

Minutes



STEERING GROUP MEETING The Community Wind Energy Project for Glen Urquhart and Strathglass

Registered Scottish Charity No: SC01313

7.30pm 24th March 2011 – BALNAIN HALL, GLENURQUHART

Present

Board directors: Anne MacDonald, Mary Brook & Tanya Castell
 From the community: Neil MacInnes*, Pierre LeBrun*, Douglas & Patricia Moir
 In attendance: Donald Ross
 Apologies: Erik Trefler, Andrew Castell, Peter MacDonald, Edward Redmond
 * Members

Agenda topics

Minutes of Meeting 24th February 2010

Anne Macdonald

Discussion: the minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and signed

Current Situation (incl. correspondence)

Anne Macdonald

Update

Anne reported that Mike Girvan had notified us that a provisional offer of a grid connection for August 2013 had been received (the understanding was that this would be for connecting to Fasnakyle) but it was conditional on whatever Statement of Works comes back from the National Grid. Further information on this would not be available before mid-April at the earliest. Any issues could push the date back. Anne was following up with Mike for the details of the grid connection offer. **Action: AM**

There was some discussion around the project timeline – Anne noted that no access to the site would be permitted from April to June because of the agreement with the RSPB which would mean that the window for construction would be July to October. Ideally this would be in 2012 but if the grid connection was not going to be available until 2013 then the work might have to be deferred a year.

Funding & Finance

Anne reported that SIF (Scottish Investment Fund) only had funding available up to 2012 and yet it seemed likely we would need funding after that date so at this point it was not clear whether this would be an available source of funds. However first the feasibility study and financial projections were required and Mike had said that he was meeting with AJB Scholes in relation to the cash-flow projections. In response to a question, it was confirmed that the plan was to raise the funding from sources such as SIS and not from the communities.

Anne noted that she had also come across two other potential sources of funding (the Sustainability Fund and the Energy Share Fund) which required further investigation.

Following the last board meeting, Anne had met with Community Energy Scotland (CES) to follow up on their comments about Lottery funding. CES had been very supportive and had suggested having a meeting with the Lottery to discuss any concerns they might have around an application from Soirbheas e.g. company structure. Another issue was whether the Lottery considered Renewable Obligation Certificates as state aid. This would provide clarity on what was required from Soirbheas before a large amount of time and energy was spent on revising our application. Steven had also provided a first draft of a document for submission to the Lottery ahead of any such discussion and Anne agreed to circulate that to the board. **Action: AM**

It was agreed that it made sense to meet with Lottery officials and Mary and Tanya offered to join Anne – such a meeting was likely to take place in Perth. **Action: AM**

CES had offered Soirbheas free legal advice on whether to own a single turbine or just take a 20% share from Steven Phillips of Burgess via a conference call. It was agreed to take up the offer and Anne and Tanya would participate. **Action: AM**

CES was willing to provide a development officer to support Soirbheas with the due diligence process, liaison with Corrimony energy and community engagement as the level of activity increases. Furthermore CES had offered resource (Colin Anderson) to conduct a review of our project to provide an external perspective. It was agreed that this would be helpful. **Action: AM**

Anne also noted that she had provided a close of project report on the last piece of funding (with a £4 underspend).

[It was noted subsequently that the current bank account balance is £1,250.30]

Planning Requirements

Tanya Castell

Tanya reported that the planning permission had been granted on November 18th 2010 with a number of conditions attached – many of which required additional approvals before construction work started e.g. a Nature Conservation Management Plan to be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Scottish National Heritage. However it was understood that Mike was comfortable with the conditions set. Whilst the planning permission details could be found on the Highland council website currently, it was agreed that the key documents should be posted on the Soirbheas website. **Action: MB**

It was noted that all such conditions would be incorporated into the project documentation that Tanya was working on to allow the board to track these given that the planning permission had been granted jointly to Soirbheas and Corrimony Energy. There was some discussion around the planning permission and how it applied and the timeline given the potential delay in the grid connection. *[Post meeting: The document states that development must commence within 3 years and that*

2. **The permission granted shall endure for a period of 25 years from the date when electricity is first exported from any of the wind turbines to the electricity grid network ("First Export Date"). Written confirmation of the First Export Date shall be provided to the Planning Authority within 1 month of the First Export Date.**

Matters arising from Tanya's Project Assessment Paper

Tanya Castell

Tanya reported that following her appointment to the board at the end of January, she had been reviewing all the relevant documentation to ensure that she had a complete understanding of the project set-up. Erik and Anne had been very helpful in bringing her up to speed. Her intention was to pull together a project document incorporating all Soirbheas commitments and any conditions imposed to allow the board to track its obligations. Tanya noted she had also started a risk register which would also be circulated to the board.

Action: TC

There were a number of areas where Corrimony Energy and Soirbheas were operating differently to how it had originally been envisaged in the documentation and it was agreed that these should be clarified with Mike, e.g. the operation of the consultation committee. This would be on the agenda at the next update meeting with Mike which would hopefully take place fairly soon. **Action: AM**

Community meetings/workshops

Anne Macdonald

Tanya summarised the paper she and Andrew had circulated to the board based on the original document drafted by CES. It was intended to provide the communities with an update on the project and also included some initial proposals for review and challenge as part of the upcoming community engagement planned. These covered the areas where Soirbheas would use funds generated by its share of the wind-farm (though Tanya was waiting for confirmation from the Co-op Bank for their objectives for communities associated with renewable projects to which Soirbheas wanted to be aligned) and the process that could be used to allocate funds to projects. It was agreed that in addition to allocating money out, Soirbheas also need to keep back a portion of the money earned to invest directly. Also if Lottery funding was to be sought then the Lottery objectives would also need to be considered. **Action: TC**

The board appreciated that if construction were not going to take place till 2013 this was a long way off when considering projects that might need funding. However Anne noted that it was even more important to identify the needs of the community that any projects seeking grants would be meeting (these were unlikely to change much over the next few years) – this would enable us to articulate the outcomes Soirbheas would be seeking to achieve (understanding that we cannot replace a statutory provision). For example is there a high percentage of elderly people in the glens who are needing help with keeping warm? The aim is to use the community engagement drop-in sessions to understand what the communities' needs are. Various project ideas were articulated such as supporting students to study renewable technology, a tourist office in

Drumnadrochit and improving broadband facilities in the area though it was reiterated that Soirbheas needed to be clear on the community needs that any project would be meeting and would need to consider its article of associations which had restrictions around providing funding to individuals.

It was agreed that Tanya would update the document to incorporate the changes discussed (and that Sustaining our Glens should be the Soirbheas vision statement and included in the logo) and then circulate it to the board for review to ensure it was factually accurate, complete and that the draft proposals were reasonable before it went out to the communities. **Action: TC**

Once the board was comfortable with the paper, then the intention would be to circulate the document as widely as possible ahead of the drop-in sessions including posting it on all local websites. Anne agreed to circulate an initial list of the groups to be invited to the sessions and everyone was asked to add any groups that were missing (a name and address required for each group). **Action: AM**

Additionally Steven from CES would be asked for advice on enhancing the appeal of the one page flyer.

Action: MB

The planning of the drop-in sessions was discussed and the following agreed:

Action: AM/TC

- Balnain – Anne to lead, 19th May (Mary and Tanya would not be available)
- Cannich – Tanya and Andrew to lead, May [*Andrew cannot make any Thursday in May so this might need to move to June unless another suitable day can be found – following up with Kate McKinley*]
- Drumnadrochit – Anne to lead, tentatively 6th June (Andrew and Tanya unlikely to be available)
- Tomich – Tanya and Andrew to lead, 9th or 16th June dependent on availability of a location and confirmation with Andrew

Ideally each session would be 7-9pm and soft refreshments could be provided (if appropriate). CES had agreed to attend at least two of the sessions.

Matters Arising and Any Other Business

Anne Macdonald

Tanya agreed to send membership forms to Douglas and Patricia Moir.

Action: TC

Anne confirmed that the recent statement by the Highland Council to only allow the first £100,000 of future renewable projects to go direct to the local community would not apply to Soirbheas.

There was a wind-farm community drop-in session arranged for the 31st March in Balnain for another project and Mary agreed she would attend if at all possible.

Action: MB

Donald provided an update on his windfarm project near Abriachan and Kiltarlity. This impacted 10 communities and planning permission was with the Scottish ministers. The developers had agreed to pay a fee to the Scottish community foundation who would distribute the £300-500k per year generated to the communities.

Anne has come across some information regarding the Forestry Commission's joint ventures with a number of energy companies. These indicated a deadline of 15th April for expressions of interest in regard to wind or hydro schemes. It was not clear what was involved but it was agreed that if no commitment was required, then the board supported providing an expression of interest. Anne agreed to investigate and submit our interest if appropriate.

Action: AM

Pauline would be standing down as treasurer after the next AGM so a volunteer to take over was needed. The work was not very time consuming. The board noted its appreciation of the work done by Pauline.

Action: All

Future Meetings

Anne Macdonald

It was agreed that the next meetings would be on 28th April, 26th May and the AGM would be on the 23rd June.

Conclusions: N/A

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
Ask Mike for copy of grid connection offer letter	Anne	ASAP
Circulate draft Lottery briefing paper from CES for review	Anne	DONE

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
Set up meeting with Lottery fund	Anne	ASAP
Set-up (and attend) call with lawyer on Soirbheas structure	Anne (& Tanya)	In progress
Give go-ahead to external review of Soirbheas project	Anne	ASAP
Post all key planning documents on Soirbheas website	Mary	ASAP
Set up update meeting with Mike to review project status and risks and confirm modus operandi	Anne	ASAP
Complete project documentation including risk register	Tanya	17 th April
Confirm Coop objectives for project	Tanya	ASAP
Circulate revised project update document to board	Tanya	Done
Circulate initial list of groups to be invited to community drop-ins	Anne	ASAP
Work with CES for spice up drop-in flyer	Mary	ASAP
Arrange drop-in sessions	Anne& Tanya	ASAP
Send membership forms to Douglas and Patricia Moir	Tanya	DONE
Attend wind-farm drop in at Balnain on March 31 st	Mary	31 st March
Investigate and express interest if appropriate Forestry Commission's joint ventures with energy companies	Anne	14 th April
Identify candidates for Treasurer position	ALL	ASAP

DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS: Thursday 28th April 2011

Chairman:

Clerk to the Board:

Erik Trelfer

Date: