliament approved the global climate treaty, just waiting Putin's signature.
- change is coming and fast - we are choosing the method e.g. wind v nuclear, but possible contamination is a serious threat - the 'backyard' of some energy forms is very large e.g. Chernobyl and Dounraey - there will always be a cost to our energy needs.
- too often we see energy as a right - will we have shorter, more miserable lives - this happens overseas
- to us the cost may just be expense but with decrease of fossil fuels we may see more conflict, like Iraq.
- our wind park is one small step towards a better future if we think globally
- renewables are not a waste of time
- selfish to think of it as a blot on the landscape - ('Carrot' pages handed out with pics of turbines)
- can think of it, not as an industrial blot on a rural landscape, but as a thing of beauty
- not a wind farm but a 'wind park'.

3. 'Why I supported the Clashindarroch Wind Farm Proposal' - Joanna Strathdee, local councillor

- background given on the limits of the power of Aberdeenshire Council to give consent for the proposals to go ahead, only acted as consultants to the Scottish Executive
- they paid a site visit, had a public meeting at Stewarts Hall before the Marr Committee.
- views were collated and forwarded to Aberdeenshire Council.
- Scottish Executive also had their own consultants.
- people's main worries were expressed in the conditions which she forwarded and considered would protect residents
- had Aberdeenshire Council sent a flat refusal to the proposals, conditions would not have been possible
- Aberdeenshire Council recommended the final decision be deferred until a national strategy had been agreed.
- the area is in mostly Tier 4 with a small part in Tier 3
- she went through 303 letters of objection twice - found 1/3 from well out with Aberdeenshire, some written twice, some had no name and address.

- can argue for a different way forward but all come with detrimental effects, the more remote the greater the impact in reaching the national grid.
- the decisions were taken in Westminster and Aberdeenshire Council have a duty to implement them.
- she supports offshore wind turbines and community owned wind farms.
- house builders should be encouraged to use environmentally 'better methods' e.g. use of solar panels.
- biomass burners have a problem of supply.
- we can't take more and more fossil fuels - the supply is finite.
- onshore wind farms is the only immediately available method.
- the subject was debated in Parliament, with the Scottish Executive being asked by MSPs to take an active lead in developing alternative methods of producing renewable energy.
- the Scottish Executive will respond on this in due course.

4. Visual Impact on Glass - Anne Forbes

- 'a horrendous blot on the landscape of some of Britain's most beautiful scenery' words of Prince Charles quoted in a Sunday paper this summer
- gave impetus for a brief survey of 34 people round Glass this August, to find out local views - 31/34 were strongly against the wind farm proposals (i.e. 91%) - the above words echoed what they felt.
- this is an exceptionally beautiful area - described in an article on the Aberdeenshire Towns Partnership Scheme on front pg. of Huntly Express on 24 Sept. as 'one of the most attractive areas in Northern Europe' - we should protect it.
- it is the wild unspoilt scenery that attracts visitors and also those who chose to live here - it is what is special about Scotland - as anyone in the rest of Europe, or elsewhere, will tell you when you say where you come from.
- some residents of Glass met Malcolm Bruce, our MP, and Nora Radcliffe, our MSP, on their summer tour of their constituency at Glass School in August to express their concerns, including the visual impact of the unusually tall turbines (over 100 m) looming over our beautiful landscape.
- MB advised not opposing wind farms in principle, as that argument already lost and he was personally in favour of wind farms, nor abandonment of this one in particular as area already zoned for a wind farm - advised honing in on specific concerns, to try to negotiate a reduction in scale of the project & oppose construction of the more offensive turbines, to write to Scottish Executive - several did this.
- Malcolm Bruce and Nora Radcliffe also wrote on our behalf re problems of the new access road not on original plans, effects on the river system and the visual impact on Beldorney Castle.
- Visual impact is not deemed a valid argument in general - however, we are lucky to have an 'A' listed building of national and international architectural and historical importance as an early (mid 16th century) and an outstanding example of a Z plan Scottish tower house, the 1st in the North East.
- Historic Scotland wrote to Scottish Exec. pointing: important feature of the castle is its attractive rural setting in undulating landscape of Deveron Valley, it is of special historic and architectural interest & enriches the scenic quality of this landscape, that 9 of the turbines by virtue of their proximity, exposed location, height & appearance would considerably detract from the landscape setting of the castle.
- 'as such the proposals would fail to preserve the setting of a category A listed building & would be contrary to the Planning Act 1997 (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Section 59; Gov. planning advice on the historic environment as set out in the National Planning Policy Guidelines NPPG 18 para. 12 & 43 & the memorandum of Guidance on listed buildings & conservation areas 1998 Appendix 1 para 10.1.0.
- in view of all this, Historic Scotland wished to register its objection to the proposed wind farm development and requested that amendments be sought to reposit or deleting 9 of the turbines in order to safeguard the setting of the castle.
- although it is apparently invalid to argue about the visual impact on us, we can only hope the objections from Historic Scotland will benefit us all who care about preserving the integrity of this exceptionally lovely valley.

5. Access Road to and From the Site - Fiona Hill

- speaking on the upgrading of access routes to & from the Clash. wind farm site and the impact of building & constructing new roads needed.
- AMEC assumption is that the area is not one of great natural beauty - mostly located within Aberdeenshire 'Council's Tier 4 'area of least sensitivity' with a small part in a tier 3 area - with visual impact minimised by complex topography.
- 'has potential to be an excellent wind farm location'
- large area to the west and SW marked as 'an area of great landscape value' and NW, S & E are 'areas of

regional landscape significance'.

- adjoins a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Area of Conservation.
- part of the route actually crosses a SSSI at Craigs of Succoth.
- will be necessary to improve, extend & create new access roads.
- spoke to Jim Craig of Aberdeenshire Council, Stonehaven (Marr Committee) in relation to upgrading existing public rds. He has met with AMEC & sees 3 main issues: haulage, routing & traffic management.
- no information had been presented to Roads Dept since original planning application in 2003.
- Aberdeenshire Council have indicated that disruption will be spread over 3 routes (2 off A97 Huntly-Rynie) which will have the heaviest use, bringing in steel, concretes & aggregates to build new on-site roads - an onsite quarry to dig aggregates would significantly reduce movement.
- Edinglassie road off the A920 is AMEC's most direct route off A96 & thus the preferred route for the turbines as fairly straight, with few bends.
- no Council plans to alter existing roads - AMEC say 'some straightening' may be required.
- no info. on how an 800-tonne crane will be transported to site to lift the turbines into position
- decision on which port will be used to bring turbines: Buckie, Aberdeen or Inverness to be made after consent.
- delivery of 47 turbines likely to require gigantic lorries passing our homes on 752 occasions, an average of 6 trips/day, 6 days/wk for an estimated 8 months.
- police will manage road management, for school bus, postie and then one way traffic for parts of day, inevitably involving longer journeys as the alternative.
- AMEC obliged to maintain fabric of road, to upgrade if necessary.
- if land purchase required either AMEC to liaise with land owners or Scottish Exec. to compulsory purchase under Roads Act 1984 - widening not required on straight parts.
- all residents along Edinglassie road have private water supplies & are concerned about possible pollution caused by construction work and heavy traffic.
- also concerned about danger to pipelines, overhead power lines and telephone lines.
- Aberdeenshire Council say residents should discuss their concerns individually with AMEC
- new access road not on original plan - leaves public road at Malach, goes through Grummack Forest (owned by Broadland Properties, managed by Bidwells of Perth).
- main problem it goes through an SSSI at the Craigs of Succoth. Would be an offence to undertake management works on an SSSI.
- allowed under certain circumstances: formal letter sent to Scottish Natural Heritage requesting permission (with details of potentially damaging operations and how would mitigate) and receipt of formal letter of consent from SNH.
- New Impact Assessment Ecological report details possible effects on ecology e.g. loss of 40 old slow growing Junipers. AMEC proposes to replace with new cuttings when work completed - is this good enough for an SSSI? - don't know if these letters sent or received.
- AMEC proposes fencing off 100 m in length and 10 m in width for access road activity through SSSI - topsoil would be taken, stored and later replaced but would not cover whole of revealed subsoil - would need reseeded..
- report says it is probably soil erosion could wash soil down slope in heavy rain affecting private water supplies & affect important burns feeding the Deveron.

Important Question: - as the Clashindarroch Forest is one of the largest and most productive commercial, man-made forests in Scotland, good timber extraction roads already exist - as the wind farm is predominantly planned for the east side of the Grummack, WHY improve, extend and create new access roads through the Glass Community, the Grummack Hill and through a Site of Special Scientific Interest, which will prominently scar the hillside and which will have little or no benefit to the Deveron side in the future?

6. The Likely effects of the wind farm construction on the river system - Malcolm Hay

- talking just on R. Deveron issues as a member of the District Salmon Fisheries Board and a founding trustee of the River Deveron Trust (also a landowner, farmer and resident).
- Clashindarroch a controversial site from the start - like many land owners, approached by many development companies, he rejected them as his hills too small scale, pointed to Clash and told 'Oh no, much too controversial'!
- Deveron Board is concerned: - many beats could be affected as many letters from fishermen saying they are horrified and may not continue to come - rates higher or lower depending on the value - Board will lose rateable income & have less to spend on river.
- report by Geoffrey Sinclair, landscape architect, English Nature and for the Protection of Rural Wales: criticises the EIS choosing the site and questions why it would be permitted, with the relative enormity of the

visual effects, says the scale of the turbines in excess of anything else in the UK - creating an industrial type landscape - will be highly intrusive, detrimental to the landscape and tourist industry - will be conspicuous on the ridge line of the Deveron and the Bogie, where there is open moor land and a natural and harmonious landscape at present.

- Hydrological consequences:

- road building will cause a massive amount of soil displacement - much silt will be deposited in the river, covering eggs - fine dust settles on gravel and cements up resulting in fish eggs being swept away,
- turbidity (cloudiness) severely impacts on the ability of fish to feed and forage - can wipe out whole systems - would imply restocking from scratch.

- could dam up the streams with straw bales, but no research done on the impact of blocking of feeder streams for 5 year construction period - no real research done on the impact on the river.

- Deveron Trust commissioned a report by Professor Soulsby, Head of Geography at Aberdeen University, on the hydrological consequences of the Clash project, none of which addressed in the EIS.

- main issue: forestry activity on that hillside had a disastrous effect - this will re exacerbate another disaster - no silt traps can withstand severe storms like the rain in the last 2 months (1 in 10 yr storms - have had 3 in last 5 years) - could have massive result.

- account not taken of clear felling on wet peat uplands - in Galway a major consequence of a wind farm was a huge bog created with peat sliding into and polluting the River Shannon for 22 miles.

Question:- if wind farm to be built, why not limit the effects to the Bogie side alone, i.e. one side of the hill, to limit wiping out the entire salmon population in the whole of the catchment area?

7. A View From the Other Side - Allan Cherry

- Had 12 yrs in forestry commission, 8 yrs in contracting work, now working in paper mill - view from 'the man in the street'.

- at first thought 'Why not?' - we need other sources of power.

- started looking for info. on why do it: global warming & running out of natural resources.

- re Global warming: premise is derived from 1 piece of data which generated a computer model in US.

- since then other models have been done which claim that the original use of data and the data itself was inaccurate and wrong - same data run by these bodies revealed varieties in climate from the Middle Ages onwards - Global Warming is not the reason.

- re renewable resources (wind farms in particular): - why not compare 2 like systems e.g. look at Danish system - last report 2004 shows we are going down wrong road.

- wind power shown to be unreliable - inter connectors with other EU countries to practically give away power at times of high productivity and to import power from nuclear, coal and gas when output from wind farms low.

- Denmark had had the cheapest electricity, but now has the most expensive in Europe, twice the cost of ours - why has our Government not looked at the figures? Power from Wind Farms is 3X the cost of a conventional power station.

- where does the power come from when the wind drops? - a conventional power station, which will still burn energy in standby mode.

- Scotland has worst record for winter deaths in Europe. Land owners, developers, share holders might gain from wind power generated electricity but people's lives will be more at risk from the higher cost of electricity that will result.

8. Nora Radcliffe's Report on the Current Situation with the Scottish Executive - Anne Forbes

- Apologies from NR for not being able to attend as in Edinburgh on parliamentary business - grateful for attempts to find a date and time she could manage - hopes report helpful, looks forward to feedback.

- because of large scale of this WF project (installed capacity of more than 50 Mw), is dealt with directly by Scottish Executive, with local Planning Authority a statutory consultee, allowing elected Councillors and local people to make views known & expertise of local planning officers utilised.

- final report going to Scottish Ministers for decision delayed due to 3 further ecological reports submitted by AMEC earlier in the year a) a mammal survey b) ecological survey of access route & a bird survey - sent out for consultation to the statutory consultees (Moray Council, Aberdeenshire Council, SNH, SEPA & RSPB) with comments to be in by 5 October, 2004.

- Any representations by members of the public after 5 October treated as late and may not be considered if it goes to a Public Enquiry, although could be at discretion of the Reporter.

- Moray Council sought & was granted an extension of deadline because next meeting not till 15 December.

- This gives a 2nd window of opportunity to get comments on the supplementary reports into the system by addressing them to the Moray Council to be taken into account at their meeting on 15 December - would be

passed on as part of Moray Council's submission, thus in the system in the event of a Public Enquiry.

- all representations made earlier to Scottish Executive, Aberdeenshire & Moray Council are in the system already - will be taken into consideration when report prepared for Scottish Ministers.
- detailed work on preparing report for Ministers likely to begin after Christmas & New Year break.
- time scale likely to be about 3 months but she has been invited to check progress end of January.
- in course of preparing report, officers collate all the info. presented, consider objections, consider whether can be met either by applicant agreeing to make changes or by imposing conditions.
- four options available: a) Refusal b) Where objections cannot be met by negotiation/condition, a Public Enquiry c) Consent given d) Consent given, with conditions attached.
- officers cannot say yet which is likely, as still have to collate & consider all the info.
- hope this up-date useful and helpful if people wish to comment on the supplementary reports & have not done so already (Note from Anne Forbes: these 3 supplementary ecological reports can be viewed in the Brander Library, she has copies which can be viewed ,can be obtained from: Alison Daugherty at AMEC: e-mail: Alison.Daugherty@amec.com or can seen on our new website: <http://www.glassclash.info>.)
- address to write to with comments before 15th Dec.: Alan Short, Development Control Manager, Environmental Service Dept., Moray Council, High St., Elgin, Moray, IV30 1BX).
- NR will be happy to report back any further info. gleaned at end of January & try to answer any questions anyone has in the meantime.
- on wider policy issues: it is necessary to rely on on-shore wind power in near future to meet our renewable energy targets, because wind turbines are the developed technology available at present.
- pressure to build new nuclear power station will be hard to resist unless we can demonstrate in next 2-5 yrs renewable energy targets can be met -is superficially attractive as a 'clean' source of energy, but still has concerns about safe storage & nuclear waste disposal.
- wave & tidal resource around our coasts makes much more economic & environmental sense for Scotland - we are in vanguard of developing marine technologies - need to keep that lead as we move from experimental to commercial production - the European Marine Energy Centre in Orkney, where these devices can be tested & developed in a purpose built facility, should help us do that - we should exploit this huge indigenous resource, become suppliers of this technology to the world (as Denmark has done with wind technology) - clear goals which will help economic success for Scotland & meeting Scottish & UK environmental commitments.

1 November, 2004

9. AMEC Update on the Proposals - Alison Daugherty & Tom Brinicombe

- Aberdeenshire Council voted not to object to the proposal in January.
- Moray objected on grounds of landscape and visual impact in May.
- AMEC| took 6 months to compile the 3 part new ecological reports requested by the Scottish Executive - can supply copies if people get in touch (Tel: 01434 611300)(e-mail: Alison.Daugherty@amec.com).
- Aberdeenshire has made general comments on the reports - Moray Council are discussing it on 15th Dec. - comments from the public should reach them by then.
- if turned down, technically should go to a Public Enquiry - is fair to say, it will go to a Public Enquiry.
- will be considered by Scottish Exec. by 7th January
- Public Enquiry would take 9 months to a yr. - with opportunity for public to participate.
- visual impact is a subject you can't argue about, is subjective - you can either consider the turbines monstrous or beautiful.

10. Working Together as a Community and the Advantages to be Gained - Bob Yuill

- some in community will be affected much more than others, esp. S. side of river who will have imm. environment altered to take heavy traffic with effects for a couple of yrs., also others who use the Clash in other ways than forestry.
- different opinions within our close community have to be reconciled.
- have to deal with developers (a global corporation with all its resources) & the installers (whoever they may be) - should not have to do so on our own.
- no support or guidance from Scottish Exec., Enterprise Agency or the Council - all culpable.
- Scot. Exec. said favoured 'community wind farms' without slightest idea what it means.
- Highlands & Islands provide a guidance 'pack' to their communities.
- we as a community must work together (as are well used to doing) to ensure impact on those most affected is minimised, don't have to deal with issues on our own and how the community may make long term gains, without twinges of conscience!
- some facts & figures: plan is for 47 turbines ea. with 1.75 MW capacity, totalling 82.25 MW. - total investment

- about £750k per MW capacity - circa £62 million investment for a large wind farm (can be up to £900 per MW installed, depending on e.g. cost of grid connection & size of development).
- predicted energy output is 216,000 MW generating at 30% capacity - annual ave. min. profit before interest & tax £6.95/annum on a 20 yr life (in today's money, inflation adjusted) (extract from IPA Energy Consulting report to the Highland Council 30 Dec. 2003).
- AMEC says the Clash an 'excellent wind resource' so likely to have a capacity of 35% or better, operation design is for 25 yrs. & connection to grid easy, so profit to AMEC could easily exceed £7m/a, more likely nearer £10m.
- other main gainers: Forestry Commission, who own the land 3-4% of gross income (not the profit) for use of their site: £175,000 gross income per installed MW is 82.25 MW x 3.5% = £503,781 annual rental value - no point in growing trees and can tick boxes on their 'balanced scorecard' for environmental impact etc. - Council will earn rateable value on behalf of Aberdeenshire rate payers, Chancellor will get his cut & Scot. Exec. will meet a big chunk of renewable target - i.e. it is a fair bet it will go ahead - too lucrative for all concerned.
- for damage limitation, we must work together as a community to ensure those directly affected not lone voices & to ensure AMEC deliver on their promises, and we maximise benefit to the community from the developers.
- should aim for £1,200 per installed MW per annum = £98,700 p.a. income for the community.
- Dervaig community on Mull are developing own wind farm - will provide £116k over 1st yrs. rising to over £200k/a from an 8 MW scheme.
- how to handle such funds? - trust fund can't guarantee democracy - suggest a 'Co-operative for the Benefit of the Community' registered as an Industrial Provident Society with the Financial Services Authority, can apply for 'Exempt Charity' status with Inland Revenue' - every person in communities affected (incl. out with Glass) can become a member & subscribe to £1 voting share - committee elected and use of funds agreed at members' meetings by majority vote.
- possible use of funding could be: putting money aside for eventual replacement of village hall, existing groups e.g. superb community association, youth club, bowlers, rural, badminton could apply for funds; Kirk has some of the finest stained glass in world & badly needs restoring, footbridges over Deveron, access to Broadband, public transport; also to improve heating & energy conservation & other environmental improvement.
- need meeting to give a mandate to put the mechanism in place to negotiate as a community to ensure those most affected not alone, that have a coherent negotiating position with the developers & installers & provide our own community with a legacy for the future.
- Vote taken showing general approval for the idea.

Questions: see separate sheet on new website: www.glassclash.info

Chairman's Summary - Lilian Cameron

- Nick Carroll spoke on why disappointed at people's reactions to wind farm proposal at public meeting in Stewart's Hall and spoke on why wind farms are beneficial to wider community.
- Joanna Strathdee took us through the procedures of the local council and said she favoured community owned wind farms as a better option, read some of her list of 30 conditions sent to Aberdeenshire Council.
- Anne Forbes spoke on the visual impact on this very beautiful valley, which none of us could argue with - she spoke of meeting with MP Malcolm Bruce and MSP Nora Radcliff & their advice; also Historic Scotland's objections re Beldorney Castle as an 'A' listed building.
- Fiona Hill spoke on the problems of the access road.
- Malcolm Hay on the possible pollution of the river.
- Alan Cherry - spoke interestingly on the wider issues and challenged the perceived opinions.
- Nora Radcliffe's Report was very precise on procedures with the Scottish Executive, informing us its current situation, awaiting reactions to the new ecological reports from the Moray Council after its meeting on the 15th December and of the need for us to lodge objections with them before then.
- AMECs Alison Daugherty gave us an update and an idea of time scale. Her opinion was that it probably will go to a Public Enquiry.
- Bob Yuill spoke on the way he feels the community could benefit - we can all respect the views of our neighbours. If given the go ahead, do a damage limitation and can get advantages if we gain control of funds by setting up a co-op. Can be a decision made now. (Vote was overwhelmingly in favour).
- Interesting Questions:
 1. David MacKay said the committee should be a voice to point out potential problems (could think of hundreds) and have a good line with councils, developers and installers to channel concerns.
 2. Everyone should write to Moray Council themselves.

3. Those wanting AMEC's report on water can e-mail Tom Brinnicombe: tom.brinnicombe@amec.com
4. A collective response to Moray Council was proposed - individual letters were thought more effective. Anne Forbes prepared to receive copies to keep as a record.

A Vote of Thanks was proposed for Lilian Cameron for being an excellent Chairman.

The meeting closed at 10.00 p.m.

Anne Forbes,
November, 25th 2004