

Open Meeting- Wind Farm Proposals

15/4/25

Attendees:

Llanfair Clydogu and Cellan Community Council

Dave Bartholomew (meeting chair), Roger Daniel, Simon Aldridge

Llanfihangel ar Arth Community Council

Angela James

Llanllawddog Community Council

Andrew Rees, Harvard Hughes

LLanyfaelog Community Council

Afron Davis, Nicola Jones

Llangunnor Community Council

Geraint Bevan

Lampeter Town Council

Gary Thourgood

Agenda.

- Feedback on Green GEN Cymru Towy Teifi consultations
- Green GEN Cymru court actions
- Dispensation forms
- Future meetings

GG Consultations:

Comments on, and formal responses to the Green GEN Cymru (GG) consultations reported as follows:

LLanllawddog:

Whilst the council recognises the response to Climate Change is necessary it cannot be at 'any cost at all'. Stated a clear preference for under grounding by cable ploughing entire line as opposed to trenching which seems to be GG preference. Has requested GG to supply costings and environmental impact statements previously and have expressed disappointment to GG that they have never responded to those requests. GG stated in the consultation that they have tried to hide/disguise the pylons, however the proposed route can be clearly seen, it affects line of sight and vista, as currently the proposals take the route up and over hills visible to many.

Llanyfaelog:

Outlined the proposed new Substation as their core issue and requested it be included as part of meeting discussions and the meeting title. Although there is some undergrounding proposed, at the end of the line close to the substation, the council wants to see further under grounding of cables to be carried out, also along the length of the entire route. Also it was noted from discussions with GG at the consultations that at the point where the line is undergrounded further infrastructure would be needed to be built to transition from overground to underground. Further, there is more than one line converging into the

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substation and only one is being undergrounded so the question has been posed to GG why the Towy and Teifi lines cannot both be undergrounded at the same time (same trench?). Have also requested Green Gen furnish them with comparison implementation costings (pylon vs underground) as they have been told that undergrounding will be too expensive but with no proof of costs, and an outline of the expected lifespan of both overground and underground options for the network. Concerns were raised around the security aspect of having a large showcase substation in such a rural area. The recent Heathrow substation fire was highlighted and that one of the initial responses was to suggest a possible terror link. They have raised the considerable issues impacting traffic, both commercial and domestic, this includes air traffic. Finally, each line will have its own area of 'substation' and so questions pertaining to the build (screening, noise, pollution, drainage etc.) will need to be raised for each individually.

Llangunor:

Reported that they have seen a significant change to the route from the previous consultation (an improvement in that some sections of the line and the Towy valley line, will be placed underground). In a number of areas along this section of the route there are proposals to underground the cabling (in one instance to take account of a wedding business which lies along the route). They feel that there is some response possibly to 'push back' from communities and have responded to GG to stay their preference is for the whole route through their council area to be completely undergrounded and not to have some parts pylon and some parts underground.

Llanfihangel ar Arth:

Reported they have seen the route changed in Alltwallis as a result of the last consultation, but this now has moved to Pencader where more residents are affected. This council were unaware of this route change until the consultations. From conversations with GG representatives at the consultation it was noted that GG have undergrounded the line around Merlin's Hill near Carmarthen as it is considered an important historical site. The council feel that the Pylons proximity to homes is an issue which justifies further consideration towards undergrounding.

Lampeter:

Although the proposals may not directly affect Lampeter, residents have stated they want to protect the Teifi valley as they see it as part of the heritage of the area. Concerns are focused on limited access along the mainly single-track roadways and asked how the Pylons materials are likely to be delivered along the route without significant disruption to local traffic or destruction to the environment. GG representatives indicated that these logistics will be 'sorted out' after the planning has been given, however this seems to be the 'wrong way around' as there must be full disclosure and visibility of all such facts in order to make an informed decision. As much attention must be applied to how the line will be constructed as to where the pylons are going.

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Llanfair Clydogu & Cellan:

Highlighted the key environmental impacts on forestry area, as the home of a number of protected species. Also noted the potential impact (breach) of the Holford rules on this proposed route or (as noted by GG) re-routing to higher in the valley or along skylines.

The CC's position is the whole line must be undergrounded. There will be significant impact on the environment, and the whole community, at this section of the line. It was also reported that the costings for under grounding appear to be from a paper that was issued in 2014, and are considerably out of date. Cable Ploughing had not been used for heavier duty power transmission at that time. There was also some confusion surround one GG representative at the consultation who claimed to have worked for ATP previously and expressed the opinion that the undergrounding would be too expensive. Further investigations suggest that this person has worked at ATP but only for a period of three months.

It was noted that GG elected to host this consolation in a small upper room in Lampeter, not in the Cellan village hall as last time. The events were held in in the middle of the lambing season. As the capacity of the new Lampeter venue meant fire regulations restricted numbers, some were unable to enter the event and had to leave to resume work or to return to their farms for lambing. In addition, the number of venues selected for consultation was only 6 for the 52kn route and one of these was not actually on the proposed route itself and the time given for the whole consultation was 6 weeks. These limitations to the consultation event and the lack of attention or emphasis which was placed on local feedback arising from the last consultation in Lampeter was highlighted along side local feelings of frustration and anger.

Green Gen Court Actions

At this meeting only Llanfair Clydogu & Cellan have local landowners being taken to court by GG (currently). Discussions around cases coming to court and those that have already been. Some cases have been differed as they have been directed to be heard in Welsh for Welsh speakers. Outlined issues about GG actioning court costs to individual land owners (in some cases it seems joint landowners are being taken to court individually, for access to the same piece of land).

Four individuals so far have felt threatened and signed agreements to allow GG access to their land prior to the court case proceeding. GG are using these as test cases. A letter has been written to Adam Price to question the morality of this action, even though it is likely to be legal for GG to press this. There was discussion around actual costs of cases with GG lawyers stating £50k may have been quoted by GG to individual landowners. Is this a justifiable cost, and can it actually be imposed as it could be not considered proportionate for legal costs against members of the general public in a local magistrate's court? Also questioned if such tactics could amount to landowners signing under duress, thus invalidating the contract.

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A Lawyer now appears to be representing landowners and a fighting fund GoFundMe page has been set up by TVAP. Currently at @£10k. There is support for these cases from MP Anne Davies and AM's Adam Price and Cefin Cambell

It was noted that the 'substation' sound small, but will be a large undertaking providing benefits to many, it was asked if this is considered "Fair Play", where we are seeing the potential of a substantial loss being inflicted on a small number of people for the benefit of a huge number of people. It was suggested more could be made of what is happening ideologically and how can we ask the 'many' to help the few?

The response by the first minister to a question from Adam Price in the Senedd recently talked of GG taking a 'sensitive and sensible' approach which should be 'likely to diffuse the situation'. It was questioned if these court actions imitated by GG reflect the first ministers' sentiments.

Dispensations

Carmarthenshire Council have advised that Community Councilors in Llangunnor have no reason to register for a Dispensation (as they are general residents and discussing it as advice towards planning observations). But Community Councilors in Llanfair Clydogu and Cellan (Ceredigion) have been advised that they do have to obtain dispensation in order to discuss the proposals. Where Community Councils have been advised that they are needed the Community Councilors have either already obtained them individually or as a 'blanket' application covering all councilors (Llandyfaelog) or are in the process of doing so. However, there seemed to be some contradictory advice so more clarity is needed.

It was questioned why County Councilors appear to not need to obtain Dispensation whereas Community Councilors do?

Future Meetings

It was agreed we will distribute minutes from these meetings to all invited Community Councils (regardless of attendance) and that individual councils can, if they wish, publish them on their own council websites so that they are publicly available. Before issuing to the wider audience a final draft being will be issued to attending Councilors for final review and acceptance.

Next Meeting 7.30pm on 22nd May.