

Lammermuir Community Council
Ordinary General Meeting

Wednesday 19th October 2022 at 7:30pm via Teams

Minutes

Present: Councillors:

Bill Landale (BL), Tony Homer (TH), Anna Dabrowska (AD) Adam Prokopowicz (AP) Morag Rodger (MoR), Cllr Mark Rowley (MR) Cllr John Greenwell

Guest Speaker: Paul Whitfield (PW)

Minute Secretary: Dianne Repsch (DR)

Residents: Geoff Masterman, David Macvie, Ryan Jones

Agenda
<p>1. Welcome and apologies:</p> <p>Apologies: Cllr Donald Moffat</p>
<p>2. Lees Hill Energy Park - Guest Paul Whitfield</p> <p>Paul Whitfield (PW) kindly attended the meeting to give LCC further information on the Lees Hill Energy Park. PW is a resident living in the middle of the Langtonlees Farm where the proposed energy park is going to be located. PW has gathered further information whilst liaising with Fred Olsen directly.</p> <p>PW's property will be 800m from the nearest wind turbine and will have 6 of the 7 turbines within 1600m. PW has carried out independent research which advises that 1600m to 3000m is a safe distance for a property to be from wind turbines from a health and safety perspective. The maps in the scoping documents show that Longformacus will be able to see the turbines and solar panels quite clearly. The Lees Hill proposal is for a total of 100 mw capacity to include the wind turbines and the solar panels. If the proposal was just for the wind turbines it would be less than 50mw which would mean it would not go to the Scottish Government for approval it would go to the Scottish Borders Council.</p> <p>For the solar panels shown in blue on the map they only need a third of that area to create the 60mw in the proposal. Fred Olsen has not decided where the solar panels are going to be but PW believes they will amplify the noise that comes off the turbines as it will be over hard ground instead of soft soil.</p> <p>The proposal also includes 60mw of storage on the site. 1mw of storage is the equivalent of one shipping container and the proposal would therefore be for the equivalent of 60 shipping containers. PW has not been able to establish how the grid connection works and FO were not able to provide this information. The planning application for the Energy Park does not include anything for the grid connection as it is a separate application.</p> <p>PW had attended the public exhibition at Gavinton on Wednesday 19th October and had asked a number of questions regarding the size of the turbines and whether the photographs shown at the exhibition were accurately depicting the size correctly. PW also mentioned that at the exhibition there had not been any photographs showing the intended area for the solar panels.</p> <p>BL asked if there is a list of amendments which PW would agree would be acceptable for this proposal or would PW prefer the whole project not to go ahead.</p>

PW replied that he believes it is not safe to continue living in his house if this project goes ahead because of the noise, the flicker and amplitude modulation. The 800m from his property to the nearest wind turbine is just too close. PW confirmed that he had written to the Scottish Planning & Environmental Health Agency.

Action 1: DR to circulate PW's letter to Scottish Planning & Environmental Health Agency to CC's.

MR said that he had also attended the Gavinton Public Exhibition. Before commenting on the Lees Hill project MR wanted to remind everyone that LCC and the LCF have a relationship with Fred Olsen (FO) through other wind farm projects such as the Crystal Rig Wind Farm. MR confirmed that he had made similar observations to PW and his main reason for attending the exhibition was to see what material they were exhibiting. They were at least showing outline wireframe drawings showing what they expected the impact to be as well as a limited amount of photographs. By the time they get to a planning application MR believes there will be 20 sets of clearly detailed drawings and by that stage they should be technically correct and almost be beyond challenge. The display at Gavinton did not show any of the landscape change and none of the crane hard standings, the compounds, the storage or the tracks in and through the wind farm or the solar impact. MR commented that this was a unique proposition and one of the most open sites MR had ever seen in a wind farm application. The document showing the visibility of all the turbines is a solid block of colour which means it will impact most of the local area. MR agreed that PW's home will be untenable due to the noise and health issues and also Langtonlees itself. As there have not been any wind farm developments with turbines of this scale, with this proximity to homes, MR urged the community councillors to go to the exhibitions to flag up issues that FO need to be aware of.

PW confirmed there were 4 other properties that would be affected although 2 of these belonged to the farmer who was working with Fred Olsen on the project and 2 farm cottages where the residents worked for the farmer. PW also commented that it was disappointing that a development like this should be going ahead on productive farmland when there are so many issues with food supply chains across the world.

AP said that based on research and other professional projects he was working on, the number of wind farm developments was reaching capacity elsewhere but also in the Scottish Borders. The developers will put in bigger turbines wherever they can but this affects negatively on the health of the people who live in those areas. AP would like LCC to discuss the issue of the overall wind farm development plan in the interests of the people who live in the area as private enterprises will develop to maximise the profits. AP felt that the problem is not only that of LCC but also for other community councils. AP mentioned that he was aware of a number of lawsuits in the area concerning the impact of the wind farms on the health of the residents.

MR said that LCC needs to come to a view on what it thinks of the Lees Hill application and as it is only at the scoping stage LCC should flag up to the developers and the authorities the issues that LCC think needs to be looked at. LCC can absolutely insist that there is total rigour about habitability of homes. As the noise assessment has not been completed other homes could be affected.

MR also said that now is the time to raise issues that LCC feels should be examined as that is the point of the scoping process.

Action Point 2: BL confirmed that with DR a draft letter would be drawn up and sent to MR before being sent to the interested parties.

3. Matters Arising:

Minutes of previous meeting held on 31st August 2022:

BL confirmed that the minutes of the previous meeting have been approved as a true record of the meeting and the Minutes can now be finalised.

Action Point Document:

Action Point 1: Fred Olsen, Crystal Rig Phase IV - email sent to Kevin Burns raising the questions from the meeting on 31st August. DR has sent and reply is pending.

Action Point 2: Dog Waste Bins for Community Walkway - no update

Action Point 3: Data Sharing/Google project. TH confirmed that this was ongoing

Action Point 4: TreeStory Consultants (acting on behalf of Ellemford Estate) - Email has been sent raising the concerns of LCC and the community.

Minutes of previous extraordinary meeting held on 21st September 2022

BL confirmed that the minutes of the previous meeting have been approved as a true record of the meeting and the Minutes can now be finalised. Refer to Item 6 for summary of actions.

4. Treasurer's Report

Bank Balance 19/10/2022	£3,533.98
Payments out (in transit)	£457.80
Payments in (in transit)	£0.00
COMMUNITY COUNCIL	£746.15
SBC COVID-19 FUNDING (ring fenced - no change)	£330.03
WALKING FUND (ring fenced - no change)	£2,000.00
<u>(LCC PROJECT FUNDING – RING FENCED AT THE LCF)</u>	
DEFIBRILLATOR (incl AED training) (no change)	£884.47
COMMUNITY BROADBAND	£1,000.00
COMMUNITY WEBSITE	£617.45
COMMUNITY EMERGENCY FUND	£8,262.50
LCC ADMIN COSTS	£2,000.00

AD confirmed that there will be some small changes to the Emergency Fund as some payments have been made, approx £400. AD clarified that LCC requested 2k for the resilience fund from LCF which was added to the Emergency Fund which also holds the funds to support the community with the cost of living payments.

5. Planning Applications:

None received

6. Ellemford Estate Woodland Creation and Management Plan:

Action Point & Summary of actions from the meeting on 21/09/22.

BL confirmed that there had been no further communication with TreeStory or with Scottish Forestry and he understood that they were working through the issues raised and LCC would hear in due course.

Action 1: Ensure Ellemford Estate Woodland Creation information on Lammermuir's website - AD confirmed this has been done.

Action 2: The Ellemford Estate Woodland creation details to Facebook

Action 3: Check road safety concerns with Roads Office and Health & Safety - MR confirmed that Road Safety Officers would be consultees in the process.

Action 4: Ask estate to let us know what biodiversity information they have obtained in preparation for the project

Action 5: Send details of SBC strategy to BL

Action 6: Distribute summary document and short version for residents - BL confirmed that he had completed.

Action 7: Produce an issues log

Action 8: Co-ordinate with Cranshaws Village Hall Committee to send a larger request to all CELCA Trustees for their approval. AL (LCF) confirmed that this is underway.

Action 9: removed

Request 1: Ask the developer to public all maps and information on the website - AD confirmed that on the LCC website there were links to the maps but that Ellemford Estate should also be showing the maps on their own website.

Request 2: Additional stakeholders need to be informed - BL confirmed that the additional stakeholders had been flagged up to TreeStory.

Request 3: Developers to put fencing up on Ellemford side of the river first - TH confirmed this had been raised at the meeting and hoped it would be shown in the next stage of the development.

Request 4: Set back fencing with a clear area between fence and road - TH confirmed this had been raised at the meeting and hoped it would be shown in the next stage of the development.

Request 5: Hedges to be left to grow and mask view of fences - TH confirmed this had been raised at the meeting and hoped it would be shown in the next stage of the development.

Request 6: Corner view heading towards Longformacus after Winchester is important to establish as a proper viewpoint. - BL confirmed this had been raised at the meeting and hoped it would be shown in the next stage of the development.

Request 7: General point has been noted that areas have been registered as general woodland, but the bulk is commercial forestry.

Request 8: Community would feel more positive if the cottages that had been for agricultural workers are kept for residents and not external holiday homes. Commit to employ locally for clearing and gardening - BL confirmed this had been raised at the meeting and hoped it would be shown in the next stage of the development.

Request 9: How the fencing will affect the main drive of the shoot, as they had not considered this - BL confirmed that this needs to be sorted out by Ellemford Estate.

Request 10: Narrow strips of wood for shooting and offering shelter for sheep - BL confirmed that this needs to be sorted out by Ellemford Estate.

Request 11: See results of landscape study the developer mentioned, other studies that have taken place and share on a mini website to look open and transparent. - BL confirmed that this needs to be sorted out by Ellemford Estate.

Request 12: Visuals of future views in 5 years to verify claims of improvement to the aesthetic of the landscape. BL confirmed that this has been raised as an issue so Ellemford Estate will need to respond.

Request 13: Talk from an expert in biodiversity for the community to learn more.

Request 14: Land to be left to regenerate naturally rather than artificially.

AD asked if we have included a list of these requests in the LCC letter to TreeStory. BL confirmed that these points had been raised.

AP said there were several issues discussed outside of the meeting which are not reflected in this list and how can these now be presented?

1. The Scottish Government and the consultant firm agreed to conduct meetings with the residents of Rigfoot affected by the project. AP confirmed that he had spoken to some guys who had been measuring the possible height of the trees versus the viewpoints in the fields. By doing this the conclusion is that half of the field will not be eligible for forestation because of the viewpoints. There is an option for submitting a proposal that would start the project on the left bank of the river where there would not be the same issues that there would be if it was on the right bank.
2. The consulting firm seems to be attached to the idea of the fences regardless of there being other fences or obstacles in the area of the project. So this would be an area of contention between the residents and the estate.

Action Point 3: BL asked AP to send him an email detailing these points and BL would pass them on to the developers.

7. Resilience Committee Report:

TH reported that the RSG have had a zoom meeting to finalise the community survey and the process of the survey. A pre-notice is going out via The Herald and then the practical arrangements will be finalised to get the survey out in the next couple of weeks.

AD confirmed that there is only one week to decide if LCC are requesting funds from LCF in respect of the generators. AD confirmed that there had been a visit organised at Gavinton to look at the generator and how it works with the village hall. AD also confirmed that she would prepare the LCF fund application so that it is ready before the deadline next week.

TH confirmed he had attended the Gavinton meeting and everyone who was there had been impressed with what they saw and what it offered and that it would be a practical solution for Longformacus and Cranshaws. TH confirmed he had spoken to David Lockhead who was keen to see a generator made available at Cranshaws. There are likely to be a few short term practical issues which will need to be addressed. The costs are not extortionate and if LCC bought two then it would be under the 10k limit. The RSG was supplied with all the information on the generators including the type and size which seemed to be the right option for LCC to have. The RSG are meeting again next Monday and will make a firm decision on the fund application.

BL thanked the RSG for their efforts and this project will provide a very practical safety net for the community. It will also show very publicly that the community council is doing something to help the community.

8. Crystal Rig Phase IV - Community Liaison Group

MoR agreed to be the representative for LCC to join the Community Liaison Group.

Action Point 4: DR to send information to MoR

9. Matters arising not listed above

Ellemford Show:

BL confirmed that LCC had a presence at the Ellemford Show with a table, leaflets and an opportunity for people to speak to the CC's. A questionnaire was handed out to local residents asking them to fill in the questionnaire on the order of importance of things such as roads, resilience, broadband, health and wellbeing etc. There were approximately 12 replies and looking at the results the items of most importance were:

1. Roads, Surfaces and safety
2. Connectivity, telephone, broadband
3. Education

Although the questionnaire was completed by only a small sample of the community it confirms that the road surfaces and the number of potholes are important issues for some residents and also very important was connectivity and also that there is good access to education, not just schools but other sources of education as well.

MoR suggested that LCC invite some of the surrounding community councils to join the show so that there would be representatives from ABPCC, Gavinton and Duns Community Councils.

MR said the Ellemford Show had been brilliant and expressed thanks to the committee and organisers for all of their efforts. If LCC and CELCA (LCF) took a table inside the marquee for next year this would keep them at the heart of the show.

MoR confirmed she would be attending an after show meeting and she would pass on the sentiments and speak to the organisers about the table for next year's show.

Roads:

JG said that he would be interested to hear if any particular roads had been mentioned by the community which they felt were a priority for repairs. There are 3,000km of roads in the Scottish Borders and there was an issue with buying materials in particular for the resurfacing works however there was a programme of works in place so that as many roads could be repaired as possible.

Hedges:

BL asked Cllr's Rowley and Greenwell who is responsible for cutting the miles of hedges along the roads and was it reasonable to expect Ellemford Estate to cut the hedges on their estate now that the farmer was no longer there.

MR confirmed that the owner of the hedge is responsible for cutting their own hedges. There is an ongoing debate as to whether they should be cut every year due to wildlife etc

10. Correspondence Received:

Email received from Evelyn Bright (EB) which had been posted on facebook and DR had circulated to the CC's.

TH confirmed they would discuss at the next meeting of the RSG. BL would acknowledge receipt of the email from EB.,

11. Date of next meeting:

Annual General Meeting and Ordinary General Meeting: Wednesday 7th December 2022 at 7.30p.m. to be held at Longformacus Village Hall

Meeting closed at 21.00