

**ROYAL BURGH of WIGTOWN & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD IN THE COUNTY BUILDINGS, WIGTOWN,
ON MONDAY, 10 AUGUST 2015**

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www.WigtownCC.org.uk

PRESENT

Matt Kitson <i>Convenor</i>	Jak Kane <i>Secretary</i>	Rob Harford
David Moran	David McAdam	Willie McCartney
Joe McKeown	Robin Richmond	Nick Walker

IN ATTENDANCE

David McKay <i>Wigtown Free Press</i>	Louise Kerr, <i>Galloway Gazette</i>	Police
Gail Plunkett, <i>Chair, Wigtown PS Parent Council</i>	Cllr Alistair Geddes	Cllr Jim McColm

APOLOGIES

Jock McDowall	Richard Arkless MP
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1 WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND CALL FOR URGENT OTHER BUSINESS

Matt Kitson welcomed all to the meeting and explained that, further to the earlier notice that MP Richard Arkless would attend the meeting, it transpired that he would now be unable to do so because of a family illness, however he outlined his commitment to support the work and aims of the CC. Jock McDowall had also tendered his apologies for absence.

It was also noted that two items raised at the previous meeting should be included in the Agenda: Wigtown Fair Trade and Right of Way.

2 POLICE MATTERS

PC Ellis reported that the individuals allegedly involved in the vandalism at Wigtown Primary School had been charged. A bogus email purportedly from the Stranraer Sheriff Clerk had been received locally and people should be on the lookout. Wigtown Agricultural Show had passed with no major incidents and only one man arrested. There had been complaints of nuisance door knocking at a property in South Main Street and one in High Street. Incidences had been reported at times when it was unlikely that children could be involved and residents were asked to be vigilant and report any suspicious behaviour.

The planned Young Driver Roadshow had been held in Newton Stewart to address the antisocial behaviour of some young drivers. This would now be followed by a two month operation to target practices such as street racing, car modifications and use of mobile phones while driving.

3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Monday, 6 July 2015)

The minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated and, subject to the addition of Jock McDowall's apology for absence, were adopted; proposed by Robin Richmond and seconded by Nick Walker.

4 UPDATES & REPORTS

A: Wigtown Week Working Party

David Moran reported that the Community Festival had been largely successful with a varied programme of events and that the costs had been covered by available funds. The level of attendances was mixed with evening events targeted at adults and families doing much better than some of the daytime children events that were poorly attended. It was suggested that part of the problem could be that many of the local school children were away from the area on holiday and that Wigtown Week was held before children on English school holidays had arrived. It was agreed that a review meeting of the Wigtown Week Working Party should be convened with a view to identifying what items from the programme should be kept and to consider the timing of future

Festivals bearing in mind the dates of other community festivals. It was noted that the inclusion of the Common Riding within the week of the Community Festival could be problematic as it was dependent on the availability of the horse riders. It was agreed that the Primary School's Pupil Council should be invited to contribute on what type of event could potentially attract increased involvement of younger people. **ACTION MATT KITSON/DAVID MORAN**

B: Consultations WP

Jak Kane had circulated a report prior to the meeting (see Appendixes A & A1). Report approved.

Community Council Survey – due to the failure of the Council's Print Unit to produce hard copies of the Survey, the closing date for the return of completed surveys had been extended to the end of September 2015.

Scottish Government's consultation on management of SACs and MPAs- This consultation was originally scheduled for Summer 2015 and has now been deferred until Autumn.

Amendment of the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils in D&G – Draft amendments had been circulated with a closing date of 28 August for responses. It was noted that among the amendments was the ability for Community Councils to operate during the interim election process arranged to fill vacant posts required by the CC to meet the minimum elected membership number (as long as meetings are quorate). Community Councils were being given the opportunity to increase or decrease its maximum elected membership and it was agreed that Wigtown CC should maintain the status quo.

Ward Boundary Proposals in Dumfries & Galloway – It was agreed that a response to the proposed boundary changes would be submitted given that they would see Mid Galloway ward merged with Wigtown West (excluding the South Rhins) and the number of councillors representing the enlarged multi-member area set at four. It was felt that the new ward would be problematic for the reduced number of councillors with the size and distance involved in covering all communities and their community councils. Cllr Geddes said that he hoped Dumfries & Galloway Council proceeded with its call for a Judicial Review into how the Commission calculated councillor number, with deprivation being taken into account for the first time when calculating factors that affect boundaries and councillor numbers. Rural areas were more likely to be subject to cuts in councillor numbers.

C: Planning WP

A report had been previously circulated by Nick Walker (see Appendix B). Report approved.

Solar Panel Farm, Baldoon – It was agreed that Nick should advise Green Hedge that the Community Council perceives its solar panel as less contentious than wind farm installations, and therefore a preferable form of renewable energy project. There was no evidence of significant negative opinion and most appear to be neutral or positive. **ACTION NICK WALKER**

D: Moss of Cree Forest

A copy of FCS's response to the CC's letter re the proposed sale of the Forest had been sent to Carty Port Community Company along with confirmation of WCC's support and willingness to attend any future meeting.

E: Louis McGuffie VC Commemoration Working Group

Nick Walker advised that the next meeting of the Group was set for 21 September and he and Willie McCartney would be meeting with Steven Dowling before then to discuss the design of the town gardens' gateway. Nick also advised that there would be a Louis McGuffie-related event in this year's Book Festival with another to be included in 2018 to mark the centenary. **ACTION NICK WALKER/WILLIE McCARTNEY**

5 CHRISTMAS

It was agreed that a meeting of the groups involved in the organisation of last year's festivities be convened to follow up on the action plan agreed at the February greetin' meeting. The plan would again see the Festival Company organising the Kist but, being heavily involved at the moment with its organisation, they were unlikely to want to participate in meetings until after the annual Festival. Friday 11 December was the provisional date for carols at the Christmas tree with later refreshments in the County Buildings. **ACTION MATT KITSON**

6 TASKS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Education Issue – Although the Area Committee had committed to a Community Meeting to allow parents to get more clarity on what cuts to teaching and ASL (Associated Support for Learning) staff were in the pipeline, DGC's Education Services were not keen on taking part.

Wigtown Parent Council chair. Gail Punkett said she had only recently been informed by the Head Teacher that Wigtown Primary School would have the same ASL support level as last year under their partnership with Kirkcowan Primary School. However the information was only received within a few days of the end of the summer term and that information regarding potential cuts to ASL staff over the next two years was still not forthcoming and the Parent Council was losing faith in the consultation process.

A Parental Involvement meeting has been convened for 8 September in Stranraer to discuss the 2-18 Service Review and the budget saving process currently underway within Education Services but the Parent Council and the Community Council have growing concerns that parents' and community views were being ignored by the local authority despite the consultation process.

It was agreed that the Community Council should continue to support the Parent Council in its call for an Area Committee Community Meeting on these Education issues. **ACTION MATT KITSON**

Youth Representation – Rob said that he would pursue the possibility of gleaning a representative from a group of young people recently involved in volunteering activity in the Machars.

Community Resilience – The Community Council had received a formal offer of a Community Safety Fund grant of £1,591.34 from DGC.

Wigtown Parking & Bus Stop – DGFirst to be asked for update and timescale.

Derelict Properties – Cllrs Geddes and McColm had met with Alistair Speedie and had again urged that, in the absence of any progress in the condition of the property in High Street, a Section 719 notice should be used. The development of the property in North Main Street had required additional consents following the collapse of the rear of the building but DGHP had the matter in hand.

Poppy Appeal Co-Ordinator – Nick Walker confirmed that Wigtown Community Shop had agreed to take over the co-ordination of the annual Poppy Appeal in Wigtown.

Minutes Secretary – There had been no response to posters advertising the position as yet. Jak indicated that he would be unable to take the minutes at the CC's next meeting as he would be away.

Beddie Crescent Bench and Play Equipment – It was confirmed that the Bench and Play equipment were installed and in use.

Wigtown Fairtrade – Nick Walker advised that he had been unable to attend the Fairtrade meeting but had intimated the Community Council's support for the initiative. A new committee for the Wigtown Fairtrade group had been appointed and the next meeting had been set for 3 September. Nick said he would be happy to continue to represent the CC on the group.

Right of Way - There had been no response to a letter sent to the landowner and access to the core path was still blocked. It was agreed that Joe McKeown should refer the matter to the Rights of Way Commission. **ACTION JOE McKEOWN**

7 COMMUNICATIONS, CORRESPONDENCE, ETC

DGC – Stranraer Household Waste Recycling Centre opening 27 July.

DGC - Posters/notices re Community Council Elections on 22 October. Closing date for nominations 25 September.

Keenan & Pennykidd – Employer's Liability Insurance Certificate.

8 COUNCILLORS ISSUES

Cllr McColm advised that there had been no council meetings during the summer recess. The problem of potholes had been exacerbated by the wet summer but reported holes were being repaired quickly. The cutting of grass had also been adversely affected but he confirmed that roadside verges would be cut for Wigtown Show.

Cllr Geddes said that he supported the stance of Machars Action who were questioning the Council's lack of provision of a Countryside Ranger Service following the reduction of seven staff to just two. He could not see the justification for financial constraints in an area that had the Dark Sky Park, the Biosphere, the Galloway Forest Park and Wigtown Bay Local Nature Reserve.

9 OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

David Moran advised that Wigtown Community Shop had made a £500 award towards the cost of the Community Festival. It was agreed that a letter of thanks be sent to the group. **ACTION MATT**

There had been four entries to the Community Photo competition, all from adults. It was agreed that pupils from local schools be invited to enter on their return to school after the holidays.

ACTION MATT

Matt said that MP Richard Arkless had spoken to him re the Vodafone project at the Isle of Whithorn that would deliver improved mobile phone coverage and he had said that he would be contacting Vodafone in the hope that a similar initiative could be arranged for Wigtown and Moniaive.

10 NEXT MEETING

Monday, 14 September 2015, at 7.30pm, Wigtown County Buildings

Appendix A. Consultations Working Party - August 2015

- a) **Amendment of the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils in D&G** - Dumfries & Galloway Council. Closing dates: 1st draft - 28 August 2015; 2nd draft – 16 October 2015

It was agreed at a meeting of Dumfries and Galloway Council on 25 June that an amendment process would be undertaken to the existing Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils.

The proposed amendments are based on specific areas for improvement and you can view or download the proposed amendments document from

<http://dumgal.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=16567&p=0>

Among the proposed amendments are: the opportunity for Community Councils to increase or decrease its maximum elected membership; and the ability for Community Councils to continue to operate during the interim election process arranged to fill vacant posts required to meet the maximum elected membership number (as long as meetings are quorate).

- b) **Community Council Survey** - Dumfries & Galloway Council. Closing date: 28 August 2015

Dumfries and Galloway Council would like to try to improve the service that its staff provide so that Community Councils are able to function effectively. DGC carries out this survey annually in relation to the support provided for the previous year (April 2014 - March 2015).

DGC is looking for Community Councils to discuss the questions and complete one online questionnaire with answers that its members have agreed but the printing of hard copies of the survey had been "missed" by the Council's Print Unit and have not been delivered to the Area offices for onward distribution to Community Councils as yet.

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=13570>

- c) **Ward boundary proposals in Dumfries and Galloway** - Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland (LGBCS). Closing date: 22 October 2015.

The Commission is asking local people and interested parties to comment on its proposals for ward boundaries in the Dumfries and Galloway council area in a 12 week period of public consultation on proposed ward boundaries. It consulted with councils on ward boundary proposals earlier this year.

The proposals for Dumfries and Galloway Council present an electoral arrangement for 43 councillors representing five 3-member wards and seven 4-member wards, reducing the number of wards in the area by one and reducing councillor numbers by four.

Stranraer & North Rhins, Wigtown West and Mid Galloway wards will be merged to create two wards – Stranraer & the Rhins and Mid Galloway & Wigtown West - with each having four councillors. (see Appendix A1)

- d) **2015 consultation on Management of Inshore Special Areas of Conservation and Marine Protected Areas** - Scottish Government. Autumn 2015

This consultation proposes possible fisheries management approaches for 14 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and 6 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). This follows on from a similar consultation in 2014. The SACs are protected by provisions in the EU Habitats Directive. The MPAs are protected by provisions in the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010. A number of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under the EU Wild Birds Directive are also likely to benefit from the proposals if implemented. The management of Luce Bay & Sands SAC will be included in the consultation.

APPENDIX A1: Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland (LGBCS) - Ward boundary proposals in Dumfries and Galloway

LGBCS's proposals for wards in Dumfries and Galloway council area present an electoral arrangement for 43 councillors representing five 3-member wards and seven 4-member wards, reducing the number of wards in the area by one and reducing councillor numbers by four. The reduction in councillor numbers was limited by the 10% limit to change rule adopted by the Commission without which the recommended number of councillors would have been 41.

The ward to be cut will be achieved through the merger of Stranraer & North Rhins, Wigtown West and Mid Galloway wards to create two wards with four councillors each. The new wards will be called Stranraer & the Rhins and Mid Galloway & Wigtown West. Wigtownshire will lose one councillor overall, in common with each of the other four Council areas (Abbey, Mid & Upper Nithsdale and Annandale East & Eskdale wards all losing one councillor).

LGBCS actually considered two options in connection with the Wigtownshire wards with the one going forward its Option B. Option B proposed to merge the existing three wards to create two new wards with new ward names. The proposed wards follow community council boundaries and will be (see map on the following page):

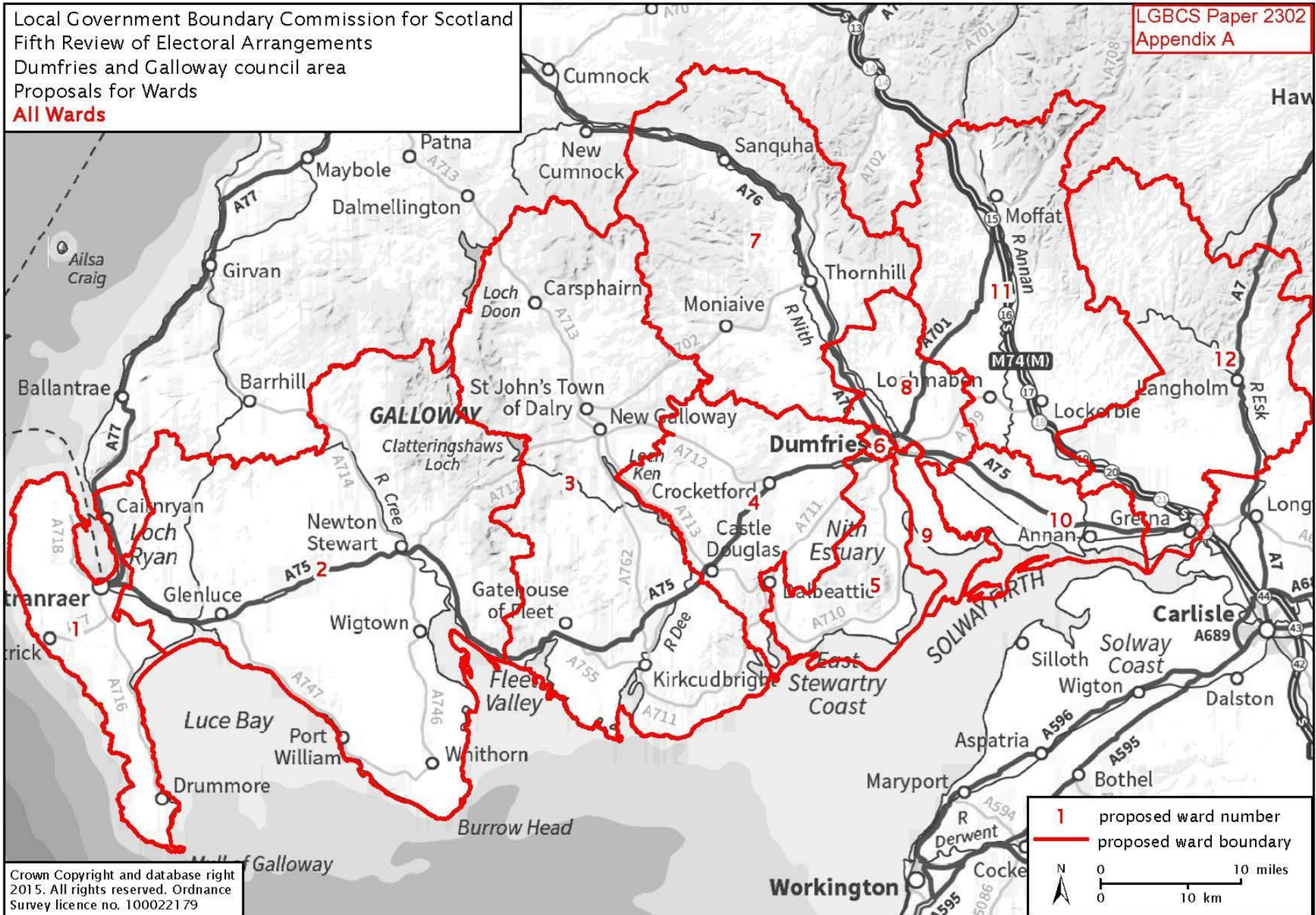
- Stranraer and the Rhins ward containing the main towns of Stranraer, Cairnryan, Drummole, and Portpatrick.
- Mid Galloway and Wigtown West ward comprising the communities of Glenluce, Newton Stewart, Whithorn and Wigtown. Kirkmabreck Community Council area will also be included from Dee ward.

Option A would have seen Dee ward joining the Wigtownshire wards and the creation of three new wards. Wigtown would have been in the Rhins and Wigtown West ward along with Drummole, Portpatrick, Whithorn and surrounding areas; Mid Galloway and Kirkcudbright ward would have included the towns of Newton Stewart, Gatehouse of Fleet and Kirkcudbright. Thankfully LGBCS recognised the disadvantage of Option A that would have seen the loss of community ties within the Machars and Newton Stewart.

Ward Proposals. Dumfries & Galloway Council area is classified as Category 4 and wards should have an elector to councillor ration of 2,800:1

Ward Name	Number of councillors	Current electorate	Forecast Electorate
Mid Galloway and Wigtown West	4	10521	10383
Stranraer and the Rhins	4	11615	11739

A guidance booklet providing a detailed summary of the ward boundary proposals can be downloaded from http://www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk/reviews/5th_electoral/dumfries_and_galloway/dumfries_galloway_booklet.pdf .



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1 proposed ward number
— proposed ward boundary

N
 0 10 miles
 0 10 km

Appendix B. Planning Working Party Report For Full Comm. Council 10.8.2015

Members – Willie McCartney, Robin Richmond, Nick Walker

Current applications

- 15/P/1/0159 EXTERNAL CABINET, WIGTOWN SURGERY. For public defibrillator. Recommend – support.
- 15/P/1/0137 CHANGE OF USE WORKSHOP TO KENNELS, AND BUILDING FOUR COVERED RUNS, TAHALL COTTAGE, KIRKINNER. Recommend – no submission.
- 15/C/1/0037 REPLACEMENT 11kV ELECTRICITY LINE (Newton to Wigtown).
- 15/C/1/0038 REPLACEMENT 33kV ELECTRICITY LINE (Newton to Sorbie).
- 15/C/1/0040 REPLACEMENT 11kV ELECTRICITY LINE (Sorbie to Whauphill). Notification rather than consultation.

Recommend – note, and welcome progress on electricity infrastructure upgrade.

Update on general applications

Nil.

Renewable energy proposals

- 15/P/1/0031 SHENNANTON WINDFARM, NEWTON STEWART. 12 turbines, 100m to blade tip, ancillary structures, etc. UPDATE: nil.
- 15/P/2/0053 CALIFORNIA WINDFARM, CARSLUITH. 7 turbines, 110m to blade tip, structures, etc. UPDATE: nil.
- 13/P/1/0366 AUCHLEAND WINDFARM, WIGTOWN. 7 turbines, 130 m to blade tip, ancillary structures, etc. UPDATE: nil.
- 15/E/1/0008 PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION: SOLAR PANEL FARM, BALDOON. First stage consideration of possible development by Green Hedge Renewables PLC. Using former runways and area to southeast, bordering Crook of Baldoon RSPB reserve. Up to 54 hectares (133 acres), ½ mile from Bladnoch. Photovoltaic cells on metal tables angled at 20°, 80-200 cm tall, generating up to 20 MW. Underground cabling. Link to grid potentially on site. Some areas could be re-seeded with grass after installation, for grazing by sheep. Whole site enclosed 2 m boundary fence, monitored by CCTV. No anticipated interference with rights of way, wetlands, etc. Decommissioned after 25 years.

UPDATE: The Developer says the proposed solar panel farm will use a brownfield site (which is partly true) and the area can be farmed even amongst the solar panels. The solar panels will not be widely visible and can be screened with hedges and trees, but they believe some properties to the south of Wigtown will be able to see them. Recent political and economic news (including statements by the Chancellor of the Exchequer) and uncertainty around subsidies and policy, mean that the Developer has decided to pause work on this proposal until the situation is clarified. They are keen to know the community's views in principle however, as they remain keen to proceed. But the public exhibition which they had planned for late August will not go ahead. If the project does proceed in some form, there would be community benefit but whether in cash or in kind (such as support with other solar projects) or through partial community ownership would have to be considered, discussed and negotiated, and the political and economic circumstances might be a significant influence.

Are there obvious issues or concerns in the community that we should flag up?
What level of support / opposition are we aware of? Can we establish an overall
view or give an indication of what the balance of views is?

RECOMMEND – discuss and agree preliminary CC view on proposal; considering
indicating limited evidence of strong views expressed locally, with more positive
than negative comments.

Recommendations

Note report, accept recommendations included, discuss and agree position on solar panel
farm.

Nick Walker 09.08.2015