



STONEHAVEN & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL
EXTRA BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES
 19:00– 21:00 Tuesday 21 January 2025
 Meeting held in the Sheriff Court Buildings, Stonehaven

Present		
Community Council Members: Andy McArdle (AMcA), Alistair Lawrie (AL) <i>Vice-Chair Person via Zoom</i> , Audrey Malcolm (AM), Brian Menzies (BM), Caroline Duguid (CD), Daniel Veltman (DV), David Lawman, <i>Chair Person</i> (DL), Fiona Tavindale (FT), Ian Hunter (IH), James Morrison (JM), James Stephen (JS), Julie Lindeman, <i>Secretary via Zoom</i> , (JL), Norman MacKay (NMck) <i>Treasurer</i> , Phil Mills-Bishop (PMB), Rachel Frame (RF), Raymond Christie (RC) & Steve McQueen (SMcQ)		
Aberdeenshire Council Elected Members: Alan Turner (Cllr T) <i>via Zoom</i> , Dawn Black (Cllr B) <i>via Zoom</i> , & Sarah Dickinson (Cllr D) <i>via Zoom</i>		
In Attendance -		
Zoe Archer, Steven Park, Andrew Ritchie, James MacKinnon, Hugh Ramsay, James Adamson, Joanne Adamson, Catriona Masson, Stuart Rodley, Kate Matthews, Brian Wade, Mick Margiott, David Potter, Glory Potter, Angie D., Caroline Farquhar (Tess White MSP), Gillian Walker, Kay Wood, George Masson, Louise Malcolm, Regina Erich, Allan Sutherland		
1 & 2	Chairperson's Welcome and Rollcall	Action
	DL welcomed everyone to the meeting, including those who were attending via Zoom.	
3	Apologies and Declarations of Interest	
	n/a	
4	SSEN's Hurlie 400 kV Substation @ Fetteresso Forest Planning Application	
	<p>a) <u>Introductions / Meeting Format</u> DL explained the meeting format, and advised SSEN confirmed on Friday afternoon, that they had nobody available from the project team who were available to attend the meeting.</p> <p>DL advised as SDCC wished to understand the views of the community it represents, they only extracted data from those with an AB39 post code.</p>	

b) Survey Results / Quick Overview

BM run through the results of the survey and highlighting the following points:

- There were 306 respondents with AB39 postcodes.
- Over 75% of the respondents objected to the substation.
- Just under 80% of the respondents objected to the pylons.
- Just over 80% of the respondents said their view was clear, i.e. they did not have mixed views.
- Just under 65% of respondents positively to the question about Community Wealth Fund. they thought.
- Example comments from the survey highlighted.

The full results of the survey are available on slides 8 to 16 of the SDCC presentation, which can be found as an appendix to the minuets.

c) SSEN

As noted above SSEN did not attend the meeting. The view of the meeting, especially members of the public, was it just showed the disrespect / contempt SSEN showed to the community.

DL advised the meeting that SSEN had offered to try and answer any questions we submitted to them prior to the meeting, unfortunately we never received a response prior to the meeting.

The questions which SDCC submitted to SSEN are included within the SDCC presentation, (page 18) which can be found as an appendix to the minuets.

PMB from SDCC, provided some commentary in an effort to provide a balance to the discussion.

PMB stated SDCC & residents should be looking at the Hurlie application APP/2024/1951 and not the Pylon or any other infrastructure as no application has not been submitted by SSEN and even when it did it would be under a different process where s37 of 1989 Electricity Act triggered and representations made to the Energy Consents Unit (ECU).

d) Save Our Mearns (SOM)

Both Kate Matthews and Brian Wade from SOM talked us through their presentation and answered many questions / responded to comments from both SDCC members and members of the public.

Points included:

- Approving, Hurlie, will open the doors to many other projects, industrialising the area.

- Showing maps that detailed the many projects that are in the pipeline for both of Kintore and Tealing, as an indication of what will follow at Hurlie.
- Comments on Community benefit.
- Highlighted potential issues with:
 - Increased risk of flooding in Stonehaven
 - Construction traffic
 - Damage to roads
 - Noise, air, water and soil pollution
 - Visual impacts / loss of recreational space
 - Impacts on tourism, agriculture, property & local business

The presentation can also be found as an appendix to the minutes.

There was discussion about alternatives to pylons, including subsea cables and underground HVDC, which is used in the likes of Germany. It was noted the initial cost of underground HVDC was more expensive, but similar (or even cheaper) in the long run.

PMB responded stating he had researched it and that it was partly underground but massively subsidised by the EU and surplus energy sold to other EU Members. PMB said underground cabling would be 5 times more costly, drastically scar the landscape (particularly during construction) and make repair/inspection much more difficult/costly.

There was also discussion about the potential increased levels of flooding, due to large areas being concreted over. Plus it was noted SEPA had submitted a holding objection while they requested further information. PMB advised this was standard practice, while further details were being requested.

There was a discussion about the Biggar Socio-Economic Report which is included within the Hurlie planning application, where PMB in response to comments made by Kate Mathews (SOM) and Mr Brian Wade (SOM) stated that Biggar was an Independent Edinburgh based consultancy with impressive credentials, project achievements and a client list including Government and Local Government departments; Universities and Communities Groups etc. Also, that the use of Gross Value Added (GVA) metric is an accepted indicator of economic activity and value by National Government when calculating GDP and similarly Regional Government on what a project would bring to the local economy and Aberdeenshire Economic Development had made no objection to the report nor use of GVA. Additionally, other impacts/costs highlighted by Kate Mathews/Brian Wade would be covered by SSEN within their Developers Obligation discussions with Aberdeenshire Council.

e) Community Benefit

BM run through some slides on the SDCC presentation, with the following points being highlighted:

- Why is a community wealth fund important for Stonehaven.
- How significant can a community wealth fund be?
- Current situation with SSEN in Stonehaven.
- Other examples for Stonehaven.
- The Potential.
- Who will benefit from the proposed infrastructure?
- Who will not benefit from the proposed infrastructure?
- What can we do about this?

See slides 20 to 28 of the SDCC presentation, which can be found as an appendix to the minutes.

There was much discussion, including the both the concern any benefits would not reach those most affected by the proposed infrastructure and that talk of accepting community benefits at this time would dilute the message that the community did not wish this project to proceed in any shape or form.

During the discussion on Community Benefit / Funding, PMB advised the current SSEN Community Funding amounts available: Regionally £40M (up to £100M with Government approval) and Local Community Fund for Health & Wellbeing projects of £225k (51 Grants of £5000) PMB also stated he agreed these appeared not as substantial as they could eventually be; but did not agree with the use of the phrase "peanuts" as describes by some others.

f) Q & A – General Questions / Comments From Members of the Public

SDCC members took the opportunity to listen to the views of the many members of the public present. There was great understanding and empathy when those who would be most affected by the project told their stories and explained how it would change their life, it was real people speaking.

g) Q&A – SDCC Members Questions / Members Deliberation

AMcA asked if we should be contacting our MP's and MSP etc. DL advised the previous SDCC along with many local community councils had written to with our concerns to our MP's & MSP's along with many government ministers expressing our concerns.

After discussion the following motions were discussed / agreed. SDCC members.

SDCC Members voted to object to the proposed planning application, by 16 votes to 1.

	<p>SDCC Members agreed not to pursue any community benefit at this time, as did not wish to dilute the clear message they and the community of Stonehaven did not support the planning application.</p> <p>Taking into account all our discussions, the following SDCC members will work together to prepare our submission to Aberdeenshire Council objecting to the planning application. DL, AL, JL, BM, AMcA & RF.</p>	
5	Dates of Next Meetings	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda Discussion Meeting: Tuesday 4th February 2025 @ 7pm • Business Meeting: Tuesday 11th February 2025 @ 7pml 	