

## East Lammermuir Electricity Infrastructure Developments

Meeting held by Fred Olsen Renewables with community representatives 9 November 2023

FOR currently operate a large number of wind turbines at Crystal Rig. The site – which includes a large substation linking to the National Grid - is accessed through East Lammermuir.

### Present

Fred Olsen; Kirsty Leiper, Kevin Burns, Julie Aitken

Community; Andy Collins, Fiona McGibbon, Jim McLaren, Chris Bruce

### Future development proposals

Kirsty opened the meeting by saying she had noticed that the timing of news about proposed developments was a concern to local communities, so she had invited Julie to join us.

Julie spoke about Fred. Olsen Renewables' plans to repower Crystal Rig I. This would likely involve the removal of the original 25 turbines and replacement with 10 taller (230m to tip) more efficient turbines producing more electricity than those installed in 2003. A planning application was likely to be submitted towards the end of 2024 as the CRI planning consent was for 25 years ending 2028.

A decision about Crystal Rig II would follow in 2035 or thereabouts. In general, windfarms will need to be re-powered as they reach the end of their lives just to maintain the current energy supply, in addition to new windfarms to increase capacity. This will become a continuous process.

There was a long and detailed discussion about the best way to preserve and enhance the habitat at Crystal Rig, and everyone agreed there must be research on this – or perhaps a need for more research to guide decisions. NPF4 requires newly consented windfarms – including those “re-powered” – to significantly enhance the environment where they are built. There is an opportunity here to go way beyond simply covering up old plinths and cables.

Julie also confirmed that FOR are looking at a possible Crystal Rig phase V, to the west of the existing turbines.

Fiona commented that the construction traffic on the road up from the A1 at Thurston – sharing the route with local residents and passing very close to many homes - all the way up to Crystal Rig will never be free of construction traffic. One phase ends, another begins.

Provision of an entirely off-road active travel paths network might offset the perpetual inconvenience to some extent. Kirsty said FOR will support the work to develop a Local Place Plan for East Lammermuir by Spring 2024.

In the meantime we need to focus on the best possible arrangements for construction-related traffic.

## Construction Traffic

Kevin confirmed that he has been liaising closely with NnG/EDF who are nearing the end of their construction phase at Crystal Rig. They have a lot of traffic movements at present and are actively sharing notes of local concerns with Kevin so that lessons can be learned.

Kevin noted that we have a unique opportunity to influence all developers who succeed in getting planning consent to build energy infrastructure in East Lammermuir. We can seek to go beyond the typical agreements with only one developer, and should ensure the proposed Charter is a tool to promote best practice.

For example, where more than one developer is using a road, there is scope to work with ELC to ensure the road is left in a better condition than it was when the work started – going beyond the usual agreement to re-instate.

The construction traffic working for Fred. Olsen Renewables at Crystal Rig IV can be a model of good practice for other developers to build on.

Kevin made the following proposals; some selected comments from community reps follow in italics.

- FOR reviewing the use of Trackers in all their site HGV vehicles going to and from the site. This will allow FOR to review if HGV's are adhering to the speed limits put in place for the site traffic. *Community reps support this idea but asked FOR to consider extending this to all site traffic including vehicles taking workers up to site – and/or use a minibus to take folk up FOR would monitor trackers – 3 strikes and driver off site.*
- No convoys of HGV large vehicles to or from the site. *Community reps asked for this to be reconsidered – some advantages to only having to wait for one lot of vehicles to pass. Need to discuss with broader affected community*
- 20/30mph speed limit from A1 junction to the site entrance-(See map attached for discussions at Thursday's meeting) *Maybe a good idea for all traffic during construction phase, need to discuss with affected community (including farmers) May be more effective if community campaign for speed limit.*
- Regular resident/community meetings with FOR and the main contractor to review traffic management status. These meetings will be scheduled in advance and occur at regular intervals.
- Dedicated direct contact details for FOR individual to review all issues and any incidents reported. *Community asked for this to include 24 hour staffed phone during abnormal loads movements*
- Text message service to highlight additional traffic or possible delays on the road (This has been implemented at other construction sites with some success)

- Full road survey pre-commencement of works. This is part of the current planning conditions. The road survey provides baseline data to ensure the road is returned to its pre-construction condition once the site work is completed. (FOR and ELC to implement) *See above – community reps asked for greater ambition, road should be fabulous when work is done. Need a broader discussion about widening road / passing places / stronger underpinning / verges / drainage. Noted a low speed limit would mean less damage to the roads. Developer forum may assist in co-ordination where several developers using same road.*
- Regular review of road conditions and spot maintenance throughout the project work with the council roads department to repair any site traffic related damage.
- Traffic Management risk registers/log to report incidents and near misses. To be reviewed by the council/community each month. *Agreed, but prevention is better than cure*

Andy had brought a location map and printed off and marked up the swept path analysis drawings and these were discussed in general terms.

Fiona asked for:

A list of trees and hedges affected

A walk along the route with FOR.

Details of how vegetation will be restored

Involvement of ELC Trees Officer

#### Next steps

1. Fiona offered to walk the route with relevant FOR staff to review which trees and bushes are to be cut back or (hopefully not) removed to facilitate passing of larger turbine parts. Kevin will set this up, other community reps welcome to join. January ?
2. Kevin will notify if any additional land is acquired to facilitate passing of larger turbine parts.
3. Kevin will provide a Habitat Management Plan
4. Agreed we need to convene a meeting of all households directly affected by this work to hammer out a majority view on these proposals. ELCC to lead on this. To include Woodhall residents as well as Thurston, Thurston Mains, Hunter Steading, Elmscleugh cottages. Needs to happen in December 2023.
5. FOR agreed to share their draft Construction Traffic Management Plan by January.
6. December second meeting with community reps, East Lothian Council, Developers needs to hammer out the proposed Charter and get everyone signed up to an ambition that ensures collaboration, minimises disruption and seeks to leave East Lammermuir a better place. As an element of this we need a proper discussion forum with community reps, Developers and East Lothian Council roads officers involved to set out what can be done – not just more of the same.