

## **ELCC Meeting Minutes – 25<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

### **Virtual meeting (Webex)**

#### **Present:**

Colin Bloomfield (Webex Host); Chris Bruce (Chair); Cris Thacker; Janice Hanvidge; Anne Lyall;, Donna Collins, Julia Harrison, Paul McLennan.

#### **Apologies**

Janette MacDonald

#### **Visitors attending (part meeting)**

Elouise Smith, Louise Davis, Sam MacMillan (SSE Renewables), Patrick Keenan (JM Mcleod) Rob Fryer (Community Windpower)

#### **Previous Minutes**

Minutes from 14<sup>th</sup> July were approved pending a minor amendment to the Treasurer's report (Proposed JaniceH, Seconded CT)

#### **Items**

##### **1. Berwick Bank and Marr Bank Windfarm projects (SSE Renewables)**

Both these projects are located in the outer Firth of Forth - around 50km from the local coastline. If approved they are likely to deliver around 3.2 GW electricity with over 200 turbines. This is roughly the amount required to power every home in Scotland. Connections for Berwick bank will be at Branxston near Thurston Manor.

The project will require an offshore substation which in turn will feed one or possibly two onshore locations depending on the cables required (Marr Bank is likely to need an additional substation) There is not likely to be a massive visual impact difference between the two different types of substation that may be specified (AC versus HVDC – the latter being a newer technology). Indicative locations are included in the application, but the final locations of these are really more dependent on future survey and other technical assessments.

The projects are likely to have a design life of around 30 years, but possibly likely to last up to 40- 50 years in practical terms, hence the leases applied for will be for 50 years.

An environmental impact assessment has been completed for onshore impacts, and this has been submitted to East Lothian Council. Public consultation is already planned within the project plans, although currently these have been significantly disrupted by the Covid crisis.

Community benefits differ for offshore compared with onshore projects. These are planned to be discussed further into the project processes.

Marine Scotland have yet to issue their technical report, although this was imminent.

CB raised a question regarding transport infrastructure. In terms of the proposed works involving the installation of a temporary road for construction traffic, which would normally be removed at the end of the windfarm project installation, CB questioned whether the construction road could be left and in future integrated as part of East Lothian Councils cycle way plans/initiatives. An additional, separate real need was also an underpass under the current A1. LD commented that this had not been specifically considered but could well be considered in the community requirement response to the planning applications (**Action SSE**)

## **2. Community Windpower**

Rob Fryer (CWP Civils Director) and Patrick Keenan (Senior Site Agent for RJ McCleod – the main works contractor) joined the meeting. Works are underway currently in terms of install of access tracks and so forth for Aikengall IIa additional turbines. The route to site for transport of the turbines are the same as previous projects and the turbines are due to be delivered around April/May 2021 from Siemens. RF commented that CWP are accruing funds due to transfer to ELCC & Oldhamstocks Community Association. Agreements have just been finalised with Co-path and Cove, other agreements are in various stages of progress.

It was noted no additional connection works were required of Aikengall IIa.

CB suggested that the liaison committee currently convened for other projects might serve as a mechanism for Aikengall IIa communications. PK commented that this would be a welcome suggestion. Additionally, RJ Mcleod sponsor local community projects directly through STEM and funding requests for any suitable projects. These could be raised at this forum for consideration.

PK commented that the current works revolve mainly around the ability to pour concrete for the turbine bases. This is very weather dependent, but construction traffic is largely focussed around Tuesdays and Thursdays typically between 6am and 6pm Monday to Thursday, using the route established already from Thurston Manor.

CT questioned whether there were job opportunities for local people. CT would forward details of local people who may have a 'CS Card' to PK for consideration (**Action CT**)

RF commented that contractors are briefed daily on safety issues and speed limits.

## **3. Matters arising**

Julia H commented local Liaison groups had now been set up and were generally working well. There were no major issues to report currently.

AL questioned whether Village Halls are re-opening. Currently, none are for any significant activities – certainly not for 'public' events. National Guidance from the Government was considered to be needed first, in order to then be able to access the implications for each location (**Action All ELCC members**).

CB asked whether DELAP had met since our last meeting and AL confirmed they had not, but were due to meet soon after this meeting date.

Julia H could not connect with the Torness Liaison virtual meeting (due to technical issues) but had subsequently contacted the site director for an update. He is changing roles/location and had given Julia contact details for his successor.

Julia H commented she had been sent example resilience plans for a number of areas, and these were available if required.

AL had attended the Viridor Liaison meeting and commented the medical waste was due to reduce very soon. The proposed new plastic polymer recycling facility plans were out for public consultation.

AL commented that Spott still had a speeding issue and that a recent survey had highlighted this. A key issue was speed limits not being adhered to. P McL suggested contacting Morag Haddow. (**Action AL**)

ColinB commented that speeding issues in Stenton were similar and that whilst the majority of drivers are entirely sensible, a very small percentage drove at quite ludicrous speeds, way above current signed speed limit restrictions. Paul McL commented he would highlight these issues and suggest speed monitoring loggers for both villages. (**Action PMcL** would request speed data loggers for surveys in the relevant villages)

Janice H commented that there is a derelict static caravan that has been vandalised in the Oldhamstocks area. JH had already contacted Gavin Ross and would forward the info to PMcL to see whether the council could help with its removal (**Action Janice H**)

Janice H asked PMcL whether the SPoC COVID responses from the villages had highlighted any issues around personal care assistance. PMcL answered that whilst an Options Appraisal had been requested some years ago, and reminders had been issued to provide a response, no work on this area had been done. One of the key issues was that care pay rates appear to be lower than other local businesses such as supermarkets, hence it is difficult to keep staff. A broader discussion and debate on approaches to care was required and a full steering group would be re-started very soon, which would look at rural care issues with a much broader remit than the previous Belhaven Review. (**Action PMcL**).

#### **Outstanding Actions carried over:**

CB had also had contact with Ruth Semple (Natural Power/Fred Olsen Renewables) to finalise agreements over Crystal Rig III. CB commented the nature final agreement depended whether FOR are moving to an agreement where ELCC take the primary decision over funding allocations, in which case the agreement would need to be with the new East Lammermuir Community Benefit Fund (once established) rather than ELCC (**Action CB**).

#### **4. Treasurers Report**

Owing to the Covid crisis, the next round of Crystal Rig Community Benefit funding applications would be considered at our November 24th 2020 meeting. It was proposed to plan to reopen applications in October and to issue application forms and info by email to village organisations then.

To date it was noted that ELCC COVID Support Funding totalling £11,171.42 had been utilised to date.

#### **5. COVID response/Support Fund**

JuliaH commented that no feedback had yet been received regarding the LINKS worker at Dunbar Practice, but this was thought to be actively progressing. (**Action Julia H** would check further).

CT commented he had not yet managed contact with the Thistle Foundation, so no update on LINKS/Wellbeing workers yet was available. (**Action CT** to follow up).

CB commented that Thistle provide Wellbeing Support, provides a more encompassing support function than the LINKS roles (which are more roles pointing people in the right direction of other support organisations). He believed current tender contracts for role vacancies are written specifying LINKS rather than Wellbeing type roles, although The Thistle Foundation is likely to be asked to tender.

Janice H reported that JMcD had not yet heard anything from Enjoy Leisure either verbally or after letter/email reminders. (**Action P McLennan** would contact Bill Axon directly)

#### **6. AOCB/ Carryover Actions**

From a previous meeting there was also a need to at least establish 'rough ball park costs' of Thistle Foundation type services on a part-time basis initially from Ross Grieve, recognising that there may also be other service providers. Ross had been contacted and an answer was awaited. (**Action CT**).

CT had made contact with the mental health worker in North Berwick High School supporting for youths in East Lothian last week but to date no reply had been received. This was being followed up. (**Action CT**).

CB commented the Dunbar Medical Practice had now advertised for a Links Worker post. It was thought there was an open tendering process for the service, and various organisations such as Thistle and Link would be tendering.

Previous meeting discussions had highlighted services such 'as exercise on prescription' can be an outcome from both mental health requirements as well as physical requirements for a patient. JMcD had emailed Bill Axon, General Manager of Enjoy Leisure, about exercise programs but no reply had been received at the date of this meeting (**Action JMcD**)

## **7. Date of next meeting**

6<sup>th</sup> October 7.30pm by Webex, or possibly in person at Spott Village Hall depending on Covid restrictions at the time. ColinB suggested meeting 'visitors' could continue to attend virtually, even if ELCC core members do manage to meet in person. This would be potentially a lot easier for occasional attendees.