

**ROYAL BURGH OF WIGTOWN & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL
PLANNING WORKING PARTY REPORT FOR FULL COMM. COUNCIL 10.3.2015**

Members - Willie McCartney, Robin Richmond, Nick Walker

Current applications

15/P/1/0159 EXTERNAL CABINET, WIGTOWN SURGERY.

For public defibrillator. RECOMMEND – support.

15/C/1/0037 REPLACEMENT 11kV ELECTRICITY LINE (Newton to Sorbie).

Notification rather than consultation. RECOMMEND – note.

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 02.08.2015