

The Nant y Moch Wind Farm

Community Liaison Group

Inaugural Meeting 25th November 2008 at 7.00pm Neuadd Goffa Talybont

Minutes

Chair: Allan Lewis Assistant Chief Executive, Ceredigion County Council

Members: Alex Fornal Development Manager, Airtricity
Aled Thomas Blaenrheidol Community Council
Gwyn Lewis Cadfarch Community Council
Gerwyn Jones Ceulanamaesmawr Community Council
Andy Rowland Ecodyfi Manager
Anwen Haynes Llancynfelin Community Council
Gareth Daniel Melindwr Community Council
Oliver Morys Menter Aberystwyth Development Officer
Wynne Jones Pentir Pumlumon Development Officer
Kari Walker Trefeurig Community Council
Harry Toland Ysgubor Y Coed Community Council

Observers: Norman Michelle Blaenrheidol Community Council
Vanessa Garwood Regeneration Manager, Powys County Council
Lowri Jones Regeneration Officer, Powys County Council
Michael Phillips DULAS

Secretariat: Eluned Lewis Community Liaison Officer, Airtricity

Translator Heledd Davies

Apologies: Aaron Ffort Forestry Commission Wales

1. Welcome and Introductions:

Allan Lewis welcomed everyone to the inaugural meeting of the Community Liaison Group (CLG) and round the table introductions took place.

2. Purpose of the meeting:

Allan Lewis explained clearly to members that sitting on the CLG would not bias anyone for the wind farm development. As representatives for their respective Community Councils and regeneration partnerships they had an important role to play in the community engagement aspect. He added that the planning process would be something completely separate under which members could voice their opinions as individuals, as representatives of their different organisations or as organisations in their own right. He went on to set out the purpose of the meeting, which was to:

- To discuss and to aim to agree the formation of the Community Liaison Group, Independent Facilitator and future meetings
- To receive background information on the development
- To discuss and to aim to agree the draft Community Engagement Plan

3a. Background to Nant y Moch Wind Farm Development

Alex Fornal, Development Manager, Airtricity:

Alex Fornal presented background information on the development, setting it within the context of the Welsh Assembly Government's (WAG) TAN 8 Planning Policy on renewable energy. He explained that Nant y Moch, otherwise known as Strategic Search Area D or "SSA D", was one of seven identified by the WAG as an area suitable for large scale wind farm development. Airtricity had successfully won the tender rights to develop area D which has a target of 140 MW, which equates to around 60 2.3 MW turbines. Airtricity were now working with Dulas, the Machynlleth based renewable energy company, to submit a planning application at the end of 2009. Michael Phillips gave a brief background to Dulas explaining that they would be responsible for the development of the wind farm design.

Allan Lewis asked if there were any questions following the presentation:

Kari Walker, Trefeurig asked if the turbines would all be grouped together or spaced out?

Gerwyn Jones, Ceulanamaesmawr asked how long the wind farm be operational for?

Anwen Haynes, Llancynfelin asked how high the turbines would be?

Allan Lewis explained that detailed questions of this nature would be answered in due course as part of the implementation of the Community Engagement Plan. Alex Fornal replied, explaining that the work of Dulas over the next year was to design the wind farm taking into account all kinds of constraints. He also explained that this application was for an operational period of 25 years after which the site is either decommissioned or a new planning process is started.

3 b. The purpose of the Community Liaison Group and Terms of Reference

Eluned Lewis Community Liaison Officer:

Eluned Lewis gave the background to her role, explaining that Airtricity have made a strong commitment to the community, higher than the perceived "gold standard" South West model by employing a dedicated local bilingual Community Liaison Officer (CLO) and the creation of a Community Liaison Group (CLG) to provide a dialogue between the communities and the developer. She went on to explain that the membership included the seven Community Councils encompassing the development area, the three regeneration partnerships active within this area and a representative from Airtricity. She explained the specific aims of the CLG which are detailed more fully in the draft Community Engagement Plan before moving on to the Terms of Reference for the CLG, explaining that they provide a working framework for the CLG to achieve its aims. She noted that comments had already been received on the Terms of Reference and that paragraph 7 which states that the Independent Facilitator would have a casting vote is to be removed and that all references to "unanimous" voting were, subject to members approval, to be replaced with text explaining the principles of consensus voting.

Allan Lewis asked if there were any questions or further amendments to the Terms of Reference:

Gerwyn Jones explained that Ceulanamaesmawr Community Council had specifically stated that he did not sign up to the Terms of Reference at this meeting tonight. Representatives from Blaenrheidol and Llancynfelin concurred with this. Anwen Haynes asked if signing up to the Terms of Reference was in effect signing up to supporting the wind farm development.

Allan Lewis suggested inserting a paragraph which explicitly stated that this was not the case. This was agreed by all present. Alex Fornal stated that he had no problem whatsoever if the CLG wished this to be more outwardly expressed.

Wynne Jones expressed concern regarding the lengthy process involved in getting approval from all members as the different organisations meet at different times of the month. It was agreed that this will be a challenge.

A discussion on consensus voting took place and it was agreed that the CLO would re draft this element.

Andy Rowland asked for more clarity regarding paragraph 11 Publicity and Media in the Terms of Reference, specifically was the information provided at the CLG meetings deemed to be within the public domain or not? It was agreed that an important role of the CLG members is to feed information back to their respective organisations. For this reason the information is seen to be within the public domain. However it was recognised that press relations and wider disseminations of information beyond the normal channels of liaising with member organisations would be undertaken with the consensus of the CLG members. Allan Lewis asked that members are always mindful about how they report back. It was also agreed that a section needs to be added to the Terms of Reference regarding procedures in dealing with sensitive information.

Action: The CLO would redraft the Terms of Reference, taking all of the above into account and circulate to the members as soon as possible so that each respective organisation could agree to co signing them at the next CLG meeting.

5. The Independent Facilitator (taken in advance of the final presentation on the CEP)

Allan Lewis explained the role as detailed within the Terms of Reference. Alex Fornal added that the most important word here was trust, that this person must be trusted by all the members of the CLG. Eluned Lewis explained that some names had already been explored which included Cynog Dafis and Gwynfryn Evans, Chairman of Cronfa Leri. The group's opinion was sought:

Gerwyn Jones suggested that Allan Lewis continue in the role, with many agreeing with this. Allan Lewis explained that he would not wish this to be perceived as being County Council led. Norman Michele suggested Lord Elystan Morgan and Oliver Morys suggested the Chief Executive of Ceredigion's Association for Voluntary Associations Hazel Lloyd. Alex Fornal made it clear that any payment for facilitator services would need to be agreed and financed by the CLG separately as he would not wish to have the Independent Facilitator to be perceived as being in the pay of Airtricity.

Allan asked if members were happy for the CLO to discuss further with the two individuals suggested prior to the next meeting. All agreed with this.

Action: CLO to discuss the role of the Independent Facilitator with Lord Elystan Morgan and Hazel Lloyd from CAVO and report back to the next CLG Meeting.

4. The Community Engagement Plan – Michael Phillips, Dulas:

Michael Phillips explained that the Community Engagement Plan (CEP) sets out the methods, timing and transparency of Airtricity's commitments to consult with the principal communities, interest parties and wider public on the Nant y Moch Wind Farm throughout the lifecycle of its development. He explained that Airtricity were contractually bound to deliver a CEP and that it was the CLG which will be required to agree that the CEP has been delivered by co signing a Statement of Community Involvement which will be submitted with the planning application for the wind farm development. Michael gave examples of different methods of community engagement will take place along with timescales, urging members to scrutinise the detailed activities set out in the back of the draft CEP, to discuss them with their respective organisations and to suggest amendments as soon as possible so that the final CEP can be agreed at the next meeting of the CLG.

Andy Rowland asked what level of engagement Airtricity were proposing, would they simply be informing or would they be consulting and taking feedback on board within the decision making process? Alex Fornal explained clearly that community opinion will be a factor, along with many others which will influence the final wind farm design. Michael Phillips added that the consultation will enable the development to be designed minimising disturbance to local communities and maximising the community benefits. It was agreed to clarify the consultation methods with the wider public within the CLG

communities and to insert a note stating that the stakeholder lists were not exhaustive and could be added to as the CLG felt appropriate during the implementation of the CEP.

Action: CLG members to send suggestions on the draft CEP to the CLO well in advance of the next CLG meeting, with the aim of agreeing the CEP at the next CLG meeting..

6. Future meetings of the Community Liaison Group

It was agreed by all that Tuesday nights at 7pm at Y Neuadd Goffa Talybont, a central location to the area was suitable. The date of the next CLG meeting was agreed and was set as Tuesday the 17th of February 2009 at 7pm at Y Neuadd Goffa if available. This allowed enough time for each organisation to look over the CEP and Terms of Reference, enabling the members to sign up to these formally at the next CLG meeting. The issue of travelling expenses was raised and it was agreed that a budget, to be administered by the CLO for CLG's members travelling expenses, be set up and the CLO would draft a set of procedures on how this budget would be administered. Such proposed procedures would be agreed at the next CLG meeting.

Action: CLO to make the arrangements for the next CLG meeting and circulate these in advance. CLO to formulate a set of procedures for administrating the travel expenses fund to be agreed at the next meeting

7. Any other business:

Andy Rowland asked about the likely timescales for appendix 4 – the suggested community benefits package extract. Alex Fornal explained that Airtricity have committed up to a £1 million prior to commissioning the wind farm as an early release mechanism from the community benefits fund. He stressed however that there had been no more thought than that at this stage and it was something which both Airtricity and the CLG would need to discuss and carefully consider. Many members voiced concern about this early release funding being perceived as a bribe if it happened prior to or during the planning process as well as expressing concerns regarding compromising their decision making role in the planning process. Allan Lewis suggested he would seek legal advice from his legal department about this.

Action: Allan Lewis to seek legal advice on this matter and report back at next CLG meeting

Allan Lewis suggested that declarations of interest should be inserted at the top of the CLG agenda.

Action: CLO to ensure that this is inserted on all future agendas for the CLG

It was requested by several members that the minutes and the amended CEP and Terms of Reference be circulated as soon as possible, many organisations would be meeting next week.

Action: CLO to circulate the minutes of the first CLG meeting and the amended documents as soon as possible.

Date of next meeting:

Tuesday the 17th of February, 7pm at Y Neuadd Goffa, Talybont.

There being no further business Allan Lewis thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting was adjourned.