

Carr-Bridge & Vicinity Community Council

The Pines
Station Road
CARR-BRIDGE PH23 3AN

25th September 2009

George Moodie
Planning Department
Highland Council
Glenurquart Road
INVERNESS

Dear Sir

Tom nan Clach Windfarm – Planning Application – 09/00439/FULIN

The Community Council held a public meeting in the village hall on 9th September to gather opinion in regard to the above application. Although the meeting was attended by a number of people from outside the village only residents were allowed to vote. 67 people attended. 55 were Carrbridge and Duthil residents. Of those allowed to vote 43 (78%) voted against and 3 (5%) voted in favour and therefore the Community Council must consider that the feeling within the community is strongly against the application. All others present were from surrounding villages. The letter was agreed by members at the Council meeting on 24th of September.

The objections are as follows:

There is a presumption against development in this area.

- The Dava area is an outstanding natural wilderness with an existing presumption against development which should be respected.
- We further understand that, due to the habitat and the wildlife, this application would go against EU directives.
- This type of development is more suited to an industrial area.

Construction traffic.

- The proposed route for much of the construction traffic is on one of our 'Safer routes to school' and is already a hazardous stretch on the Old Inverness Road within the village.
- Increased heavy traffic must, of necessity, increase the risk of accident. The roads are, at present, unsuitable for this volume.
- This road forms part of the Sustrans cycle route and is therefore unsuitable for increased usage by heavy traffic.
- The B9007 is currently unsuitable for heavy traffic and is often closed in the winter months.

Economic impact.

- Tourism is the main source of income for this area. A Tour operator present at the meeting said that his European clients come here for the wild open spaces and they cannot believe that this can be allowed to happen here. Most have said they won't come back if this project goes ahead.
- For every 1% drop in tourism numbers this equates to £1.5 million in lost revenue, of which Carr-Bridge and the outlying villages in this area of the Spey Valley will bear the brunt.
- As there is already an economic impact study ongoing and this is so important to the area we ask that the study information should be reflected in the planning process.

The technical inadequacy of the application.

- No data is available regarding the supporting buildings, transformers and transmission lines which will all have a visual impact.
- There is insufficient information regarding the construction, e.g. the amount of peat that is to be removed and where will it be put.
- The peat bog stores carbon but carbon will be released during the construction which is counter productive and will also produce methane.
- Concrete bases may have an effect on the remaining peat bog and the applicant has not demonstrated any understanding of this long term.
- Toxins from maintenance and operations will leech into the peat and thence the rivers resulting in overall damage to the water table. It was noted that there was no facility for collecting the effluent from the detergents used to wash down the turbines.

Furthermore we would like some assurances on the following matters:

Overall plan for windfarms. Communities have to invest a lot of time to discuss and learn about these applications on an individual basis. This application is only one of several in the area making the total number of turbines difficult to visualise. It would be advantageous if an overall plan was made rather than piecemeal planning applications where the same arguments are gone over time after time. The meeting considered that it must surely be a fundamental of planning that areas of industrial development are zoned differently to areas of amenity, recreation and environmental sensitivity and if that is so how can such random applications be made? Piecemeal applications confuse all those affected who presently do not know what developments and on what scale may be allowed, let alone that applications are difficult to track.

Timescale and Extent The meeting considered the possibility that this development could go much further than the 17 turbines of this application, in that 50 turbines were included within the original scoping application for Tom nan Clach and that if a planning application for Glenkirk was successful but without the planned access over the Findhorn, then it was possible that any Glenkirk development would be accessed by the Tom nan Clach route and approach roads through Carrbridge. This was of major concern to those present.

Visual Impact. The visuals are difficult to understand and appear to diminish distance when seen from the viewpoints. How is it possible to hold the photomontages at an exact distance? We request straight-forward photographs and that a further study in line with HC's own guidelines is done to ensure that the visual impact is easily understood by non specialists and members of the public. The images in the Non Technical Summary are especially misleading.

Removal. Once the equipment is redundant we would require assurances that the developer will return the site to its original state. The planning application only says that turbines "may be removed" after a 25 year period and the meeting considered that it would be impossible to reinstate the site to its condition as a natural peat ecosystem due to the length of time it takes peat to develop.

Yours truly,

Pete Carson
Planning Representative