

Open Meeting- Wind Farm Proposals

18/2/25 7.30pm Online via Zoom link

Attendees:

Llanfair/Cellan CC: Roger Daniels, Dave Bartholomew (chair), Simon Aldridge

Llanfihangel ar Arth CC: Angela James

LLanllawddog CC: Beth Gibbon, Havard Hughes, Nia Bowen, Andrew Rees

Llandyfaelog CC: Nicola Jones, Arfon Davies

Apologies:

LLangunnor CC

Bronwydd CC

As this was the first meeting between the councils there was no formal agenda.

Introduction

Dave Bartholomew (DB) explained the meeting is called to enable all the CC's along the Teifi to establish the extent of the understanding each community has regarding the proposed wind farms, pylon routes, substations and battery parks. To then gauge the overall and individual areas perspective and decide what we can do to best represent those community views. He asked each CC to speak. The following points were recorded:

Llanfihangel ar Arth

- A strongly worded letter from the council's clerk was sent over a year ago to GreenGen (GG) stating the CC's opposition to the proposals outlining all aspects of the negative effects, on biodiversity, environmental and visual impact etc. It also stated the entire community were wholly supportive of green energy but not in the way it is being proposed here. The letter also noted the fact undergrounding/cable ploughing was economically as efficient as pylons, but hugely less destructive & that a local company ATP have already carried out undergrounding work for the National Grid in the valley. (Undergrounding has been completed by ATP for National Grid at a site just opposite All Saints Church in Cellan parish.)
- There has been no response from GG.
- A copy of the letter will be forwarded to Gwennan Cellan clerk for distribution.
- The CC have held a number of events to discuss the proposals.
- There are no formal plans submitted by GG for this area yet.

Llanfair Clydogu and Cellan Community Council

Llandyfaelog

- It was advised for all CC's to submit an application for Dispensation to our relevant County Council monitoring officer. It was further noted that this council have already sought dispensation for Councilors.
- They are mostly affected by the Substation in Llandyfaelog. It is planned to be a 'Flagship development, and the largest substation in the UK.
- However, they are already seeing an impact on road traffic.
- Battery Park's will not form part of the initial planning applications.
- They have asked the NG if they can present a visual graphic animation/simulation of what the impact is likely to be so that this can be seen or show to all members of the community to see how they are going to be affected by the proposals. -. The request was further clarified as a request to show ALL transmission lines converging on the area. NG have not yet responded to this request.
- The Substation planned will be on a 34-acre site perched up on hilly land to avoid risk to it from any potential flooding It is also proposed to be situated in Llandyfaelog due to existing overhead National Grid infrastructure.
- The CC have written to NG but NG will not engage on any other aspects of the proposed plans other than the substation plans. No formal planning has been submitted as yet

Llanllawddog

- Noted that their community is greatly impacted by the pylon proposals and almost all the CC's are affected.
- The CC has arranged meetings to discuss proposals and reflected there are very strong objections throughout, and in particular at Alltwallis, and Peniel.
- GG has held one initial consultation and they were extremely well attended. However, 12 months ago GG held a Webinar where only the hosts were visible, and the presentation was very weak and short. The only route to submit questions was via the chat link.
- GG were challenged on their claim about being a long-term leading green energy company, and asked to show or state any historical projects. There were none.
- It was advised for all CC's to submit an application for Dispensation to our relevant County Council monitoring officer. It was further noted that this council have already sought dispensation for Councilors.
- Councilors have attended a public meeting held at town hall. County Councilors were in attendance.
- The main impact of the proposals for this community is from Pylons.

Llanfair Clydogu and Cellan Community Council

- Questions to GG about the impact on specific areas along the proposed Pylon routes were unanswered, or inconsistent as they had no idea of where these areas were or what they contained and what the environmental impact might be to each area.
- Also noted that there has been some reticence from landowners about objecting because of their previous experience (from previous windfarm developments in the area) where they have refused land entry and subsequently the Police have been accompanied the surveyors to gain land access. In some cases, landowners were threatened with arrest. It was suggested that this may have been to avoid a breach of the peace. GG does not have the right to access land without a court order. It was noted that under the electricity act GG can eventually go to court to obtain this right of access. However, it was also suggested that they would not want to incur the costs of doing this each time they wanted to access land, so they are using pressure tactics at this stage.

Llanfair/Cellan

- The CC has acquired farmers/land owners impact statements from local community. These could be extremely useful if we were able to get them from all communities when CC's are asked to submit recommendations.
- Communities in Ceredigion are largely impacted by both the Pylons and Turbines.
- The current proposals are for 71 220 m high turbines above Llandewi Llanfair & Cellan and the resulting Pylon lines routing down to Carmarthen from here. There are no existing Turbines of this size in the UK. They will cover an area of 9000 acres which is @15 square miles.
- There are also plans for a site of 4 square miles above Pencarreg. The environmental impact that this proposed development will have is simply enormous. There will be major destruction of this area, the amounts of concrete needed for each turbine is immense. The impact to the water table here where many have private supplies is expected to be huge, with potential leakage from the concrete bases into that table could be hugely damaging to all aspects of the natural environment.

Meeting subsequent discussion

The following points were raised:

- Issues regarding light pollution have been raised.
- The planning schedules across all areas was questioned, noting plans for the area have been put back one year, largely because surveyors are finding it difficult to establish land surveys because they are not being allowed onto private lands.

Llanfair Clydogu and Cellan Community Council

- GG's consultations are, at this stage, unofficial but that GG are using surveyors who's tactics are becoming more intense putting pressure on land owners to allow them access, threatening with legal action etc.
- With respect to the planning permission for battery parks it was suggested that these will be separate and subsequent to planning applications for windfarms.
- It was noted that the previously largest wind farm in the UK (Whitely in Scotland) was, in its first phase of development, originally smaller than the current GG/Bute/Belltown proposals, consisting of 39 turbines which were smaller than those proposed for Wales. To support this initial phase some built 96 km of new roads to get access to the sites to install the turbines were laid, and they made 6 new quarries for the 3 million tons needed to build the sites on moorland.
- It has been suggested that the reason GG are against under grounding cabling is because purchase of the land to erect Pylons means they become land owners, even if limited to the land directly underneath the routs This could be a major land ownership for this company and becomes an asset. Undergrounding leaves them without ownership & therefore no asset to sell on. Also, it makes future connection to the powerlines easier to support as yet unannounced proposed new power generation facilities.
- The 2026 elections coming up in the Senedd it could be an appropriate time to reflect our communities' views/concerns to the Welsh Assembly to deal with this mater.
- This is essentially now a national debate not just limited to the Cambrians, and it is something we should discuss as to how best coordinate our collective response as CC's once the planning applications start to be submitted.
- This forum is a productive way for us to share information and build a group going forward and getting this info out to the general public in our communities.
- Four community councils from the Teifi valley have attended the meeting and two have sent apologies for being unable to attend at this time. This represents almost half of the community councils situated in the Teifi Vally between Llanddewibrefi and Camarthen Town which were initially contacted. It is hoped that more councils will take advantage of the opportunity to meet and discuss these issues, and others which are relevant to the Teifi valley area as a whole.

Meeting Close

- DB asked if we all agree going forward this is a useful forum to discuss how best we can coordinate our efforts and reflecting our communities as a whole and combine our individual voices without that affecting the local work, we are all doing.
- This was agreed. However, it was re-iterated that one aspect we must be very aware of is that we cannot be 'pre-empting', and we need to discuss this with our monitoring officer

Llanfair Clydogu and Cellan Community Council

ensuring we safe protected as council members with dispensation. CC's and individual councilors should not express personal views as a reflection of CC views until we have received dispensation.

- DB said he is happy to facilitate further meetings going forward and suggested a follow-on meeting in 4-6 weeks after each of the attendees had been able to reflect on the points raised and discuss them within their respective councils
- Minutes of this meeting and a response to a request for more information on the plans for Pylon and windfarm developments in the area will be circulated shortly.
- There was a general vote of thanks to the clerk of Llanfair and Cellan CC for arranging this meeting and DB closed the meeting by expressing his thanks to all for attending and looking forward to meeting up again in the near future