

Heriot Community Council

Minutes of meeting, 7th February 2024

1. Present: John Williams (Chair), Frank Connelly, Helen Brinkworth (minutes), Cllr. Hannah Steele, two members of the public, secretary of Moorfoot Community Council
Apologies: Gavin Whittaker, Sue Sharp, Cllr. Fay Sinclair, Cllr. Neil McKinnon, Cllr. Euan Jardine

2. Minutes accepted

3. Torfichen Windfarm

- a. Windfarm proposal of 19 turbines at a tip height of up to 180m and a proposed energy storage facility. Located at the northern edge/escarpment of the Moorfoot Hills, within Midlothian Council but following the boundary next to Heriot. This is to the north side of the Granites Road B7007 and overlooking Middleton.
<https://www.torfichen-windfarm.co.uk/>
- b. Visible from Nettlingflat, Corsehope rings and other high ground locations in Heriot but hidden from low areas within valleys.
- c. SBC landscape capacity study states turbine should not be visible on the escarpment and reporters' decisions on previous windfarms are supporting this position.
- d. Moorfoot CC: comment is that they are opposed to development. It is closer to the village than expected and will lead to a bigger impact than first expected. However, quarry development is seen as the bigger issue for the village. MCC would like a joint response with the use of the Heriot expertise to write it.
- e. Heriot hoping to use landscape comments from local estates to inform the response. Main concern is of combined impact with other windfarm applications.
- f. FC comment: capacity issue as connections not existing for more windfarms and battery use for energy storage facility not having a fixed design criteria or regulated.
- g. Public comments:
 - i. infrastructure bottleneck
 - ii. Hang gliders would no longer have the use of the escarpment.
 - iii. While not strongly opposed to the windfarm – these turbines are overly big and numerous.
 - iv. Survey that is part of the application does not record the high numbers of geese that are present in the area – estimated at 500 geese at certain times.
- h. JW: Torfichen is promising large amounts of community benefits payments.
- i. Voting on response.

HB abstaining until viewing the Landscape Capacity study for Midlothian. There should be a clear separation between the Heriot and Moorfoot opinions within the response as there is minimal impact on Heriot.

JW and FC vote to object. GW support for objection prior to meeting.

4. Police Report
 - a. Not relevant to Heriot
 - b. All reported incidents of antisocial behaviour and serious crime located in Galashiels.
 - c. HS is part of SBC police meetings and can take comments to them about lack of information regarding traffic accidents/crimes. Statistics about traffic incidents are collected by SBC.

5. Petition to SBC re handling of s36 wind farm applications.
 - a. John Campbell leading on organising a petition asking that SBC should change policy re s36 applications that come before the planning committee. Community councils are asking that SBC should take all comments from the community and submit them to the SBC planning committee for consideration of local opinion and concerns.
 - b. JW taking this issue to Euan Jardine.

6. Planning and Windfarms
 - a. JW to attend presentation on planning for all CCs in Scottish borders.
 - b. Wull Muir
 - i. Expected to be in front of the planning committee in March.
 - c. Greystone Knowe
 - ii. SBC landscape have commented that some turbines should be taken out from the application. GSK likely to be refused.
 - d. Scawd Law
 - iii. SBC landscape recommending refusal.
 - e. Leithenwater
 - iv. Application should arrive soon.
 - f. Longcroft
 - v. Windfarm proposal of 19 x 220m turbines - visible from Lauder Common and Edinburgh - about 9km north of Lauder in the Lammermuir Hills. <https://longcroft-windfarm.co.uk/> "The annual generation from the proposed wind turbines, based on an anticipated 46.4% capacity factor, is estimated at approximately 509 gigawatt-hours (GWh)"
 - vi. JW: only grounds for objection are for cumulative and landscape impact
 - vii. Vote to object from JW, advance request to object from GW, vote to object from HW on grounds of cumulative impact.

7. Scottish Government Consultation on 'Proposals for a Heat in Buildings Bill'
 - a. SS to comment/respond to consultation on behalf of CC.
 - b. concern from members of the community about how this will impact rural areas and old properties with requirements to change heating systems and upgrade insulation when purchasing a house.
 - c. objection point that rural communities do not have access to urban options such as communal heating schemes.

8. Community funds
 - a. Three new defibrillators have been installed and locations registered for 999 calls. Defibrillators now available at Crookston, Nettlingflat, Macfie Hall and Heriot Station. All are within protective cases, but these are unlocked.
 - b. Microgrants: no new requests

9. AOB

- a. Notice boards: FC organising for noticed boards to be taken down and refurbished one at a time by a member of local community, estimate £150-£200 each. No response from FS about possible free notice board from SBC.
- b. A7 Action Group: No news from Gavin.
- c. Windfarm money: no action yet to change limit on microgrant.
- d. Windfarm panel: have agreed action plan for local survey and contacting local groups.
- e. Scottish Government consultation is available for people to respond to at <https://consult.gov.scot/local-government-and-communities/democracy-matters/>
- f. Heriot underpass in need of some maintenance – lights sometimes off in the evening (on during the day), stair edge strips missing, mirror broken. HS to query SBC about maintenance and HB to report issues.
- g. Likely possibility that Heriot Kirk will not be a functioning church in the future as the current situation with 3 churches linked together is not sustainable.