

Heriot Community Council

Minutes of Zoom meeting 26th January 2022, 6:00pm

Present: John Williams, Helen Brinkworth, Frank Connelly, Sue Sharp, Gavin Whittaker, Cllr. Aitchison, Cllr. Scott, Jenny Mushlin (Stow and Fountainhall CC), Duncan (Energiekontor) plus 4 members of the public.

Apologies: Cllr Anderson. Cllr. Jardine

In order to allow external contributors to provide information without having to listen to local issues, windfarm updates were dealt with first.

1. Windfarm updates

a. Wull Muir

Duncan (Energiekontor) provided a follow-up from his representation in October. He has been letter dropping to some properties. Not all have been done as he 'did not have enough printed'. The remaining properties will be dealt with in time.

He restated that the principle reason for previous refusal was closeness to escarpment and as more land is available to them the proposed turbines will move significantly closer to Heriot in order to protect the views from Midlothian.

Environmental studies have been in progress since October and work on noise impacts have started, but they are not ready to share methodology with John as requested previously.

A range of studies have been redone, along with new photography. Content is being uploaded to the website and will be advertised in the local press along with a promise to inform HCC when complete.

Energiekontor will update HCC with date when they expect to make a submission

A resident complained that the new planned positions will be visible from his house, in addition to visibility from his property, approximately 1000m from the turbines, and expressed concern about the effects on livestock. Duncan claimed that his visibility tools indicates that the turbines won't be visible from the resident's house, but will be from his curtilage. This will require confirmation. It was stated that there was a mistake in item 2.3 of the proposal notice, where it claims that the turbines won't be visible from any large communities. As the turbines will be visible from Heriot it was questioned how 'large communities' were defined.

It was again pointed out that EK have a history of increasing turbine heights after obtaining planning permission. Corn Harrow windfarm was cited as a recent example. EK applied for

135m and have increased the heights to 180m on appeal. Duncan claimed that all occasions of similar changes took place in Dumfries and Galloway, and that costs went up and the sizes had to increase to compensate. He gave a partial assurance that increasing the height was "*not our intent*". It was contested that Duncan had claimed that the project was at the edge of viability at the October meeting and that, should planning permission be granted for a development with, for example, one fewer turbine, that would require EK to increase the turbine heights to compensate. Duncan claimed that he had said in October that the project was not a significant one to EK.

Visibility concerns were further expressed from Borthwick Hall area residents, along with impacts on visibility from upland areas. There were serious concerns that a small community can be severely impacted by a large wind farm. The Carcant windfarm has effectively closed off some areas to horse riders because of safety concerns around horse reactions to the turbines. This proposal would increase the area that is effectively closed off to horse riders along a core path.

The impact on trees was questioned, but Duncan claimed that there would be no requirement for large scale felling.

Access to the site would be via Carcant or access from A7 near Falahill.

Compared to the previous project in the same area, residential and amenity views are far more from significantly impacted in the Heriot area, particularly Nettlingflat.

A question was raised from a resident about compensation for loss of value of property. Duncan claimed a lack of any clear link on property values, but the resident claimed evidence supports impacts on house prices.

Greystone Knowe

A request for the date for statutory submissions to the end of July was submitted to ECU from SBC. Responses from CCs would be required by February.

Jenny Mushlin (Stow and Fountainhall CC) reported on impacts from the proposed development on the area. These include:

- Noise higher than 35dB.
- Visual impacts on Fountainhall, Crookston, Nettlingflat, among others. But there would be no visibility in School area.
- No assessment of the impacts on Fountainhall had been carried out.
- There would be significant impacts on farm properties, including private properties adjacent to the development.
- Roads access was a significant concern from Fountainhall. A large turning circle had been proposed at Fountainhall and at Brockhouse to accommodate the very long HGVs required for the turbines. The response from Coriolis was reported to have been extremely poor and unhelpful.
- Old stage road would be used for access, but no road maps had been provided by Coriolis, who stated that they would not provide details until after permission is

granted. Any road changes would almost certainly require long road closures with significant diversions and impacts on pedestrians.

- Stow and Fountainhall CC had complained of an almost total lack of communication or consultation from Coriolis.
- The size and scale of the proposal is leading to industrialisation of the rural landscape
- Scottish government targets have an impact via onshore windfarm targets
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Heriot CC cannot actively support one side or the other prior to a planning application. Greystone Knowe, however, is vulnerable to a number of objections that can be identified. If people wish to coordinate objections, they are welcome to do that.

Even by the Scottish Government's own targets, there is no requirement for more wind turbines as there is sufficient capacity in the system with existing and consented windfarms. Concerns were expressed that imposing views of the turbines from the A7 could distract drivers, particularly on winding roads. It was agreed that the impact on Fountainhall is atrocious.

A joint response with Stow and Fountainhall CC to Greystone Knowe was agreed.

Sue Sharp left the meeting at 7:00pm, Jenny Mushlin left the meeting at 7:10pm

2. Previous minutes - agreed
 - a. A meeting with police about quad bike thefts had been proposed, and Sue was checking with farmers to see if there is interest.
 - b. Storm Arwen – Scottish Power saying that lessons will be learnt.
 - c. Harry Scott – following up with SBC on A7 and Thefts.
 - d. Christmas tree – there had been minor positive response, but it was felt that it may be time to review its position in future.
3. Police report - nothing relevant to Heriot.
4. Reports from councillors –
 - a. Cllr Aitchison reported that a proposed meeting with Network Rail and John Lamont was cancelled at last minute by NR.
 - b. New hedges on the B709, raised at the last meeting, were to be cut back by SBC.
 - c. Drainage at church complicated but being dealt with.
 - d. Cllr Scott requested that, if anyone's electricity was cut off for more than 48 hours following the storms, and had not heard from power company they should contact him.
 - e. A7 accidents at telephone exchange were claimed to be 'not excessive' in relation to the number of vehicles using the road, although they are excessive in relation to other parts of the same road.
5. John had prepared a letter responding to the Scottish government windfarm policy. The text needed some minor adjustment, but it was agreed that it should be recirculated via email with amendments before being agreed and submitted.

6. Underpass – a meeting had been agreed with SBC representative at 10am on Friday.
7. Bus shelter – No progress. The sale of the land immediately adjacent to the bus stop had complicated the plans and clarity on what was happening there would be required before anything practical could be done.
8. A request had been sent to the CC to assist with the condition of the Shoestanes track in light of the refusal of all residents that use it to contribute financially to its upkeep. However, this is a private track and repairs would be highly expensive. If financial assistance were provided to fix the road, a large number of other similar tracks would be entitled to make a similar request. As a private track, there was no obvious way forward and no obvious source of public funds to assist in its upkeep.
9. AOB
 - a. The monies paid to Sue, Helen and Frank for assisting with the Greystone Knowe exhibition were being donated to charity.
 - b. Scottish Water doing work on drains in the village. SBC should be contacted if there is contamination near a playground.
 - c. A complaint was submitted that the bus shelter at Crookston is in a poor state due to rubbish dumping.

Meeting finished at 7:40