

# Update from MWT: Winter 2006

NEWS:.....LEWIS WINDPOWER.....STORNOWAY GAZETTE POLL.....WESTERN ISLES GRID CONSULTATION.....ARNISH MOOR WINDCLUSTER.....PENTLAND ROAD PUBLIC INQUIRY.....

## LEWIS WINDPOWER

On 12<sup>th</sup> December, Lewis Windpower submitted their revised proposal for its windfarm on Barvas Moor, North Lewis. Fifty three turbines have been removed from across the site, but at 181 turbines, it will still:

- be one of the largest windfarms in Europe, and maybe the world?
- be one of the most environmentally damaging schemes in Europe
- dig up a carbon peat sink in the name of being environmentally friendly
- ruin the quality of life for many Lewis people
- ruin the livelihoods of tourism business vital to the local economy
- ruin the habitat of many protected species

From the details seen to date, the scheme has hardly changed. It will still be a monstrous industrialization of our culture, our lives, our moor. It will do nothing to support an interconnector (see below) and ruin the island forever, leaving an unwanted legacy for our children and theirs.

Thousands of people objected last time – it is vital that people object again to let LWP and the Scottish Executive know that this 181 turbine project is **still not acceptable**.

MWT will be continuing to campaign against the windfarm, and will be preparing information, distributing sample objection letters, and placing adverts in local papers. Information will also be posted on the MWT website: [www.mwtlewis.org.uk](http://www.mwtlewis.org.uk) and we hope to have an on-line objection facility, direct to the Energy Consents Unit.

Please help by writing letters to our MP, MSP and Councillors. Write to newspapers, especially national newspapers, which are often looking for copy over Christmas when things can be a bit quiet. Please talk to you friends, neighbours and relatives, to make sure that people know that we must object again.

The environmental statement is to be available at CNES, Stornoway and Shawbost Old School Libraries, Ness Development Centre, and Barvas Tigh Ceilidh.

Objections should be sent to "The Scottish Executive, Energy Consents Unit, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Meridian Court, 5 Cadogan street, Glasgow, G2 6AT, or emailed to: [energyconsents@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:energyconsents@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

(Please note that the email address does not contain a '-' (hyphen), between 'energy' and 'consents')

**Deadline for Objections: 29 January 2007**

## STORNOWAY GAZETTE POLL ON LWP

Stornoway Gazette are currently running a web poll on the revised Lewis Wind Power application Go to: <http://www.stornowaytoday.co.uk/frontpage.aspx> Please forward the link to everyone on your email list

## WESTERN ISLES GRID CONSULTATION

On 13<sup>th</sup> December, Scottish and Southern Energy launched their consultation on the proposed grid upgrades to the Western Isles. This is not a planning application, but a consultation on the proposed routes across the mainland, and will provide information that Scottish and Southern will feed into any future planning application.

The consultation documentation reveals some interesting information. The grid upgrade can only be progressed on the basis of firm grid connection agreements between developers and the grid provider. Currently, only Beinn Mhor Power, Eishken Estate and the Scottish and Southern, Pairc Estate proposal have such agreements. Lewis Windpower do not have a grid connection, and are currently not accommodated in the proposals.

MWT have two questions:

- Why, if the interconnector proposals are being progressed on the back of the windfarm on the Pairc Peninsula, have supporters of Lewis Windpower including Cllr Angus Nicolson, told us repeatedly that the LWP windfarm is vital?

*“If you believe in community windpower schemes, or you hope for wave or wind power off the west coast, then the interconnector must come. Without the Lewis Windpower scheme, this will not happen. No interconnector - no community schemes – it is as simple as that”.*

Cllr Angus Nicolson, Letter to Editor, Stornoway Gazette, 5 January 2006

- The consultation is based primarily on 550MW's of connection agreements for the windfarms on the Paicr Peninsula. This includes an agreement for 300MW for the Beinn Mhor Power windfarm – almost twice the size of the windfarm they are currently applying to build. Does this indicate that Beinn Mhor Power are intending to expand the scheme again? Some may remember that earlier this year the scheme had to be cut to under half of its original size because of the unacceptable impact on Eagles.

The Scottish and Southern consultation documentation can be accessed on:

<http://www.scottish-southern.co.uk/SSEInternet/index.aspx?rightColHeader=38&id=466>

**Deadline for submissions: 16 February 2007**

### **ARNISH MOOR WINDCLUSTER**

Arnish Moor is up, if not running. The following extract is from the original planning application, submitted in 2001:

*“The wind turbines at Arnish Moor will have an obvious and direct functional relationship with the rugged and windy nature of the local landscape, the size of the development will respect the scale of the landscape, and the undulating nature of the local landscape will be very effective at containing views of the wind turbines. Therefore, the significant effects will be very localised, and the proposed development will be acceptable in this location.”*

MWT have been receiving reports from people across the island including Point, South Lochs, as well as the West Side, who are shocked as to the visibility of the turbines, both during the day and at night, due to the intermittently flashing red lights.

### **PENTLAND ROAD PUBLIC INQUIRY**

The saga of Pentland Road windfarm continues. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar have approved this application on a number of occasions, but aviation objections still remain outstanding. The Scottish Executive have now announced that they are 'minded' to call a Local Public Inquiry.

### **EDITORIAL**

With so much going on a pause for reflection has its attraction. Arnish Windcluster is up, and numerous small community projects are at various stages, some running smoothly, others hitting potential problems resulting from planning issues. Meanwhile the giant windfarm applications still occupy the time, energy and resources of the island, dividing communities, islands, and agencies, who should all be working together for the benefit of all on the Western Isles.

Now this is underway, unfortunately there is no quick fix. Whatever your opinion on windfarms, it is inescapable that the major windfarms proposed on Lewis, raise many serious legal planning issues. Unfortunately, decisions made about our windfarms may set precedents in planning. These will have repercussions across the country, and so decisions will not be made quickly, and many years may pass before the issues are resolved. How different things could have been.

The Comhairle has made no secret of the energy it is putting in, to fight, what it sees as impediments to its' grand vision, be it legislation or its own people. Maybe Comhairle time, would have been, and could still be, better spent, providing sensible guidelines for the development of renewables on the islands, which enjoyed the support of local communities. And importantly, acknowledged the constraints which exist in planning legislation, and from the needs of important service providers such as the airport.

In another world, the Arnish Moor Windfarm could be in community ownership, and, a “blot on the landscape” which was at least seeing us well on the way towards island self-sufficiency in energy. Clear planning guidance from the Comhairle would be providing a path for community projects, which avoided unnecessary delay and expense. Maybe it is time the Comhairle took its eye off the developers cash, and started thinking about a real plan for a sustainable future for the islands, otherwise we may well, miss the boat.