

ALVAH AND FORGLEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2024 AT FORGLEN HALL

MINUTES

Website: www.alvahforglencc.wordpress.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AlvahForglenCC/>

1. Present.

Doug Hill (Chairman), Mike Dewhurst (Treasurer), Carol Cox (Vice Chair) Barbara Foad (Secretary)

In attendance: Peter Dow and Andrew Webster.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from: Jemima Chillingworth, Caroline Jones. And Stewart Adam

3. Presentation by Green Tech Energy - Proposal of Application Notice for

the proposed major development of a photovoltaic electricity production facility

with capacity of up to 35MW, together with a battery energy storage system with

capacity of up to 14.9MW and associated infrastructure, at Brownside

Farm, Mountblairy, Banff

Three representatives from Green Tech Energy James Jenkinson, Edward Harwood-Scorer and Pippa Robertson (Aurora Planning) presented the plans.

A pre-application consultation event was held on 24 September 2024, at Alvah Village Hall, from 12.30pm to 7.00pm. Properties on the immediate boundary of the site were sent a letter by Green -Tech around 7 households. Around 14 individuals from around 5 households attended. Another event will be held on 16 October 2024, at Forglen Village Hall, from 12.30pm to 7.00pm.

Councillors requested that all houses in Mountblairy should be sent invitation letters to make them aware of the major development proposed, particularly the substation and cable /pylon route. Councillors requested that the full address including Mountblairy and Alvah is included in the planning address so that residents are aware of its location. Using Banff only is very misleading.

There will be 100 acres of solar panels in rows facing south. These will be mounted on piles in a grass field. There will also be inverters, battery storage and an electricity substation. There will be a landscape strategy for the substation. The power will feed into the Macduff sub-station if possible by underground cable, if not by overground pylons.

There will be noise associated with the panels and the sub-station but levels are not yet available. There will be 'glint and glare' assessments made from viewpoints. The site will be fairly well hidden, except from houses in the South and from the B9025.

Questions were asked about the safety of the Battery Storage Area:

The danger of Fire in batteries

The limitations of local fire Brigade equipment and personnel. Green Tech said this was not an issue.

Water Supplies in the event of fire. Not an issue.

Light pollution: There will be Infra-red cameras around the perimeter and motion detection lighting at the substation/battery storage.

Green Tech stated that the development will be remotely monitored at all times from South Queensferry with an engineer based locally.

The compound for the battery storage and substation will be enclosed in an impermeable bund filled with water and isolating the battery packs from each other. Any HF run-off in the event of a fire would be contained and the contaminated water would be taken away by the Environment Agency.

Benefit to the Community. There will be none to individuals except the landowner. Households on the immediate perimeter (seven properties) will get a subsidy for some solar panels to their own properties. Green Tech that around 20 properties are in the immediate vicinity of the site.

The Community Council is told to expect around £500 per MW pa. linked to RPI, which is around £17,500 pa depending on power generated. This will come through a Special Benefit vehicle Deed (SBD) which will be attached to the site and be passed on should ownership change and will be paid to the Community Council.

Development Route and Traffic: All traffic will be south of the site taking the road off the B9025 immediately past the junction with the B9121 on the right traveling from Turriff to Aberchirder. There will be 18 trucks over 6 months. The most intrusive thing will be pile driving which will be undertaken by one man and machine across the site over 6 months.

Deveron Valley Special Landscape Area: This site is within the Deveron Valley SLA. Green Tech Energy advised that their opinion was that this made no difference. They have had another site approved within an ALS at Bilsbrae Farm in Fife.

<https://www.fifetoday.co.uk/news/politics/council/major-solar-farm-gets-go-ahead-on-fife-farmland-despite-over-80-objections-4578693>

The lifespan of the solar Farm is 40 years.

Screening: A mixed hedge of bare root plants will be planted AFTER construction of the solar farm and some standard trees planted.

When: Green -Tech Energy hope to submit their Planning Application to Aberdeenshire Council before Christmas. They hope building will be completed within two years

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 July were previously approved by email.

5. Matters Arising

- a) **Bogton Noticeboard:** It was agreed to look into having a red telephone Box for notices etc. secretary to circulate rough costs/options and then approach planners for their views.

- b) **EE Broadband at Alvah Hall:** Alvah Hall have not confirmed their agreement yet so the signal will be available to CC meetings using our mobile equipment. Forglen Hall have agreed that we can place a secure storage cupboard at Forglen Hall for meetings based there. We expect to have blended meetings available soon.
- c) **Forglen Cemetery Car Park:** NO further contact from Aberdeenshire Council. We all agreed that the car park needs attention. This will be deferred until the New Year.
- d) **Signatories for the community council bank account:** – the Treasurer has submitted the paperwork to Bank of Scotland and signatories have been asked to provide their details.

6. Community Benefit from Offshore Windfarms Doug Hill has spoken to John Anderson at Fordyce who has asked the Area Office at Aberdeenshire Council if they would host a representative from 9Community Council Group to talk about a joint approach to wind farm community giving. They (Aberdeenshire Council) are considering it.

7. Community Police

The Police no longer attend unless asked about a specific issue.

8. Rural Broadband. and Digital Voice

Nothing to report

9. Planning Applications.

The Community Council will not comment.

10. Floral Displays and Public Amenity Areas

Carol Rewston has decided not to stand as a community councillor this time but will do her best to keep the Kirkton of Alvah Tubs looking good. We are very grateful that Carol has worked very hard for the last 10 years keeping all the tubs looking good. Doug Hill will liaise with Carol Rewston to see what help she may need.

Peter Dow volunteered to take over the management of the Bogton tubs. He plans to plant them with successional bulbs. Peter will cost the replacement loam-based compost and bulbs. A bladder bag for a wheelbarrow is a possibility for watering these tubs.

Forglen Cemetery tubs: The triple layer tubs have not been watered in the dry spells and all plants have died. The yellow hosepipe at the cemetery has disappeared. The tub planters are fine. The tall planters should have been replanted using loam-based compost for perennials and may then have fared better. It was suggested that the tubs are removed and have now been offered to Forglen Hall.

Wild Flower verge: To date there has been no replanting of yellow rattle seed or plant plugs by Aberdeenshire Council. Secretary to chase up.

11. Arts Group.

No update.

12. Community Ownership Fund: Community Buildings/derelict land

No Update

13. Community Action Plan / Place Plan

The Area Manager said that Duncan Leece and Elaine Sinclair are available to help us with our Community Action Plan. It was agreed to cancel the hall for 4 October as no publicity had been circulated. The Secretary will check with Duncan and Elaine to propose a new date when they can lead the event.

14. Updates from Aberdeenshire Councillors.

No councillors could attend.

15. Any Questions from Members of the Public

No members of the public were present.

16. Any other business

None.

17. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 29 OCTOBER 2024 at ALVAH HALL

Barbara Foad

Secretary

Alvah and Forglan Community Council

ACTIONS

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| Community Benefit Caledonian Windfarm | Ongoing. Waiting for Aberdeenshire MS Teams meeting |
| Bogton Noticeboard | Secretary to investigate the possibilities of reinstating a red telephone box |
| Community Action Planning | Secretary to contact Duncan Leece and Elaine Sinclair for a date in 2025. Hall to be cancelled for 4 Oct 24. |
| Forglen Cemetery Car Park | No Update . Agreed to revisit this in January 2025 |
| Signatories for the community council bank account | Ongoing |
| Any other business | None. |