SOLWAYBANK WIND FARM

power for good

June 2011

Welcome to the Solwaybank Wind Farm newsletter from RES – providing the community with an update on the progress of our proposal.

What's new?

In 2009, RES submitted a planning application to Dumfries and Galloway Council for a 21 turbine wind farm at Solwaybank. Since submitting our original application, RES has received comments from the local community and consultees. We have taken on board the comments and modified our proposal as a result. We withdrew our original application in July 2010 in order to redesign the layout of the site and reduce the number of turbines.

What are we proposing?

RES is proposing a 15 turbine wind farm at Solwaybank. The proposed site is south of the B7068. The wind farm is expected to have an installed capacity of approximately 30MW. This means that the proposed wind farm is estimated to generate electricity equivalent to the average annual demand of more than 17,000 households – or approximately 25% of the households in Dumfries and Galloway*. The proposed wind turbines will have a maximum blade tip height of 126.5m and an expected life of 25 years.

We are hoping to submit a planning application in the autumn and have started a consultation process with the local community to present our current proposals. This process will enable the community to feed in their views and opinions on our proposal, and that will help shape our final application.

Why wind?

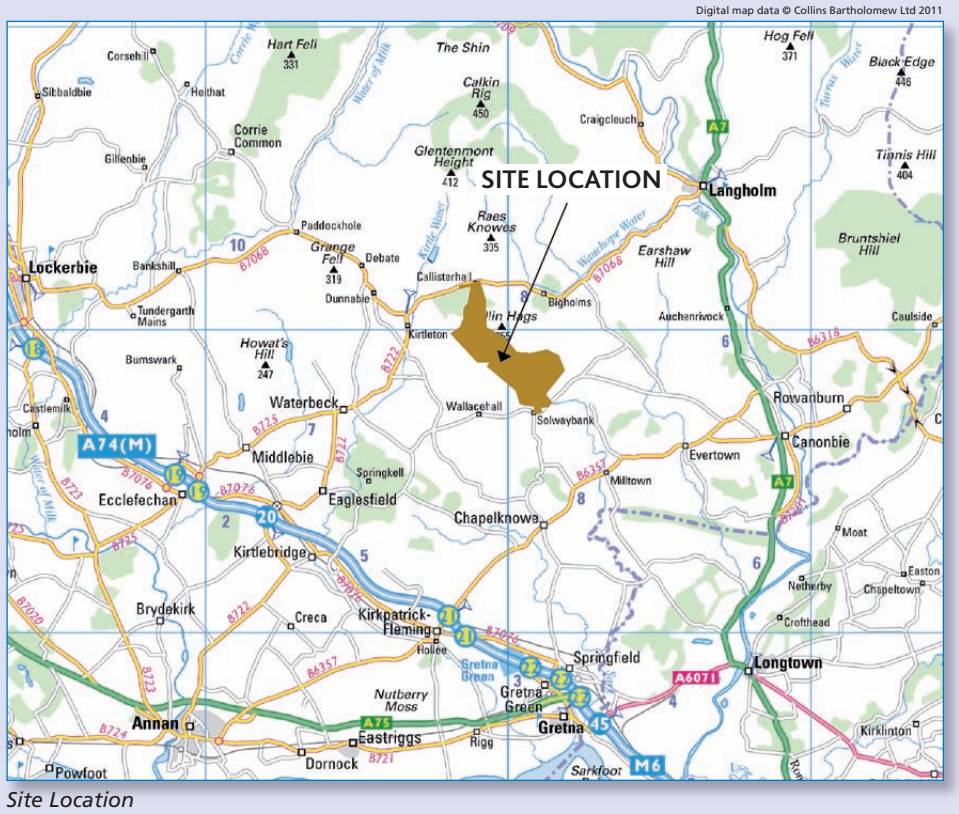
The time is right to step up the development of cleaner, greener energy sources. Renewable energy can reduce climate-changing pollution, provide a reliable supply of electricity to homes and businesses, create 'greencollar' jobs and bring important economic benefits, both locally in Dumfries and Galloway and nationally.

As the most advanced renewable energy technology, onshore wind power has a vital role to play in meeting our needs. In rural areas, there are many ways in which local communities benefit from having a wind farm in their area – such as rental payments to farmers and landowners; local taxes; infrastructure improvements; habitat enhancement schemes; recreation; and community funds and sponsorship that can help finance local projects.

We are committed to designing projects that generate reliable, renewable electricity while helping to minimise local impacts and maximising benefits to the Dumfries and Galloway economy.

**based on RES studies and annual average homes consumption figures from DECC statistics on household consumption from 2009*

Digital map data © Collins Bartholomew Ltd 2011



Site Location

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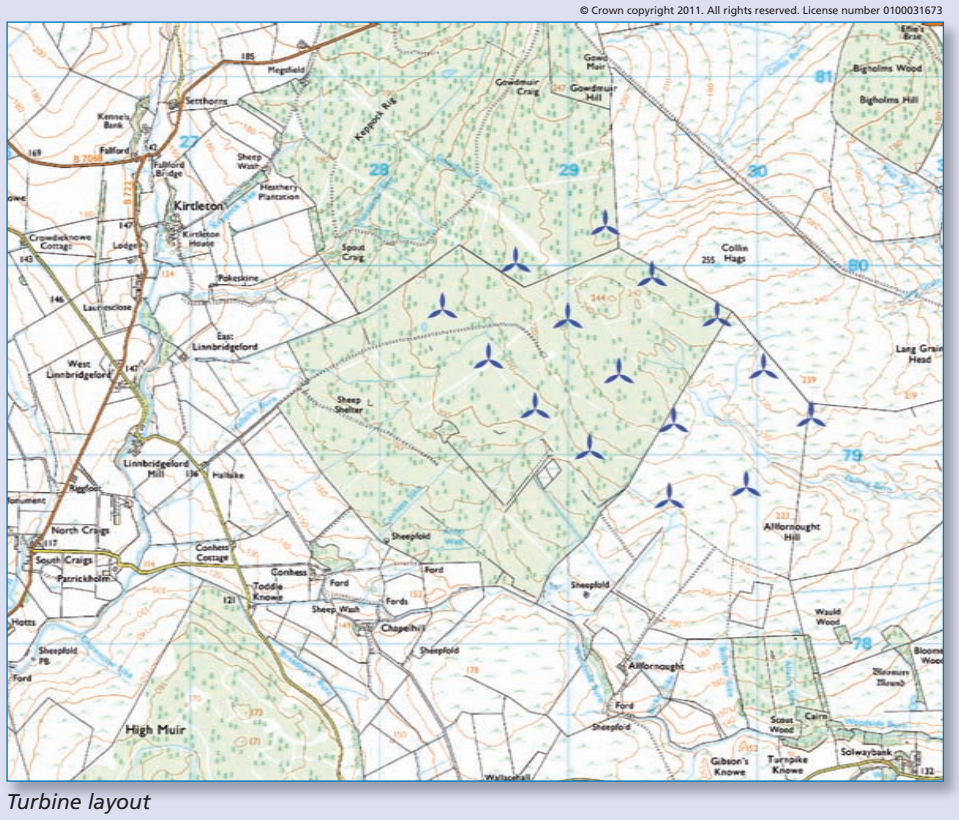


Turbine layout

COME ALONG TO OUR EXHIBITIONS AND FIND OUT MORE!

RES will be holding public exhibitions to share information about our development plans. Local residents will have the opportunity to meet the development team, find out information, ask questions and leave comments on our proposal.

Thursday 30th June 3pm – 8pm, Waterbeck Village Hall
Friday 1st July 10am – 1pm, Eaglesfield Village Hall
Saturday 2nd July 11am – 4pm, Lockerbie Town Hall

We look forward to meeting you and discussing the proposal in more detail. You are welcome to attend any of the exhibitions, as the information displayed at all will be identical.

Local consultation

We believe in meaningful and productive consultation. We have evaluated the consultation undertaken for our previous application and realised that it did not meet the expectations of the local community.

RES has a Community Relations Manager for Solwaybank Wind Farm, Rachel Anderson, and her contact details can be found opposite. Please feel free to contact her if you have any queries about the wind farm at any point during the development process.

Under the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006, which came into force in 2009, RES, is required to submit a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) report setting out how we will consult with the local community over our plans. We submitted our PAN to Dumfries and Galloway Council and this has been approved. It can be downloaded from our website www.solwaybank-windfarm.co.uk.

We have sent our PAN report to all the local Community Councils and we are taking on board their views on how we should undertake our wider public engagement. We have created a Community Liaison Group, where each Community Council sends two representatives. The group acts as a forum to discuss any concerns related to the wind farm and meets every 2-3 months. We believe in open and honest communication with the communities where we are active and publish all of the meeting minutes on our website.

Before we submit our planning application, we will create a Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) report and submit this to Dumfries and Galloway Council. The report will document the engagement process and steps we have taken to adapt our proposal, if necessary. We will ensure the findings are presented with transparency and integrity; once complete the report will be published on our website.

Our aims of the consultation process are to:

- Engage early with the community to facilitate a constructive consultation process; to help RES understand and address concerns.
- Assist the local community in understanding the benefits and impacts of the proposed wind farm.
- Add value and improve the quality of our proposal through meaningful and productive consultation.
- Work with the community to define the structure of the community benefits offered as part of the development.

In accordance with Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Scotland Regulations 2008, Pre-Application Consultation 7(2). Any persons wishing to submit comments can do so either in writing or by e-mail to: Rachel Anderson, RES, Third Floor STV, Pacific Quay, Glasgow, G51 1PQ rachel.anderson@res-ltd.com 0141 404 5531. The closing date for the submission of comments is 29th July 2011. Persons submitting comments in response to the Pre-Application Consultation are advised that comments submitted to RES at this time are not representations to the planning authority (Dumfries and Galloway Council); there will be an opportunity to submit representations to the planning authority should a planning application be made.

Meet the team

Ruth Elder

Ruth is the Project Manager for Solwaybank Wind Farm. She has been overseeing every aspect of the development process and ensuring the relevant studies and assessments are carried out thoroughly. Ruth is available on 0141 404 5528 or email ruth.elder@res-ltd.com

Rachel Anderson

Rachel is the Community Relations Manager for RES in Scotland. She handles all the local community liaison work for Solwaybank Wind Farm and is the first point of contact for the consultation process, community funds, public exhibitions and any media enquiries. Rachel is available on 0141 404 5531/07795 680 803 or email rachel.anderson@res-ltd.com

Why is this a good site for a wind farm?

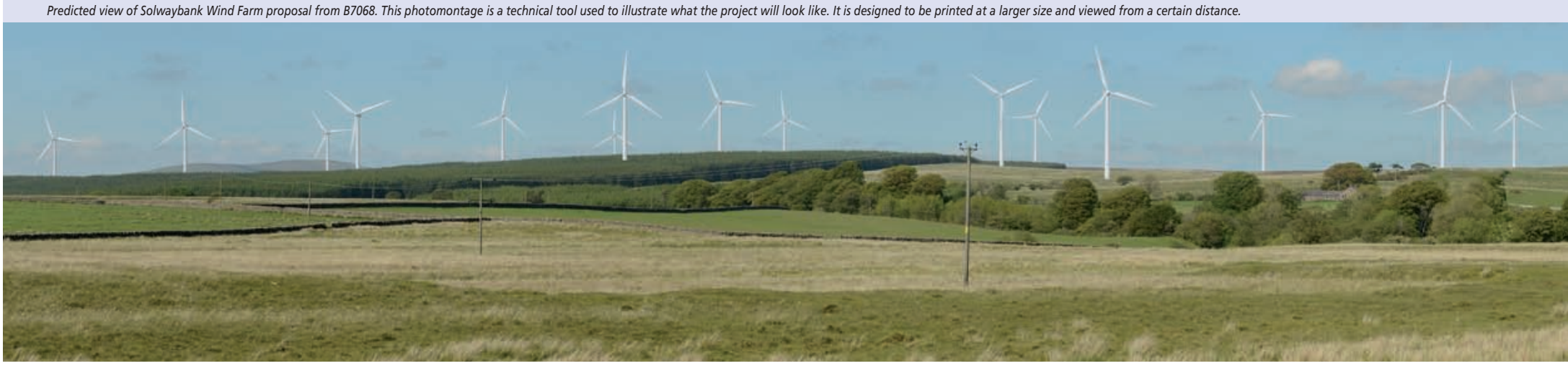
While Dumfries and Galloway benefits from excellent wind speeds, making it an attractive place for wind farm developments, there are many aspects to consider when indentifying a suitable site.

We are confident that this is a very good site for a wind farm and that our sensitively designed project will be an asset to the area. Solwaybank stands out as a great opportunity for a reliable source of renewable energy. Our site selection criteria seeks to balance available wind resource with environmental, technical and other constraining factors to help ensure the project has minimal impact on the environment and local community.

Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) are a compulsory part of the planning process for wind farms. The detailed studies have been co-ordinated by RES's in-house team, with most surveys carried out by independent consultants.

The findings from all of the site studies will be written up as a comprehensive Environmental Statement, which the Council will take into account when deciding whether or not to grant planning permission for the wind farm. Results of the surveys will be presented at the exhibitions, and once the planning application has been submitted, copies will be made available locally.

Predicted view of Solwaybank Wind Farm proposal from B7068. This photomontage is a technical tool used to illustrate what the project will look like. It is designed to be printed at a larger size and viewed from a certain distance.



Benefiting local people and the economy

Community Fund

At each wind farm site we design, construct and operate, our goal is to ensure that we create significant environmental, economic and community benefits. RES is particularly keen to see local communities benefiting from wind farms and for this reason, we offer significant community funds.

The precise mechanism through which the money will be managed will be identified through consultation. We generally prefer that the money is used to bring local environmental benefits and we are particularly keen to see it spent on improving energy efficiency, but ultimately this will be down to the local community to decide. The people who benefit the most from the fund should be those living closest to the wind farm.

We are proposing a community fund of £2,000 per installed MW, which equates to approximately £60,000 per year. We would encourage anyone with a view on how the community fund should be managed or spent to discuss this with us at any time during the planning process. It is important to note that the offer of a community benefit fund will not affect the decision to grant planning permission for the project as it is not a planning matter.

Community funds are operating successfully at other RES wind farms in the UK. For example, at Altahullion Wind Farm in Northern Ireland, the fund has been spent on the creation of a new community riverside pathway and footbridge, entertainment activities for family fun days, summer schemes for local children, and the maintenance and running of community buildings. At Forss Wind Farm, in the Highlands the fund has been spent on the erection of Christmas lights, swimming training camps, sports equipment for the local beaver group and educational trips for students.

Want to visit a wind farm?

With so many different views and arguments about, there is no better way to find out more about wind energy than visiting an operational wind farm. There, you can see for yourself how turbines work and their impact on the surrounding area. RES is always keen to support visits to wind farms and, if you would like to join a trip, please do contact Rachel.

Local jobs

Short to medium-term jobs will be created during the construction period (usually around a year) and we will be looking for local and regional businesses that can provide the following people, services and materials: civil engineering, haulage, concreting, security, electrical skills, etc. There will be additional benefits to other businesses in the area, such as hoteliers.

RES has a track record of using local contractors, this ensures commercial benefits are realised locally and it would be RES's intention to continue this policy at Solwaybank.

A learning resource

RES offers educational opportunities for young people of all ages through its Young Energy education programme. As part of this programme, we are able to arrange independent educational provision on climate change and energy for schools near to our projects. Some schools choose to follow the progress of a wind farm application as a project for their students. Wind farms offer learning opportunities across a whole range of areas in the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence from social studies to sciences, expressive arts and technologies. Please contact Rachel if you would like further information or resources.

If you are a member of local a group such as the Scouts, Guides, Rotary, SWRI, Young Farmers, etc. or work for a local company, and would like us to come and give you a presentation on the wind farm please feel free to contact us.

A good neighbour

In the areas where we are active, RES wishes to be a good neighbour. Although the benefits we offer in terms of a community fund will not be realised until a project is consented and operational, we are nevertheless keen to support community projects during the development process. If you have any ideas of projects we could support in the local areas please let us know.

RES in Scotland

RES is one of the world's leading independent renewable energy developers. We play a vital role in developing and constructing projects that contribute to Scotland's energy supply. RES has developed and/or built over 5GW of wind capacity worldwide. In the UK, we are responsible for development of around 10% of the current wind energy capacity. In Scotland, RES has built seven projects including the recent completed Dun Law Extension project in the Scottish Borders. During 2010, RES commenced construction on its Hill of Towie Wind Farm in Moray and Kelburn Wind Farm in North Ayrshire. From more than 25 years in the wind industry, RES has gained a high level of expertise in the technical, environmental and financial disciplines essential for the development of a successful wind farm. Drawing on decades of experience in the renewable energy and construction industries, RES has the expertise to develop, construct and operate projects of outstanding quality. RES values its community role and active engagement with local residents is an integral part of each RES development.

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FAQ's

Don't wind farms get big subsidies – Isn't that the reason they're built?

The energy market is a highly complex one with many mechanisms to encourage investment in infrastructure which benefits Scotland.

To compete in the short term, new renewable energy technologies need help to get into the market place. The government does not pay subsidies to companies to develop or construct wind farms, but whilst generating, help is provided via the Renewables Obligation Scotland (ROS). The ROS requires power suppliers to derive a specified proportion of the electricity they supply to their customers from renewables. This started at 3% in 2003, rising gradually to 10.4% in 2010 and to 15.4% by 2015. Eligible renewable generators, such as wind farms, receive a Renewables Obligation Certificate (ROC) for each MWh of electricity generated. These certificates can then be sold to suppliers so they can fulfil their obligation to buy electricity from renewable generators.

Will wind farms damage tourism?

That's not what the tourists say! In 2008 a report to the Scottish Government investigated the economic impacts of wind farms on tourism. The findings showed that 75% of people surveyed felt wind farms had a positive or neutral effect on the landscape. Of those surveyed, 97% suggested that wind farms would not have any effect on their intention to visit Scotland again.

There is no evidence that any existing UK wind farm has had any negative effects on tourism. A 2002 MORI poll in Argyll, where there are several existing wind farms, revealed 80% of tourists surveyed said they'd be interested in visiting a wind farm if it were open to the public with a visitor centre. And, twice as many would be 'more likely' to visit again than the number who would be 'less likely' to visit again.

The number of wind farms built in Scotland has increased in recent years and according to recent data from the Office for National Statistics Travel Trends 2007 Report the number of visits to Scotland has an increased year on year over the period 2003-2007.

Scotland is already more than self sufficient in electricity, so why do we need more?

It is true that currently Scotland can produce more electricity than it requires. However, during the next decade, much of our centralised coal, gas and nuclear capacity is due to retire, leaving a generation gap. Whatever makes up the balance, the future lies in Scotland meeting as high a proportion of its needs from clean renewable sources as it can. The Scottish Government's aim is to generate the equivalent of 100% of Scotland's gross annual electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2020.

Wind farms can only produce electricity when the wind is blowing. So can it make a real contribution to our needs?

It is important to remember that the wind is always blowing somewhere in the UK. Recent reports ('Managing Variability' Milborrow, 2009; 'Impact of Intermittency' Pöyry, 2009; 'Operating the system beyond 2020' National Grid, 2009) say that variability is not an obstacle to the deployment of wind energy. A breakdown in large thermal plant will pose more problems to the national grid than the variations in the output of a wind farm. Claims that 100% back up is needed are simply not true. Wind is part of the current and future energy generation mix and adds to the diversity and security of our energy supply.

KEEP AN EYE ON THE PROJECT WEBSITE

We have created a dedicated website where you can keep up to date with the wind farm plans as they progress. On the website there is also the opportunity for you to have a say on the plans.

www.solwaybank-windfarm.co.uk

Benefits of wind energy

Scotland has one of the best wind resources in Europe. By utilising this abundant and free resource we can generate electricity, reducing the need for fossil fuels and harmful emissions such as carbon dioxide. Wind is a tried and tested way of generating electricity and, as Scotland moves from centralised large traditional power stations, such as coal and nuclear, to a more decentralised energy generation wind can play a vital part in this transition. Wind generates clean and secure electricity and contributes to legally binding renewable energy targets.

Any more questions?

If you have any queries or require further information please contact:

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Community Relations Manager
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Email: rachel.anderson@res-ltd.com

If you require information in Braille, large text or Audio please let us know.

We would be happy to cover any issues in more detail in forthcoming newsletters. If you would like to see anything discussed in more detail please let us know.

For those receiving this newsletter by post, we obtained your address through a national post-code database. If you do not wish to receive further information from us about this proposal, please write to us and let us know.

More information about wind power can be found at the following websites:

www.scottishrenewables.com

www.renewable-uk.com

http://windwithmiller.windpower.org/en/kids/index.htm - fun stuff for kids!

www.energysavingstrust.org.uk/scotland

www.res-group.com

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