



## **Windy Edge Wind Farm Community Liaison Group Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday 26th October 2011 at 6.30pm

The Horse and Hound Country Inn, Bonchester Bridge, Hawick, TD9 8JN

Present: Matt Chapman, Smithy House Associates Ltd (Chair)  
Julie Aitkin, Infinis  
Stephen Brown, Newcastleton and District Community Council (*representing Hermitage in lieu of Martin Craig*)  
Shaun Turnbull, Newcastleton and District Community Council  
Gordon, Steele, Newcastleton and District Community Council  
Chris Griffiths, Hobkirk Community Council  
Robert Francome, Upper Teviotdale and Borthwick Community Council  
Walter Douglas, Upper Teviotdale and Borthwick Community Council  
Barbara Elborn, Newcastleton Business Forum  
Jeanette Thomson, Smithy House Associates Ltd (Secretariat)

Apologies: Martin Craig

Next Meeting: Newcastleton - January 2012

### **Welcome and Introduction**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, explaining that this was the first of a proposed series of Community Liaison Group (CLG) Meetings designed to maintain channels of communication regarding the Windy Edge Wind Farm proposal as it progresses through the planning process. The invited groups have been identified through consultation with Scottish Borders Council and are: -

- Newcastleton and District Community Council
- Hobkirk Community Council
- Upper Teviotdale and Borthwick Community Council
- Newcastleton Business Forum

### **Role of Community Liaison Group and Terms of Reference**

- Barbara Elborn proposed Paula McDonald, Regional Director of Visit Scotland to be added to the list of recipients of approved minutes
- With this single amendment Barbara Elborn proposed, Robert Francombe seconded and the meeting approved the Terms of Reference.

Clarification was sought on the following issues: -



- In the ToR it states that the minutes would be published on the project website. Julie Aitkin was asked to confirm when the site would be live as the group felt it very important to have as much information available to the general public.
- Meetings will be held at 6.30pm on Wednesdays, as required and the venues will alternate between Newcastleton and Bonchester Bridge.

### **Project Update**

Julie Aitken, Project Manager, presented an update to the meeting covering the following issues: the power point presentation will be sent out with the minutes.

### **Infinis – company overview**

- Infinis is a renewable energy business
- The company uses landfill gas, wind and water to generate electricity
- They are the second largest renewable electricity generator in the UK
- Infinis has been owned by Terra Firma since 2003

### **Information about the Windy Edge site**

- The Windy Edge site sits in a Scottish Borders Council preferred area of search
- Scottish Borders Council Supplementary Planning Guidance does not effect this site
- At the current time the project being considered is for 20 turbines with a maximum tip height of 125m to tip.
- There are no views of turbines from Hermitage Castle.
- Infinis builds, owns and operates their wind farms and the working lifespan of a modern wind turbine is initially expected to be in the region of 25 years.
- Planning permission is usually only granted for this period, after which a new application must be made or the turbines would have to be decommissioned and taken down.
- Money solely for this purpose has to be set aside at the outset in the form of a Decommissioning Bond, to provide for the removal of the wind turbines when power generation finally ceases. This covers dismantling of the turbines, the concrete bases, the electricity sub-station, the grid connection and the access roads on the site – and returning the ground to its former appearance.

### **Current Activity**

- The Meteorological Mast was erected in July 2011
- Scoping Opinion was applied for in July 2011



- Infinis is in discussion with Scottish Borders Council and Historic Scotland regarding potential views from local roads, in particular the A7
- Ecological Surveys and Consultations are on-going
- Infinis has met with Buccleuch Estates to discuss the The 'Langholm Project' which is a scientific study being undertaken on Langholm Moor into the effects of raptors on red grouse.
- A Traffic Management plan will be agreed with the council for the construction phase of the project and will be the subject of a planning condition.
- Newsletters will be sent to all households around the site early 2012.
- Public Exhibitions will be held in early 2012 (subject to weather).

#### **Grid**

- Connection to the Grid will be the subject of a separate planning application made by Scottish Power after consent has been given for the wind farm.
- The connection will typically utilise an overhead line on wooden poles and an underground cable to get the electricity off the hill. It is sometimes possible to tee into an existing line, and this option will be explored when the project progresses
- A number of potential routes for the connection to the electricity network grid will be analysed but initial studies have indicated that the most likely connection route into the will be north to Hawick.
- Electricity pylons are not used for this purpose.

- **Project Timetable**

A sample project timetable was shown indicating major project components for development of a wind farm and typical timescales. The Windy Edge project is still at a very early stage and a detailed project timetable will be drawn up in due course.

#### **Community Benefit**

- Community benefits are voluntary contributions donated by wind farm developers.
- The offer of a community benefit must not influence the determination of a planning application which must be considered on its own merits.
- If the Windy Edge Wind Farm is granted planning permission a dedicated community development trust fund would be set up. One role of CLG will be to help Infinis to determine how a community benefit fund will best be allocated and administered to the best benefit locally.



The representatives of Upper Teviotdale and Borthwick Community Council already have experience of other wind farm trusts, including Langhope Rig; they confirmed that their community would only want a benefit that reflected the small number of households in their community.

#### **Future Meeting Dates**

The next Meeting will be held in Newcastleton in January 2012 date TBC – agenda items to include wind monitoring, newsletters and exhibition information. The Group agreed to share email addresses.

#### **AOB**

There being no other business the meeting closed at 7.50pm