

RHU AND SHANDON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Wednesday 13th February 2013

Rhu Village Hall

7.30pm

AGENDA

- 1. APOLOGIES**
- 2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON DECEMBER 12TH 2012.**
- 3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA**
 - a. **From 3a:**Awaiting further response from Alistair Hope.
 - b. **Item 6:** Speeds on the A814 .
 - c. **Item 7:** Flooding in the community area. Letter sent to Jim Smith cic. 27/1/13
 - d. **Item 10 :** The Council's digital site has been highlighted on the website.
 - e. **Item 12:** An article about our Japanese Knotweed Task force appeared in the February edition of the Community Advertiser.
 - f. Any other matters arising.
- 4. GUEST SPEAKERS**
 - a. Constable Andy Crawford
 - b. Cdr James Leatherby
- 5. PLANNING MATTERS**
 - a. Rhu Marina :verbal report
 - b. Cove Wind Farm: minutes of open meeting on website
- 6. LOCAL PLAN:** Twelve week consultation starting 4/2/2013
- 7. Rhu Bowling Club**
- 8. ARGYLL AND BUTE BUDGET.** Papers circulated. Response by 13th February
- 9. OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO SPEAK**
- 10. TREASURER'S REPORT** on website
- 11. CORRESPONDENCE**
- 12. WEBSITE PROGRESS**
- 13. MEMBERS REPORTS**
- 14. AOB**

AS ALWAYS, THIS IS AN OPEN MEETING AND ANY RHU OR SHANDON RESIDENT IS WELCOME TO ATTEND.

Item 5b: Minutes of special meeting to determine the response of the Council to the Cove Wind Farm Planning application. Held on 28th January at 7.30 at Rhu and Shandon Community Centre
Attendance, Total 37

Community Councillors (9)

Jack Rudram
 Pat Pollok-Morris
 Jean Cook
 Gordon King
 Fiona Baker
 Jayne Burnett
 Jim Duncan
 Linda Duncan
 Ronald Sandeman

Lomond North Councillors (1)

Maurice Corry

Wind farm representatives (4)

A.Louise Young
 Murdo MacDonald
 Laurence Slavin
 Malcolm Brown

Rhu and Shandon Residents (21)

Alastair Moore
 Brian Black
 Chris Black
 Chris Lee
 David Pollock
 Douglas Black
 Douglas Young
 Elizabeth Henderson
 Fraser Anderson
 Gay Black
 George Anderson
 Keith Whaley
 M Pollock
 Marion Anderson
 Michael Low
 Myr Whaley
 Patricia Low
 Sanna Bystrom
 Ted Horan
 Tim Henderson
 Trevor Dacombe

Reporter(1)

Ruth McClean

Non Resident(1)

Alastair McBeth

Apologies(3)

Cllr George Freeman
 Andrew Nicholson
 Martin Ritch

Jack Rudram opened the meeting at 7:30 pm welcomed those present. He explained that the purpose of the meeting was to help the Rhu and Shandon Community Council decide whether to make representation to the planning application for the proposed Cove Community Wind Power Generation project and what form that representation should take.

Details of the Cove Community Wind Farm planning application can be found on the Argyll and Bute Council website planning reference number 12/02695/PP. - Erection of five wind turbines (up to 92.5m high to blade tip) with associated control building, hardstandings, underground cabling and construction compound and formation of new access track and upgrading of existing track. Land at Barbour Farm, Knockderry Farm and Clynder Woodland Cove Helensburgh Argyll and Bute. The equipment will be situated on the 130m contour line making the blade tip height of almost 225m above sea level. The height of the hills to the East of the development form a ridge of 160-190m. The purpose of the scheme is to generate an income of £300-400k for use in the improvement of local amenities and has no commercial interests. The development will be clearly visible from the West side of Loch Long and will have some impact in areas of Rhu, Shandon and Helensburgh. The development appears to contravene Argyll and Bute council's policy for development within a Conservation area but in line with the Scottish Governments policy for promotion of renewable energy. It is also acknowledged that the project is made more acceptable because it is community led. Comments are invited from individuals as well as groups, such as R&SCC, on the A&B Council's website. The meeting was then opened up for public comment.

The following points were made

- an application for 9 turbines above Shandon had been rejected on the grounds that it would be visible from the National Park.
- the John Muir Trust wind farm document argues against the 30% capacity. Over a period of 2 years the output was considerably less. There were a number of examples of turbine efficiency ranging from 24-27%.
- The visual assessments that had been carried out included no images taken from Shandon. In answer to this, Mr MacDonald reiterated that the photo montages were taken strictly in accordance with the official requirements by approved professional consultants. The photos of the sixteen sites that were chosen have been displayed at presentations including in the meeting of 29 October in Rhu. He estimated that 200-300 residences will have a view of the turbine blades.
- the 'industrial sized' turbines are inappropriate in a rural area on an exposed ridge and would have an effect on wildlife in the area.
- wire frame drawings had been done which show the proportion of the turbines above the hills depended on the viewing angle.
- some communities in France have benefited greatly from similar projects.
- even though a lot of work had gone into the planning of the Cove project, areas outwith the peninsula were affected but receiving no benefit.
- every penny of the income generated would go into saving the community. Amenities such as the football pitch and children's play area have fallen into disrepair through lack of funding, similarly the church hall and community centre.
- the impact of the road building necessary for the development is minimal
- there would be no impact on the TV signal as a result of the development
- micro-siting with a suggested tolerance of 50m has been applied for but assurance was given by the Trust's representative that there would be no departure from the 130m contour.
- micro-siting, in consultation with SEPA will be finalised by April or May 2013
- if 50m turbines were used, 13 would be needed to provide the same capacity
- the more efficient vertical vane towers are likely to be the future
- there would be a loss of environmental amenity in most areas
- the wind farm is near a conservation site and would have a negative effect on wild life
- the economy of wind turbines is questionable
- this development was financially good for a small group and disadvantageous to everyone else.
- although wind turbines in the Helensburgh area are contrary to Argyll and Bute policy and opposed by the National Park, Cove has gone through due process.

The general discussion for the meeting was concluded with a show of hands which resulted in 6 in favour of the Cove wind farm and 23 against.

At 8:45 pm there was a short break to allow non residents and those residents who did not wish to stay to leave the room.

Members of Rhu and Shandon Community Council convened to discuss the course of action.

There was clearly opposition to the Wind Farm at the meeting but the meeting may not be fully representative of the community as people were more likely to attend to oppose rather than support the plan.

- There was support for what the Trust was trying to do for its community.
- The reality of wind power is that it is having some impact on electricity generation but it is questionable whether the energy used in manufacturing the turbines takes too long to recoup.
- There was no mention in the plans of the lifespan of the project or funds laid aside for decommissioning. This was assumed to be part of the all in cost.
- The financial benefit comes from government subsidy but it assists in achieving renewable targets.
- The turbines are sited in an area of outstanding natural beauty within a conservation area, with a consequent loss of amenity by visual impact, although one member felt that the visual impact from Rhu would be minimal. The effects of micro-siting could change this,
- There were some worries with regard to the effect on house prices.

From the R&SCC perspective we cannot make any challenge on the economics or government policy and any objection would have to be as the effect on us as a neighbouring community.

We have 3 options:

1. Do nothing. This is outside our area and is broadly tolerable. Individuals are able to make comment or object to the plans.
2. Support. Difficult to justify with the vote given, however it was pointed out that Individuals are able to support the plans.
3. Object. The vote would suggest that this should be the course of action

Option 3 was proposed by Jim Duncan and seconded by Pat Pollock Morris. The objection was on grounds of visual impact and uncertainty of the micro-siting tolerance.

The meeting was closed at 9:35 pm.

RHU and SHANDON COMMUNITY COUNCIL
Ordinary Meeting. Wednesday 13th February 2013

Item 10: Cash Book to Feb 4 2013

Income		£		
Opening Balance		787.76		
Bank Interest				
A&B grant		400.00		
Administration Grant		162.50		
TOTAL		1,350.26		
Expenditure				
Hall rent		100.00		
Website Domain Registration			18.00	early March
Gala Fund		207.00		
Ad-free Website		24.95		
Mailing and Stamps		7.45		
TOTAL		339.40		
Closing Balance Feb 4 2013		1,010.86		