

Alliance update – to 20th March 2013

Conjoined Public Inquiry

We want to encourage people to speak up at the Inquiry and to say how they will be affected by the blight of the windfarms. This is our chance to show the Inspector the depth and breadth of feeling throughout the area. We held the first two meetings last weekend, in Meifod and Newtown, to guide people on how they can present their statement. Bearing in mind that about 170 have registered to take part in the Inquiry we know that many more will want to come to these sessions. The message was that people should not be afraid to turn up at the Inquiry to speak their minds. If you say how it will affect you, you will not be challenged, and will be treated with consideration. The Inspector is encouraging community participation and intends to hold some evening sessions in local community centres.

We are therefore planning more sessions, so that all who want to can take part.

The final Inquiry timetable was at last released earlier this week, along with the Inspector's notes of the Pre Inquiry Meeting. Please note that Public Inquiries run from Tuesday to Friday inclusive, never on a Monday.

Starting on 4th June there will be an opening 4 days on planning matters (all technical stuff). The detailed examination of the applications will not start until 3rd September. The first to be considered (over 24 days) are the three in SSA C: Llanbadarn Fynydd, Llaithddu and Llandinam. This gives plenty of time for individuals to think what they might say, and to get help from us on how best to say it.

The other two windfarms, in SSA B (Llanbrynmair and Carnedd Wen), will be considered from 5th November (for 24 days). The Llandinam line will be considered from 21st January 2014 (for 20 days). The Cumulative Effect session begins on 18th March 2014 for just 16 days. The closing session starts on 20th May (for 7 days) and the Inquiry is due to finish on 30th May 2014 after total sittings of 95 days over 25 weeks.

The Inspector asks that all interested persons should

- Prepare a list of selected viewpoints for his eventual site visits to the windfarm sites and the Llandinam connection route.
- Help decide at which community centres to hold the evening Inquiry sessions.

So please send us your thoughts on these.

As you know, the Alliance made an oral application at the first PIM on 18th February (further to a written application made on 4th February), that the Inquiry should be deferred until it could consider the effects of the grid connections as well as those of the windfarms. It is Ed Davey's department, DECC, that makes the final decision on that application. The Inspector announced at the start of the second PIM on 25th February that he would not recommend to DECC that the current Inquiry procedure should be halted. He has to report that recommendation to DECC but we understand that he has yet to make that formal report. We must therefore wait a bit longer until we know DECC's opinion.

National Grid and Bruton Knowles

National Grid's latest Spring Project News, which many of you will have received recently, tells us that they always hope to work amicably with land owners on a voluntary basis, and only look at serving legal notices as a last resort. As a result of the letters many of you sent to the Planning Directorate, we hear that, when NG/BK do apply to them for leave to serve any legal notices, they should first give anyone affected 21 days notice to allow them to make further representation to the Planning Directorate.

Fundraising

The support from the public has been really heartfelt. A number of people have contributed amounts well in excess of £100 and some as much as £1,000. So far we have raised just under £40,000, the rest coming in smaller amounts from a large number of donors. We have now reached a plateau and, in the run up to Easter, the Alliance feature in the County Times will now be suspended until April 5th.

The County Times will then launch a petition, to object to the wind farms, overhead lines, National Grid hub and 400kV pylons, aiming to get as many signatures as possible. The petition will also be available online and in hard copy form at various outlets throughout Powys and North Shropshire. Copies will also be given to each member of the Alliance. At the same time we will re-launch the donation form which will run alongside the petition in the County Times.

The petition will run until the end of May and will then be handed to the Inspector at the opening of the Public Inquiry on June 4th.

The groups within the Alliance are currently:

Conservation of Upland Powys

Montgomeryshire Against Pylons and windfarms

STOP Windfarms and Pylons

Rhiwcyonon Against Pylons

Valleys Against Destruction (formerly Abermule Action Group)

Mochdre Action Group

Llansanffraid Action Group and Community Council

Llanymynech Action Group and Community Council

Shropshire North Against Pylons

Cambrian Mountains Society

The Rainbow Trails Project Dyfnant Forest Llangadfan

Trannon Residents Against Power Plans

Country Guardian

Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (CPRW)

Rea Valley Against Pylons

Bwlch-y-Cibau and Peniarth Residents against Windfarm (and Pylon) Developments

Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (Shropshire branch)

Mid Wales Arts Centre

Save Trannon Moor Action Group

Montgomeryshire Federation of Women's Institutes