

**WOOLLEY HILL WIND FARM
COMMUNITY LIAISON GROUP**

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 9th November 2010

In attendance:

Cllr Ewan Rayner (Chairman & Ellington)
Cllr Hugh West (Leighton Bromswold)
Cllr Graham Leach (Spaldwick)
Cllr Bob Lumbers (Ellington)
Jon Knight & Simon Peltenburg (RES)
Phil Briscoe (Bellenden)

12 residents also attended the meeting.

Venue: Ellington village hall

Apologies:

Cllr Bruce Chapman
Cllr Keith Baker

Date: Tuesday, 9 November 2010

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Bruce Chapman and Cllr Keith Baker.

2. Welcome and introduction

The Chairman welcomed everybody to the meeting.

3. Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting

The Chairman asked for a clarification of agenda item 6, under which a number of parishes had asked for additional copies of the proposals. Subject to this change, the minutes of the last meeting were approved as a true record.

A member of the public asked JK/SP when copies of the proposals were sent to the councils. JK/SP confirmed they had not sent them yet because the application had not yet been validated by the council and they did not want to circulate documents which then may be subject to change.

4. Matters Arising

The Chairman confirmed that any matters arising would be covered elsewhere on the agenda.

5. Discussion of Response to Chrissie Short Letter

The Chairman outlined the reasons for discussing the letter at this stage, and began by asking about the "30% capacity factor" figure. SP and JK confirmed that the figure is a UK-average, used widely by Renewable UK, but improving technology has enhanced efficiency on the more modern turbines. SP confirmed that using the NOABL data set (freely available from:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.berr.gov.uk/energy/sources/renewables/renewables-explained/wind-energy/page27708.html>) the Woolley Hill capacity factor is 30.7%. However use of NOABL data can underestimate the efficiency compared to site measured wind data.

A member of the public asked about specific wind speeds and JK/SP clarified the measurement process.

The Chairman asked about the number of units of electricity actually consumed compared to those produced and JK confirmed as with any energy production, there is no guarantee that all will be used.

A member of the public asked if there was any data comparing local energy usage with output from the site and JK/SP confirmed that there was no such analysis, as the energy produced would feed into the grid network.

A member of the public asked if it was possible that RES may be asked to turn the turbines off and SP confirmed this would be very unlikely and would only happen if there was a fault on the grid system.

6. Woolley Hill Application Update

JK gave a project update, confirming that the planning application had been submitted to Huntingdonshire District Council two weeks earlier and he was expecting validation within the next week or so. He would be submitting some larger scale maps to the council, all of the information would be provided on the RES website, and copies of the Environmental Statement would be available on CD for those who would like one. He also outlined the likely consultation process, including the council notification of statutory consultees (including parish councils) and opportunities for public

representations. SP also emphasised the importance of the application number being included on any representations to the council.

A member of the public asked if RES were offering to send out CDs to anyone who wanted one and JK confirmed this was the case, although they would be happy to send specific chapters as requested.

The Chairman asked if the application was on the website and SP confirmed that this would happen once the application was validated by the council.

A member of the public asked about the timescale and SP responded, suggesting it would typically take the council around 6 months to make a decision, and it would take another 18-24 months for the turbines to be constructed and generating electricity.

7. Public Questions (15 minutes)

A member of the public asked when the community benefit fund takes effect and questioned the declining value as time progresses. JK/SP confirmed that the fund amount would be index-linked. The Chairman confirmed that the CLG had not discussed the fund to date, as it is a subject for discussion after the application has been approved. A member of the public suggested the £18k may not be a fixed sum and may be open to negotiation and SP confirmed that RES have always made clear the sum is negotiable and they would like to help the local community, if there is a need for more funding or for advance payment of some of the fund. JK added the importance of understanding the sort of projects that would need funding in the local area, to help understand the amounts required.

A member of the public likened the benefit fund to a compensation payment of £40 per person per year and claimed this was insufficient. SP clarified that the payment was not intended as a compensation payment but as a goodwill gesture from RES.

A member of the public asked how the fund would be controlled and JK confirmed that the CLG would be involved in the formation of the management and allocation systems.

A member of the public described themselves as a windfarm-supporter but suggested there should be a better method of allocating planning gain from wind developments. The Chairman outlined the scope and mechanism of the current Section106 process.

A number of further comments were made regarding the community fund and the Chairman added that the discussion highlighted why the matter had not been fully

discussed to date and should be saved for a later date. The Chairman identified a problem as being that while some residents may be disinterested in the money, however large the amount, others may be more supportive as the figure rose.

SP confirmed that no specific local services had been identified to receive funding to date, but would welcome any ideas or suggestions.

JK also answered another question to confirm that the fund amount is based on installed capacity rather than the output of the windfarm. He went on to explain the capacity calculations and some comparable examples that bring averages down, such as industrial sites.

A member of the public asked why an application for another met-mast (for 18 months) had been submitted. JK/SP explained that this was to collect more relevant data at the right height to help in choosing the turbine type.

A member of the public asked about the wind speed data and SP/JK explained the acceptance of available DTI data and how to access this information online.

A member of the public asked how much subsidy RES would receive for the windfarm. SP explained that there is no direct subsidy but described the system of Renewable Obligation Certificates (ROCs). The Chairman added that the response to the Chrissie Short letter had indicated that the additional cost on household bills for renewable energy would only be about £12 per year.

Public questions followed around RES, use of profits and the future ownership of sites. SP explained that RES is fully UK-owned by the McAlpine family and that although a guarantee can never be made to keep a site for 25 years, all of the obligations made during planning can be guaranteed.

8. Wind Farm Visit

SP outlined the recent visit which had taken 13 local residents to see the North Pickenham Wind Farm, where they met the site developer, toured the site, went inside a turbine and tested the noise from varying distances.

SP invited a member of the public (Geoff Wheeler) to report back on his visit. Geoff confirmed that he was one of five Ellington residents who attended the visit. He described standing under a wind turbine, standing 100 metres away and further away still, and finding that the noise was insignificant and difficult to notice in any of the

locations. Geoff concluded that he felt much happier about the potential noise impact, having attended the site himself.

Ros Wolfe disagreed and said from a distance of 900 metres she had found the noise levels to be comparable to the A14 background noise or to a combine harvester. The Chairman sought a clarification, as to whether this meant that the turbines would not be audible over the A14, so there would be no difference in local background noise levels.

A member of the public asked about low frequency/ subsonic noise and SP explained that while there were a lot of anecdotal examples on the internet, there was no expert support for the belief that noise from wind turbines had any health impacts. He also explained the problem of amplitude modulation was more pronounced in short turbines with large blades.

The Chairman expressed his regret at being unable to attend the windfarm visit but planned to make a personal visit one day.

9. Future Meeting Dates

The next meeting date was set for Tuesday 18th January at 8pm in Ellington Village Hall.

Both the Chairman and PB said they would make contact with other members to increase attendance for the next meeting.

Ros Wolfe noted that the meeting was not advertised on the website.

10. Any Other Business

A member of the public revealed himself to be from Buckworth Parish Council but not a member of the CLG. The Chairman invited him to join at the next meeting, and he agreed to consider.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.