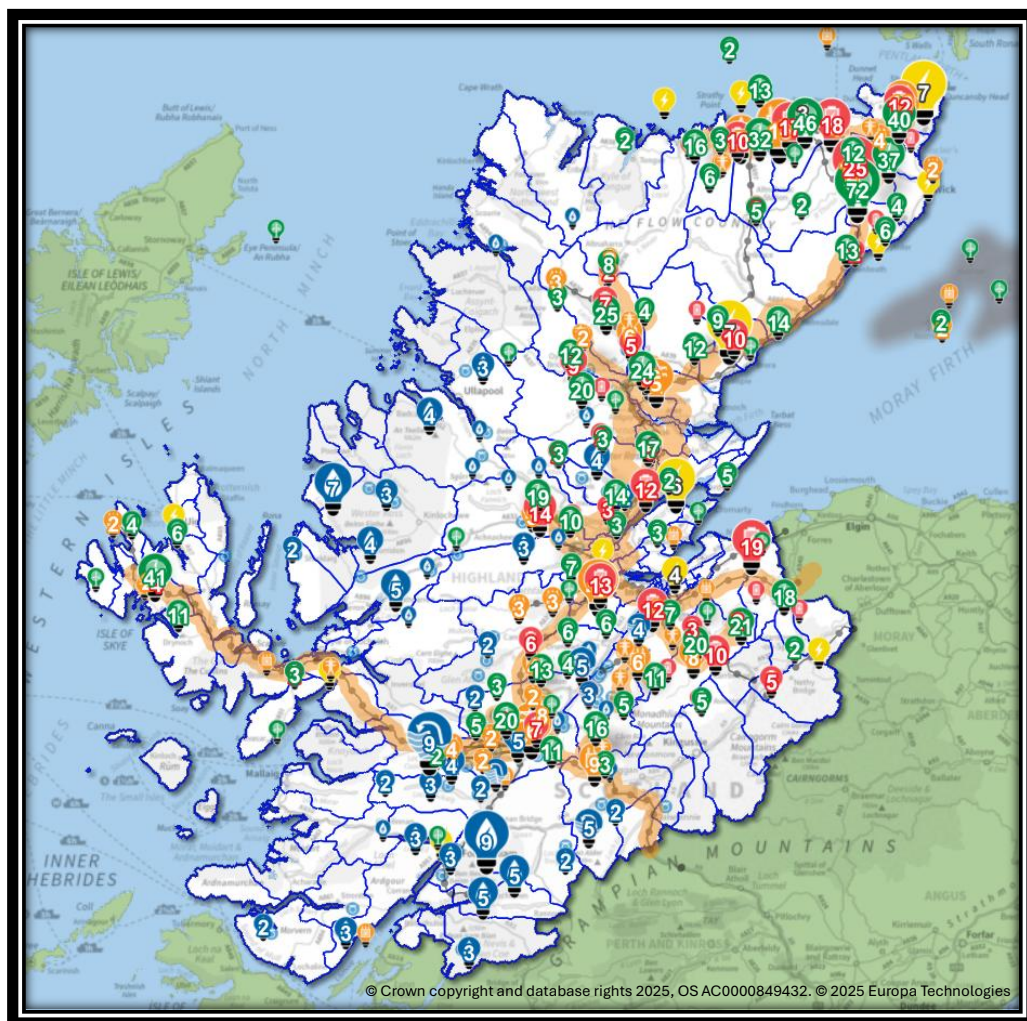


# **The Community Council Convention of the Highland Council Area on The Impact of Major Energy Infrastructure**

14<sup>th</sup> June 2025  
Beauly



HOSTED BY THE COMMUNITY COUNCILS OF  
KIRKILL & BUNCHREW, KILTARLITY, SLEAT, MUIR OF ORD, STRATHNAIRN,  
KILMORACK AND STRATHGLASS

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*Version 3: 20<sup>th</sup> June 2025*

*Cover Image: Extracted from the Highland Council energy mapping project and shows existing and proposed energy projects/infrastructure for which planning has been submitted in the Highland Council area (save for the planned under sea/ground cable from the Western Isles to Beaully) and can be found [here](#).*

## Preface

*“An unprecedented Convention of over 50 Community Councils, collectively representing over 72000 people met at The Phipps Hall, Beaulieu on 14th June 2025.*

*They came from Skye, Caithness, the Straths and Glens surrounding Loch Ness and many areas between.*

*Good people expressed their concern for our beautiful Highlands and the precious way of life that it affords.*

*They unanimously voted for one Unified Statement, at the heart of which is a plea to respect local democracy. Many voices were heard on that day and here are the statements of some of those Community Councils.”*

**Cllr Helen Crawford - Aird & Loch Ness Ward**

**Chair of The Convention**

*“This was a very powerful occasion where such determination was witnessed from so many who care so deeply for this beautiful land. Those willing to fight for its communities, and for its future. The impassioned pleas from right across the Highlands were incredibly moving. These are the people who will do what it takes to protect their homes, their environment, and their land - not just for us but for everyone who comes to share it.*

*The unified cry was to stop this wasteful destruction of our land, Scotland already produces renewable energy far in excess of its needs.*

*Governments should adopt a coherent strategy such as regional pricing for the UK and generate electricity much closer to areas of demand, a much less damaging and more cost-effective way of achieving net zero.”*

**Cameron Kemp,**

**Chair - Kirkhill & Bunchrew Community Council**

## Statements in Support

*“At a meeting in Beauly on Saturday 14th June, Community Councils and local residents from across the Highlands sent a clear message to local and national politicians. Passionate and angry voices spoke out against the industrialisation of the Highlands by SSEN’s windfarm, substation and pylon proposals.*

*It was powerfully argued that tourism based upon scenic quality and wildland is the life blood of the Highland economy.*

*SSEN’s proposals present a real and deeply damaging threat to Highland businesses and resident’s welfare.”*

**Sir John Lister-Kaye** - One of Scotland’s best loved writers on nature.

*“This extraordinary gathering of representatives from communities across the Highlands clearly showed the depth of feeling regarding the scale of proposed major energy infrastructure.*

*The message was clear and unanimous - our communities feel overwhelmed by these potentially devastating developments in our unique and, in places - fragile, landscapes.*

*On Saturday in Beauly, a chorus of Highland voices echoed as one. We ask that they be listened to.”*

**Julie Fowlis** - Artist

# **Unified Statement of the Convention of Community Councils**

***"This Convention supported by over FIFTY COMMUNITY COUNCILS, collectively representing over 72,000 residents within The Highland Council area:***

- ***RECOGNISES the impact of climate change on our planet but OPPOSES an unjust and unnecessary industrialisation of The Highlands.***
- ***CALLS for our elected members to URGENTLY support and protect our communities at NATIONAL level, given that community consultation is inadequate and LOCAL DEMOCRACY is being overridden, with decisions made by Community Councils and Highland Council consistently disregarded by the Scottish Government.***
- ***CALLS upon the Scottish Government to undertake a PLANNING INQUIRY COMMISSION to address the whole cumulative impact of all major renewable energy infrastructure developments, including transmission, storage and generation with all ancillary infrastructure on our communities and landscape, rather than the salami sliced approach which has thus far been taken.***
- ***CALLS for a PAUSE of all major applications, given the impact upon our communities, which may hasten depopulation in some areas until a clear NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY is in place and an ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT undertaken given that tourism is currently the backbone of The Highland economy."***

## Community Council Statements

Written statements submitted to the Convention were as follows:

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## **1 – ARDROSS CC**

### **Sheila Campbell-Lloyd**

The Ardross community are feeling overwhelmed. Whilst the ‘Ceislein’ Windfarm adjacent to Fyrish is the most notable and a red line for the community, we currently have seven windfarm schemes in scoping or planning around our area, added to the five that are already in place, or being constructed. All of the windfarm applications show nighttime lit turbines, with sizes ranging from 180m to 250m, these are the largest onshore turbines in the UK and for comparison are 7m taller than the Monteagle transmission mast on the Black Isle. Furthermore, we have eight battery farms, one hydrogen plant and not forgetting the Spittal-Loch Buidhe-Beaully transmission line which cuts straight through. All of this literally surrounding a small community of circa 600 people who are shouting as loud as we can, but feeling our voice is just not being heard. Each public consultation event feels like a box ticking exercise. Easy statements seem to roll off the tongue; “Your views won’t be that bad”, “you can’t hear them”, “your house price won’t be affected”, or “the lighting at night will be minimal”. Ardross as a community is not against renewable energy. We just want it to be planned sensibly with a coherent balanced strategy that looks at accumulative impact on communities, rather than this race to build wherever they can while the opportunity for profits is high. We call on the Scottish government to listen to the voice of the Highlands, ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. We need to press the pause button, step back and really consider what we are doing, because when our beautiful countryside is lost, it will be lost forever.



## 2 – CONTIN CC

### John Heathcoate

Contin's 'patch' will be traversed by the proposed Spittal to Beaully overhead line (SLBB). The proposed Western Isles (WI) HVDC underground link also runs through our 'patch'. Additionally, we are involved with four wind farm applications (one of which is in our 'patch') and a 200 MW BESS.

The SLBB line crossing the Conon valley will be highly visible to all visitors to the north-west Highlands, since all roads will pass underneath it. The residents of Jamestown will suffer significant visual impact, since their view will look directly down and along the line. The construction of the line will cause extensive disruption in Contin Forest, a popular recreation area for locals and visitors from further afield. Contin Forest will also host the WI line, so we see the forest as being out-of-bounds for several years. This will impact the annual Strathpuffer cycle race in the forest, a national event.

We are very concerned about the cumulative effect on traffic through the village, if five projects each generating abnormal indivisible loads as well as ordinary HGV traffic for several years, are built almost simultaneously. All vehicles will come through the village, where traffic arrangements are already unsatisfactory.

We are minded to object to the proposal once it is submitted.

We would hope that this meeting can agree grounds for objecting to the SLBB project, common between affected CCs. We see these common grounds as being:

- Poor justification for the particular route and the particular technology and design, but accepting that there is some general need, and a generally inadequate public involvement in this process;
- Poor socio-economic justification – large non-financial costs locally but little local benefit;
- Part of an overall radical change to the north Highlands, from rural area to electricity factory, that has received no public engagement.

In addition to these issues that I think we share, there will be particular local objections.





### **3 – CREICH CC**

#### **Secretary, Creich Community Council**

Creich Community Council wish to thank Helen Crawford and the Community Councils who arranged this convention and agree wholeheartedly with all points raised. We are also a small group of volunteers elected to speak for our communities, most of us being new to this last year, and like others here we have been inundated with an unending barrage of industrial scale renewable energy applications.

We represent great rural communities, with many other issues requiring our time and support, but the vast majority of our time and efforts are taken up with trying to protect our communities, wonderful natural environment, wildlife and great biodiversity of the Kyle of Sutherland and salmon rivers Oykel and Cassley, from this industrialisation and destruction. What an induction and first year on the Community Council!!

We already have existing windfarms Achany and Rosehall, with Meall Buidhe approved and Strath Oykel now going through a Judicial Review Process after one Scottish minister overruled the overwhelming objections from our community, Highland Council and their own highly experienced reporters at a very intense, costly and stressful Public Inquiry. Achany Extension was also approved but SSE have now said original plans are not economically viable, so have put in redesign proposals for much larger turbines.

We have very recently put in our representations to the ECU regards Balblair Wind farm and BESS and Allt an Tuir Renewable Energy Park of massive solar array, giant turbines + BESS. We are also expecting at least 3 other windfarm development applications (in scoping at present) to be put in this month. We find that companies often put these applications in at holiday times. Are we being cynical to suggest that this is a deliberate ploy to make it harder for communities and councils to respond? There are also many other industrial scale renewable developments in scoping, and we haven't mentioned yet that the massive, and in our opinion totally unnecessary, Spittal to Beaully overhead line, is planned to cut right across the Kyle at the heart of our community.

The economy and sustainability of our communities rely heavily on the salmon fishing and tourism, with most of our visitors attracted by the peaceful, scenic beauty, fantastic wildlife up close and amazing dark skies. Any one of these

developments going ahead will threaten all this, but cumulatively they will totally encircle the Kyle of Sutherland, it's salmon rivers and rural communities, turning it into a wasteland of giant concrete bases, metal and massive turbines, even if by some chance we escape a thermal runaway at one of the planned BESS, pollution of the air we breathe, the rivers and land around us and therefore the death of all aquatic life and much of our wildlife and all that we hold dear.

The only people who stand to benefit from all this are the big energy companies, their shareholders and estate owners, many of whom do not live in the area. A large part of the profits, like the energy generated, will go out of this country.

The best way to Net Zero is to protect the carbon already in our peat rich hillsides and build renewable energy developments closer to the end user i.e. English cities or Europe. Zonal pricing makes sense.

The Highlands are already producing more than is needed. Our communities don't need or want this. We need true local democracy and call for a stop to all this madness, a joined up, planned approach, putting the local communities, local environment, wildlife and biodiversity first.



## **4 - DALWHINNIE CC**

### **Lesley Carr**

I represent Dalwhinnie Community Council as a councillor, Dalwhinnie Community Development Trust as the Administrator and am a member of the Earba Community Alliance which is a co-operation between Dalwhinnie, Laggan, Newtonmore and Sean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry CCs.

We are as frustrated by the lack of transparency over all of these huge energy projects which are being planned and planning applications submitted without adequate consultation with the local communities as are all the other CCs.

I would like to say on behalf of my community that we are deeply concerned to find that we are mentioned in planning applications outwith our own area in this case as a possible venue for Park and Ride places as we have a mainline station, are very rural with a small population and this makes the developers look good with their environmental emissions during construction.

The state of the roads, ie the A889, A86 and the A82, during construction of the Earba Pump Hydro Scheme which is the biggest such project in the UK so far, have been described as Adequate by Transport Scotland without any input from the communities who use these roads all the time. The Highland Council did not object to this proposal but their recommendations for this scheme were overruled by the Energy Consents Unit.

For lots of reasons ie pollution, noise, vibration, traffic danger, lack of local services to support a large input of vehicles and personnel, reduction in tourism, amount of inconvenience when roads are closed off for big plant and equipment moves to and from the worksite, dangerous overtaking by vehicles on narrow roads due to the impatience of drivers behind big plant vehicles to name just some of my community's concerns and the environmental losses of countryside and habitat seem to be very low on the agenda for these type of projects.

We feel that democracy is not even a consideration during these types of developments. The fact that the initial planning application does not include the siting of work camps, park and ride venues, placement of sub stations or the infrastructure concerning Transmission to the grid but means that when these come to planning decisions, the Council planners cannot refuse their permissions as they would seem to be preventing the employment of hundreds

of people with the carrot of a few well paid permanent jobs at the end of the project.

I look forward to hearing the views of other CCs in this drive towards a Net Zero economy and having attended quite a few webinars and CC meeting recently, are very aware as to how many hours this all takes and by volunteers who give their time freely but I think are struggling with all the legalities of having to fight a very unevenly presented and bureaucratic process.

Kind regards,

Lesley Carr

Dalwhinnie CC: DCDDT and the Earba Community Alliance.



## **5 – DORNIE & DISTRICT CC**

### **Linda Brooks**

As a principle, we would seek zonal pricing for electricity. We currently pay among the highest rates for energy in the UK despite having a hydro station within our community council area.

Our experience is that until this year's 80th anniversary of hydro stations, there has been no recognised community benefit from having this infrastructure in our area and we ask that community benefit, which should be significant, managed and distributed using the greatest level of subsidiarity, should apply to existing as well as future renewables development.



## **6 – DUNBEATH CC**

### **Andrew Bailey**

Labour MP MR Henry Tuffnell recently raised the fact that Net Zero is not delivering more jobs and cheaper bills for the people of the UK. So we must now reconsider the approach. More and more labour MP's are raising questions about the loss of jobs in the oil and gas industries. We must therefore speed up this process of raising these questions from all MP's and stop this Milliband lunacy and scrap target dates.



## **7 – DUNNET & CANISBAY CC**

### **Mark Gibson**

First of all we would like to give our apologies for not attending this meeting in person. It is just a little too far for us to travel. We would also like to thank Councillor Crawford and the other people there who have worked hard to bring this meeting together and to highlight some issues facing community councils across the Highlands.

We represent a Community Council on the far North coast of the Scottish Mainland. Our area includes the famous Dunnet and Duncansby Heads, John O'Groats and the late Queen mothers former Castle of Mey. It is a scattered community which generally relies on tourism and farming as the main Industries. We welcome tens of thousands of visitors each year but we have a good local community with active development trusts seeking to improve the area for both locals and visitors alike.

One major problem is shared with many other areas and that is depopulation. Our local plans recognise this and lack of good long term job opportunities and poor public transport links feed into this. However we do attract people back to the area through our natural environment and clean air and slower pace.

That said, we are not, as a Community Council, automatically opposed to energy developments. We have just off our coast line the pioneering MeyGen tidal energy scheme. We have several wind farms in operation. As a Community Council we have traditionally weighed up the pros and cons of these developments, listened to what local people tell us and will often take a neutral stance if that is appropriate.

We did object to the Mey BESS scheme which we felt for various reasons was not appropriate to our area. But we do take each scheme on its merits.

However, the recent influx of applications, mostly piecemeal, has made it very difficult for us to look in any detail at each one or understand the bigger picture. We are a small group of volunteers, often with many other responsibilities. The need to read through hundred page documents, attend meetings with developers and then write (if needed) detailed objections to proposals might be OK as a one

off. But when it is several applications within the same year it becomes beyond our limited capabilities.

From our lowly position there seems to be no one single energy strategy, just a year by year, scheme by scheme advancement with very little benefit showing for the local communities. We pay the highest prices in the UK for our electricity and that annoys many of our constituents when they see that energy being generated or stored almost in their backyard.

We come to this meeting open minded but also in a little way, heartened that so many other Community councils share some of our concerns and want to look for solutions that are not detrimental to the environment or economies of our local communities and can deliver real benefits.





## **8 – HALKIRK & DISTRICT CC**

### **Stuart Mills**

#### Background

We all recognise the importance of “climate change” and working together to develop a realistic and achievable solution.

In acting to protect the environment from the impact of climate change, we also need to ensure that renewable energy projects don't damage our unique and valued environment, at the same time.

Caithness and especially the Halkirk area is under siege from developments, which we must remind ourselves are business ventures designed to make a profit.

In coming up with a plan, we need to value our current quality of life and provide reliable and cheap power to all users, recognising our local environment and housing stock. Many of the Government supported solutions (UK and Scottish) are not suitable for rural areas: EV transport and Air Source heat pumps.

Currently we are far from this, and we don't have an agreed and balanced plan for developing renewable energy developments.

Our current situation is (HDCC) – See Map:

- Wind farms: Built and Operational: 42, Planning: 45
- BESS, based on Li-Ion, (not the best solution!): 1.4 GW, does not include windfarm developments
- Infrastructure: Accumulation of Substations at Banniskirk, HV voltage cable route across the county, overhead power line up grades and new OHL

#### Major Issues

The following major issues are live and getting worse:

- Noise – cumulative impact, Tormsdale is above the standard for residents, and recognised in the planning application
- Access – Local roads are not suitable to support heavy construction

- Red Lights – Larger turbines require “red lights”, major impact in a rural area
- Early developments may be upsized to larger turbines
- UNESCO World Heritage Site – Tormsdale is adjacent to the site, Altnabreac is in the site
- Community Buy in – Tormsdale, no engagement with the local community. No direct benefit to those directly impacted by the developments.
- Standard of Planning Applications – Tormsdale: no Construction Traffic Management Plan, minor road through the hamlet of Westerdale, same route for the Altnabreac development
- Power Export Route – Often not clear, no route given for Tormsdale. Developments approved ahead of the transmission routes.
- BESS – Accumulation along the A9 and the level of risk due to the number of developments, no permanent local Fire and Rescue Service
- Li-Ion Battery technology is not the best solution – Royal Society Paper (Reference:1), not sensible on peat
- Major infrastructure developments around Banniskirk to support the “offshore developments”
- Underground cable and pylon routes across the county
- Upgraded overhead pylon route across the county and new OHL projects

### Observations

The planning process is not providing the support and protection that we need. Immediate action is required to address the totality of all the developments and their supporting infrastructure.

- Action 1: Assessed against current and future developments, integrated plan

We also consider that the level of planning application is poor and requires several iterations to be fully assessed, or if rejected is often resubmitted with changes. All at the expense of the Planning Authority. Tormsdale – 3 cycle of the process and still not a complete application and rejected by the Planning Authority. Reapplication under way.

- Action 2: Single Pass Funded Application – reapplication funded by the developer

We currently feel let down and ignored in favour of developers. Current generation capacity far exceeds our local and regional energy needs in favour of profit and misguided technical solution which maximise benefit to the developers.

- Action 3: Planning application must include a suitable technical assessment of the project to the purpose of the development and the proposal

The high-level strategies need to be developed into an acceptable plan to deliver reliable, cheap and electricity for the benefit of local communities and the protection of the environment.

Net Zero – needs to be fully developed around a balanced solution.

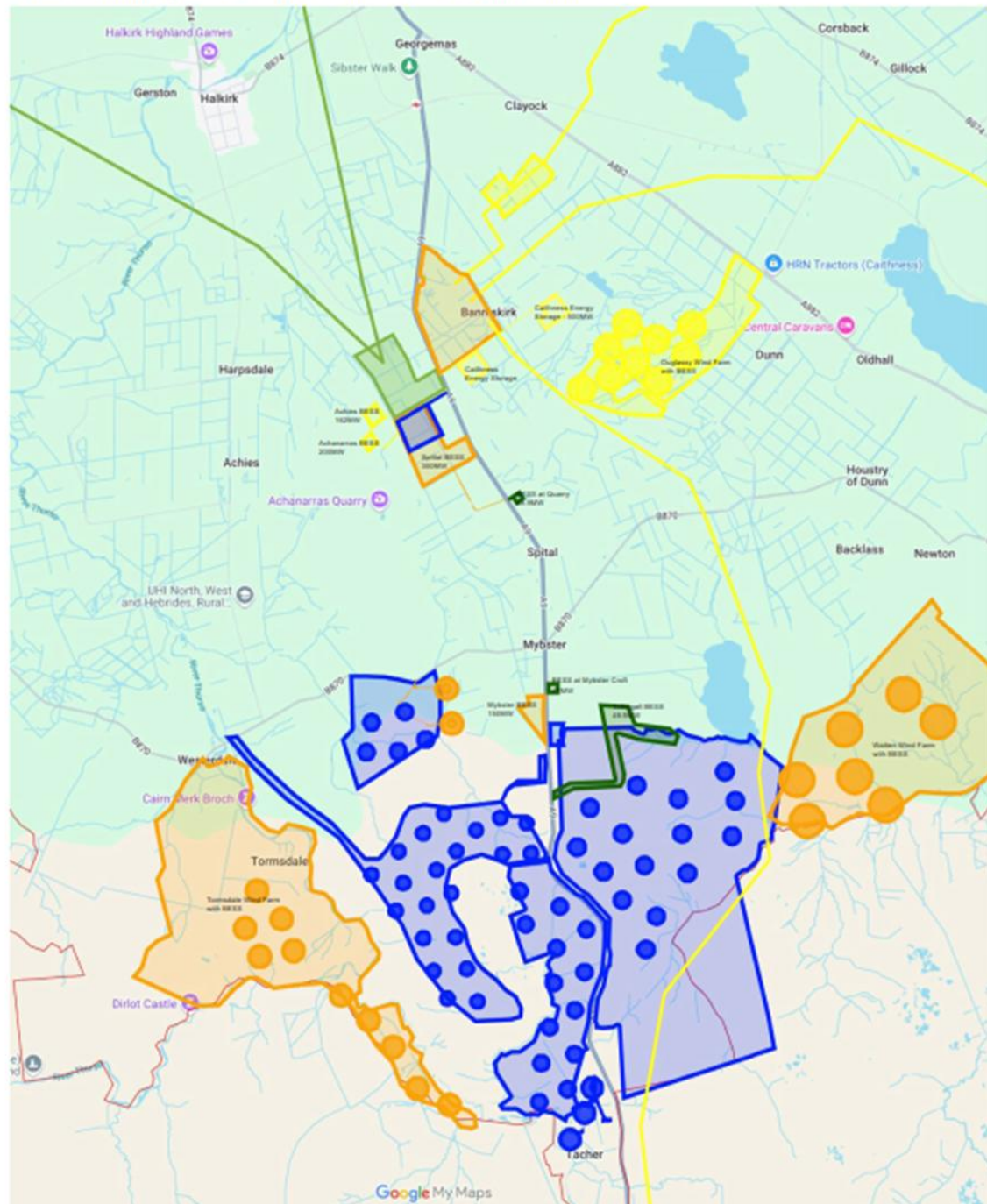
Retain the ability to hold Public Local Inquiries.

#### Reference:

1. Large -scale Electricity Storage: The Royal Society, Sept 2023 DES6851\_1

## Cumulative Impact Map - Spittal / Mybster area - June 2025

Source: [www.highlandrenewablesdatabase.org/map.html](http://www.highlandrenewablesdatabase.org/map.html)



Developments have thick outlines - Colour key:

- Yellow** — Projects at early planning stages
- Orange** — Projects with full planning applications submitted
- Light Green** — Planning in Principle for a development approved
- Dark Green** — Development approved
- Blue** — Project built or under construction
- Red** — Boundary of the Flow Country Unesco World Heritage Site

BESS in Spittal / Mybster area without wind farm BESS:

consented: 96.9 MW  
 in planning: 450 MW  
 at scoping: 862 MW  
 total: 1.4 GW - or half of the limit NESO has set for the whole area of North Scotland which covers the everything from Argyll and Bute to Shetland. Batteries should be close to consumers which makes the location up here even more questionable.



## **9 – INVERGORDON CC**

### **Sally Northern**

We believe it is important to recognise that Invergordon hosts the Port of Cromarty Firth. Residents of Invergordon and the surrounding towns and villages are most certainly impacted by the activities at the Port, mainly traffic movements of large component parts on roads that are definitely not fit for purpose.

As a Community Council we never imagined that we would need to monitor and prepare responses to planning applications across the wider Highlands – particularly if component parts could potentially be transported from the Port.

A piece of work being undertaken currently by the Highland Council showing existing wind farms and the number of potential applications in Highland Council region is staggering.

Visual impact of bigger and bigger turbines on communities that are some considerable distance away from wind farms. Battery Storage facilities are a concern also.

Community Councils need to come together to support each other and respond appropriately to all applications. We need to be standing together. New route for responding to applications is going to take some getting used to. Reading and understanding very large documents that are presented as part of any application is a daunting task. Funding any communication / consultation with the communities we represent is a costly exercise with Community Councils not having enough funds to do this effectively. Remember also Community Councils are run by volunteers who have chosen to give up their time to support the communities they represent, often on top of full-time employment, as is the case for Invergordon Community Council members.

Other considerations, that maybe do not impact Invergordon as such but should be considered are the noise nuisance and “Wind Theft”.

Perhaps a bigger question that requires answering – How Green are these turbines and what is the actual carbon footprint of installing one turbine from the cost of mining the rare minerals required, the manufacturing costs and then the transportation costs? How many years does a turbine need to be operational to

cover its own environmental cost? Maybe not contributing as much to the Net Zero goal as we are being led to believe.

## **10 – Kilmorack CC**

### **Andy Fraser**

The Kilmorack area, which I represent, has been at the centre of numerous energy-related proposals and developments over the years, ranging in size from substations to battery storage systems, and we have generally had to fight against these alone. Although we are not at the centre of SSEN's latest batch of proposals, we are, as a community, still very much affected by the seemingly endless stream of developments which SSEN and others are proposing to take forward. All of which appear, to me, to be short term, with no overall long-term strategy. It is therefore very heartening to see so many similarly affected communities coming together and taking a united stand against both ongoing and proposed developments. Together we stand a much better chance of success in having our voices heard and getting our message across to Governments to take a step back from the current headlong charge into the destruction of our Highland communities and landscape.

There is an incessant drive and a headlong rush to achieve set timescales, but does Scotland need to be the first to achieve these? Whilst we do accept that there is an issue regarding climate change, we do not agree with the unrealistic deadlines being set at government level. As these alternative energy schemes are being progressed, there will undoubtedly be further technological developments made over the years, and as such some of the earliest schemes implemented may soon be overtaken by these developments and/or government policies and become out of date. A case in point being the recent announcement from Westminster that another nuclear reactor is to be progressed in England. Will we then still require to transfer so much energy down south? We would therefore suggest that it is time for the Scottish Government to pause and take stock, stop to think, and introduce a moratorium on such further large-scale energy developments in Scotland.

To be absolutely clear, we as a community are not against progress, and we accept the reality of, and the issues associated with, climate change. But the sheer volume of recent and current applications, many of which are simultaneous, and the tight timescales involved in turning these around, do not always give us the opportunity to fully review and respond to them in an appropriate and timeous manner. And the driver behind many of these initiatives appears to be greed and profit for companies rather than energy sustainability for

the people. As Community Councillors, we are unpaid volunteers with other commitments and demands, but as the politicians continue to ignore public concerns, we currently appear to be the only voice that the local communities have.

So, I have one final thought for consideration. The Scottish Government elections are due to take place next year. If the elected politicians are going to continue to ignore us, maybe it is time for this, and similar groups, to put forward our own election candidates for election in 2026, to further emphasise just how important this issue is to us all, and just how serious we are taking it!





## 11 – KILTARLITY CC

### Susan Ogston

On the 5th of August 2020, our fellow community councillor, the late Bill Fraser, received the first notification of what was then called the Beaully Reinforcement project. Since that day, our community council has been inundated with public enquiries, emails, meetings, and a cascade of planning applications.

We've had to navigate a maze of outdated maps and dense documentation. Only recently—thanks to Helen and some long-overdue support from the Highland Council—has any meaningful assistance begun to reach us. Sadly, for many of our efforts, it feels like that support has come too late.

We are now being asked to sacrifice our way of life, our traditions, and the very fabric of our communities for the sake of a distant goal. But at what cost?

Let us be clear: we are not against sustainability or progress. We are not NIMBYs. We care deeply about our environment and our future. But we also believe that progress must respect local voices, local needs, and local circumstances.

Too often, the Net Zero agenda overlooks the real and immediate concerns of rural communities. It disregards the impact on our local economies, our jobs, and our quality of life.

As community councils, we are on the frontlines. We hear the concerns of our residents. We see the effects of these policies on the ground. And we are fighting for the future of our communities.

In Kiltarlity, the proposed Fanellan development threatens to change our village forever. If SSEN is allowed to use our roads as a thoroughfare, the character and charm of our community will be irreversibly altered. But this is not just about aesthetics—it's about our health, our safety, and our way of life.

The number of community councils represented here today is a testament to our shared commitment. Now, we call on our councillors and politicians at both local and national levels—to match that commitment.

Let us stand together. Let us make our voices heard.



## **12 – KIRKHILL & BUNCHREW CC**

### **Cameron Kemp**

Our community is facing multiple proposals for renewable energy infrastructure on an industrial scale, with projects intended to transition the U.K.'s energy capacity and drive the green transition. The Highlands and Islands are not the principal beneficiary.

Under threat locally are some of the most remote, beautiful and fragile landscapes, places that retain a visceral connection to our cultural heritage - the bustling village of Beaully, the rural communities where traditions are strong, Kiltarlity, Fanellan, Kilmorack, Newtonhill, Cabrich, Kirkhill to name a few. These developments are a direct threat to those communities and our natural environment, our heritage, and our biggest industry that is tourism. We are being told to sacrifice this, we are being told that we have to bear this, we are being told that all of this is for our benefit. There has been no economic impact assessment of the costs to our communities.

As far back as 2019, Scotland produced significantly more wind energy than required domestically. Despite this surplus, renewable infrastructure continues to disproportionately target the Highlands, sterilising vast swathes of land including vital peatlands, forestry and farmland. We currently have amongst the highest electricity prices in Europe.

We are told of community benefits, but this does not equate to what is to be taken away from us. The negative impact on families, people's mental health, local businesses, the value of homes, has not been assessed or properly compensated for.

The public consultation by Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks promoting their schemes has in not been meaningful. Piece meal plans to divide our communities. Instead we could create a once in lifetime opportunity to offer something that would benefit and revitalise our rural communities, to reverse the trend of de-population and an aging demographic and offer a future for our youth. We need our elected members to support and protect our communities at National level given that community consultation is inadequate and Local democracy is being ignored.



## **13 - LYBSTER, LATHERON & CLYTH CC**

### **Dave Chisholm**

#### Issues

The following issues are being experienced and are likely to get worse:

- Access – Some local roads have been closed for 6 months to facilitate the import of turbines.
- Red Lights – The entire seaward horizon is now a field of red lights from the Beatrice Offshore Wind Farm.
- Quantity of turbines – The area is shortly to be surrounded by turbines to the North (Burn of Whilk, Camster 1 and 2), East (Beatrice, Moray East, Moray West), West (Golticlay, Stemster) and South (Buolfruch) – See attached Map.

#### Observations

The planning process does not appear to be fit for purpose. Action is required immediately to incorporate a combined, overall impact of the number and size of developments in the local area to be taken into account in future planning applications.

Action 1 – Establish an Integrated Planning process, to take into account all developments in place and planned in local area.

Planning applications are often of poor quality with early iterations of applications often rejected, but subsequent versions still funded by planning authority. This allows developers to improve poor applications to the minimum acceptable standard at the taxpayers expense. Furthermore, the common practise of applying for extensions to wind farms once an initial application is granted (as seen at the Golticlay Wind Farm) should be looked at with a degree of contempt and be conducted purely at the developers expense.

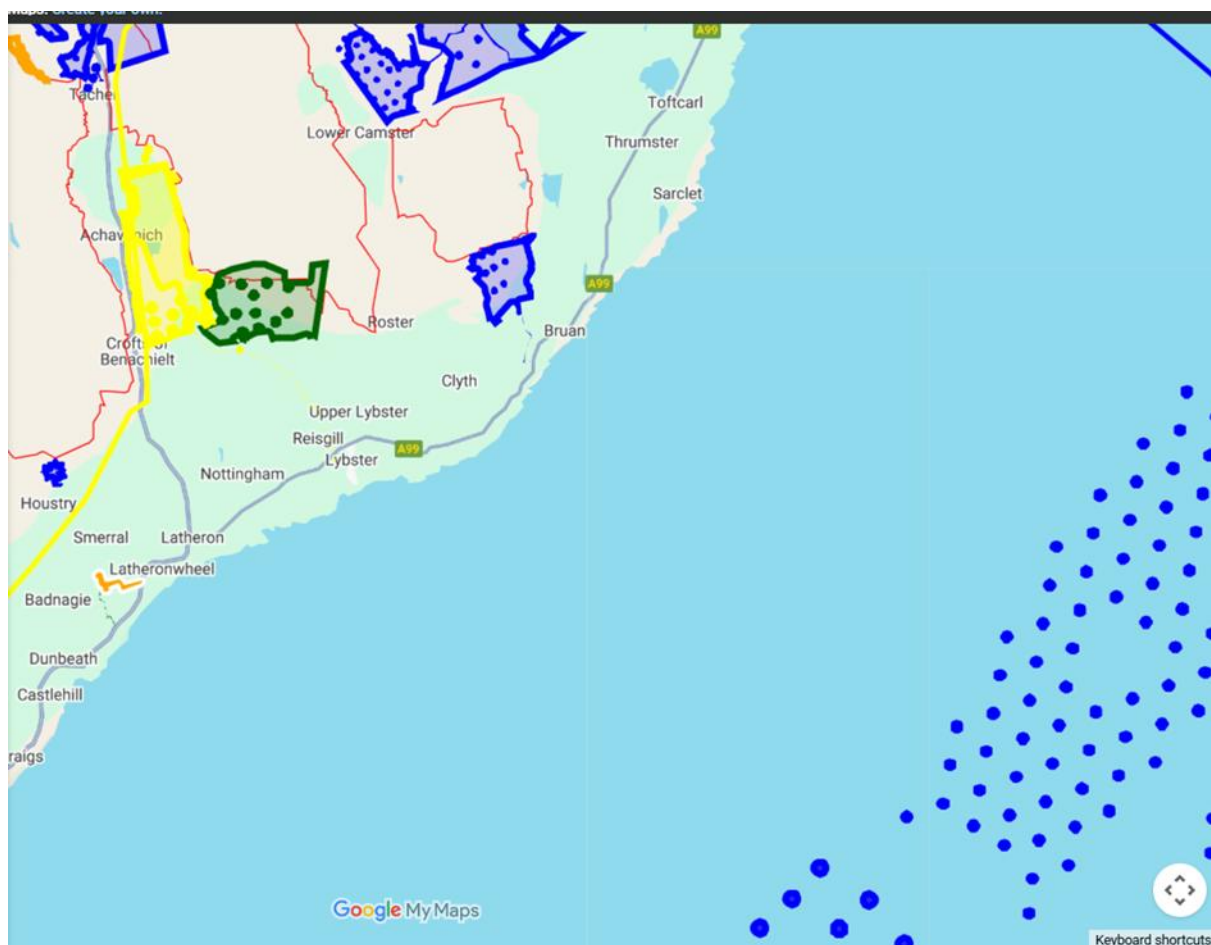
Action 2 – Developers only to be given a single application funded by the taxpayer. All further attempts to be at the developers expense.

Communities are being ignored in favour of developers. Installed generation capacity in the area far exceeds the regional requirements, therefore there is no valid technical reason to install further wind farms in the area.

Action 3 – Planning applications should be accompanied by suitable technical assessments of the proposal to explain the purpose and need for it to be constructed.

## Conclusion

Communities are being ignored, with objections raised by Community Councils and indeed Highland Council being ignored as the Scottish Government rubber stamps applications in a wild, inconsiderate drive for net zero at the expense of Highland communities and countryside.



## **14 - MORVERN CC**

### **Keith Laidlaw**

On Morvern, the Morvern Community Development Company (MCDC) operates the largest community-owned hydroelectric power station in Europe, Barr Hydro. Consequently, Morvern is acutely aware of the need for sustainable renewable energy and aspires to contribute to this endeavour while minimising its impact on the community and our very special environment. This aligns with the community's commitment to meeting renewable generation targets and benefiting communities without causing significant adverse effects. Morvern is eager to collaborate with national and global targets aimed at combating global warming and the community appreciates the potential of additional renewable energy sources such as wind, solar batteries, and possibly tidal energy.

The Highland Council has published a report suggesting that Morvern is an ideal location for onshore wind power renewable generation. However, this decision was made without local consultation, which has surprised the community. We believe that the absence of comprehensive biodiversity data, including the number of sea eagles, golden eagles, and other rare species, and the potential impact of wind turbines on these species, contributed to this decision being made without adequate data or consultation. We anticipate that future decisions will be more consultative and informed.

The Highlands, particularly the west coast areas, possess substantial potential to contribute to societies' renewable energy requirements. In this regard, there is a growing financial incentive for investing in renewables. A quick analysis indicates that a single 2MW wind turbine can generate an annual profit of between £300,000 and £500,000, depending on factors such as infrastructure, construction, and maintenance costs.

However, there are several concerns raised by our community, although this list is not exhaustive, these include: (we recommend a proper local consultation)

- The potential impact on communities during construction and operation.
- The potential impact on local infrastructure to support construction and ongoing operations.
- The environmental impact of these production facilities on the communities, including the potential degradation of iconic views.

- Any specific benefits to the communities of being located in an energy production zone.
- The potential environmental risks.
- Will local employment be part of the plan?

Currently, the Grid requires substantial upgrades to achieve the renewable energy objectives and facilitate the export of generated energy. Per capita, residents of the Highlands and Islands incur higher costs to purchase back the energy they contribute to the Grid, making us some of the highest-paying UK consumers for energy. Historical justifications for this situation have been that our remote location and relatively low consumer base necessitate higher infrastructure costs. However, this infrastructure is the same that is required for energy export. This argument appears outdated. We should be able to sell our local energy directly to local consumers through a local energy initiative. However, the Grid setup and legal regulations prohibit this intent.

Some may mention the £5,000 per MW generation capacity non-legal agreement that certain communities enjoy. This amount has remained unchanged for over two decades and is not a legal requirement. It appears to be an outdated arrangement that has not been updated for inflation. The Highland Council has expressed a desire to increase this 'tithe' to £12,500, but the additional £7,500 would be directed solely to the Highland Council and not to the local community. This is perceived as a levy to fund Inverness-centric budgets.

Perhaps turning this quantum around such that £7,500 is allocated locally and £5,000 to the central Highland Council fund is far more equitable.

We look forward to the future, however local communities who bear the brunt of disruption during provisioning and ongoing operations should be listened to and helped.



## 15 - MUIR OF ORD CC

### Gordon Shand

Muir of Ord is not as affected as our near neighbours in Beauly and Kiltarlity, but we do still have 4 energy infrastructure projects, 2 where we are part of the main transport route to site, and 2 with new OHL & UGC running through the outskirts of the village. We also have other developments to consider.

So I'll give our feedback in 3 sections - Where we are now – Our Observations up to this point – And where are we going

Where are we now – comment summarised, rounded up with edges taken off.

Community feedback from Muir of Ord? It's very similar to all our neighbours, and probably the majority of the 1400+ comments on THC planning portal for the Fanellan application. Their comments have come in at all levels, here are some -

- Why are we [communities represented today] bearing the brunt of the governments headlong rush to meet net zero by 2030 without seeing any real benefit from it on our energy costs. i.e. progress on a regional pricing system for electricity
- Concern for the environmental impact during the construction and operating phase of the OHL's and UGC works in our area as well as the increased traffic volumes in and around the village. We keep hearing the quote "An Industrialisation of the Highlands". That doesn't have a nice ring to it.
- Our business community are concerned that this industrialisation and potential visual impacts, could affecting our tourist numbers with a knock-on effect on our supporting hospitality and retail sectors. *Cost of living crisis, headwinds*
- Our supporting infrastructure requires a review and upgraded in places before any major works start. Anyone who's driven the Tore – Muir of Ord – Beauly road, proposed as one of the main transport routes for Fanellan and other developments, will be well aware of its condition and pinch points [junction leading to MoO industrial estate]. The addition of high volumes of HGV traffic will lead to congestion, driver frustration and a higher risk of accidents.

## Our Observations Getting Here

- Public consultations – have they been effective? A lot of people commenting directly to us, or via social media, that they haven't been aware of the development[s] and their local implications. Information they did have, mainly came from social media sites like Communities before power companies and other similar sites. The developers have played it by the book, they've had the requisite number of events at the required stages of their developments, but from the feedback I'm getting, the message hasn't come across, that's the issue. It would be interesting to hear what other communities think of the current consultation process, its effectiveness for them and how they deal with it.
- Who Owns "The Cumulative Effect"

We as a community have 4 energy and infrastructure projects + 2 housing developments [circa 200 houses] in various stages of planning, all on the same transport route and all potentially on the same timeline. Who gathers all this data and judges when enough is enough? Without this type of overview I feel we as a community are running blind to what's coming at us..

where are we going

Highlands and Islands Enterprise recently published [May'25] a report outlining a potential £100bn investment opportunity for the Highlands and Islands over the next 15 years, for what they call Regional Transformational Opportunities. They have identified approx 250 projects predominantly in offshore wind, onshore wind, pumped storage hydro, marine energy and supporting infrastructure [tourism was excluded from this study].

To achieve this, they have also identified associated enablers to maximise investment opportunities. These are [1] significant new housing development and delivery, [2] urgent need for skills and workforce development and [3] key infrastructure improvements.

They have also cited Planning as a crucial enabler and they report changes are underway. The Scottish Government Planning Hub has been established to support and speed up planning decisions and address planning constraints in local authorities.



So with all that on the horizon, and what's required to achieve these 'economic opportunities' it seems like a good time to call a 'time out' and support the purpose of today's meeting, that is to call upon the Scottish gov to undertake a planning enquiry commission to address the cumulative impact of these 'opportunities' on communities so that WE understand the implications, and have our voices heard in the planning of our future.



## **16 – NAIRN RIVER CC**

### **Hamish Bain**

Nairn's Local Place Plan makes it clear that BESS parks are not what the local community want. These are non-compliant with the new IMFLDP

There has not been any attempt to comply with the National Fire Chief Council guidelines nor with H&S advice/regulations.

No consultation nor any dialogue with Scottish Fire and Rescue Service - Nairn has a voluntary service. There is a massive question over availability of a sufficient Water Supply, developer has proposed tinkering in water before go-live

Questions remain over remote monitoring of these BESS parks and proposed links to SFRS and the Police.

Failure to listen and take cognisance of local community and businesses, there are several businesses with a short distance from these proposed sites.

In the event of an incident there will be a major impact on local woodlands, farm land - crops, animals etc, watercourses, roads. Best practice suggestions from further South is in an event situation to keep doors and windows closed, cattle and sheep do not have doors nor windows.

Impact on nearby residential and business properties - health and long term risks to those people who live/work adjacent to BESS in the event of a fire/explosion

Thermal run down and the effects of climate change.

The cumulative impact to all of the above due to numerous BESS parks in close vicinity.

Environmental impact of decommissioning and disposing of lithium batteries, there is little proof that initiating companies will still be in operation after a few years so any commitment to clean-up will be diluted as ownership of these sites pass through various hands. Continuous changing of companies who operate site - company who obtains consent invariably changes before site is operational - makes enforcement of conditions, especially financial guarantee, very difficult if not impossible

There has not been any consultation or dialogue by local THC ward members to seek the community's views.

Planning Committees accept whatever THC Planning officers tell them and rarely question the information presented. Problem with SPAC and NPAC is that they are populated by individuals who live vast distances from where the proposal is located and in most cases do not concern themselves with the impact their decisions can make.

Will there be an actual Community Benefit Fund, will any contributions be kept local or will THC take it in-house to help balance their books? If NICE were to look after CBF it would help to deliver the Community led LPP.

All Communities affected by the installation of electrical infrastructure should also be given a significant rebate in electricity costs.



## **17 – ROGART CC**

### **Frank Roach**

Windfarms occupy a huge amount of our time, dealing with planning applications from a number of developers. In Rogart alone we have one windfarm operating, one consented, one about to be consented as THC withdrew the objection, and three more under development. We may end up with over 100 turbines in all, plus the windfarms in neighbouring CC areas.

The general consensus is that we already have enough, that the industrialisation of the landscape will change our relationship with the land.

The new pylon line will pass through Rogart on its way to the new substation at Loch Buidhe closely following the existing 275kV line.



## **18 – SCOURIE & DISTRICT CC**

**Julie Allen**

To our elected representatives,

We in NWS have gotten used to our voices not being heard.

Without any proper consultation, we have had a tourism foisted on us. That for many years now, has forced us to witness the destruction of our way of life, and our once pristine wild environment.

We have listened to the government bleating about net zero targets and cleaner energy, while we watched our life line road branded and filled with camper vans and fumes, our lay-bys turned into free campsites and open toilets, and our favourite quiet places openly being decimated. No consultation, no consent, no accountability.

But somehow we still believed our UNESCO Geopark status, our famed naturally beautiful wild environment, our dark skies, our fragile communities, could save us from big energy.

But now they are here, and they want in.

Again, governments, local and national would have us believe that we must accept this for the good of our planet.

That the industrialising our wild spaces, home to us, our flora and fauna, our natural capital is good for the planet.

Defacing nature to save nature.

No one more than the people living in rural areas see the hypocrisy of your words and invisible targets.

We see you, we know who is benefiting and we know we are for sale.

Scourie and District CC, would like to add our voice to the other Highland CCs asking for a pause to any more big energy infrastructure.

Stop now and give time to The Highlands, its people and its environment to be heard.

Local democracy matters.



## 19 - SKEABOST & DISTRICT CC

### David Salt

We want to highlight the unprecedented scale of energy infrastructure planning on the Isle of Skye, which is placing enormous pressure on our local community councils.

Currently, there are at least seven separate wind farm developments at various stages, as well as a major overhead line (OHL) upgrade project. These include:

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#### Wind Farm Proposals on Skye:

- Ben Aketil Repowering & Extension – Up to 9 turbines, up to 200 m tall
- Ben Sca Redesign – Seeking taller turbines (approx. 150 m)
- Edinbane – Existing wind farm near Ben Aketil
- Beinn Mheadhonach – 5 new turbines (21 MW)
- Glen Ullinish II – Large-scale proposal east of Dunvegan
- Balmeanach – 10 turbines at 149.9 m
- Breakish – 16 turbines (180 m) and a 30 MW battery installation

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#### SSEN Overhead Line Upgrade:

- Major new line from Skye to Fort Augustus
  - Includes temporary work camps (up to 800 workers)
  - Designed to export energy to the mainland
- 

The volume and complexity of these overlapping applications—often managed by different developers with separate timelines—make it extremely difficult for small, voluntary community councils to respond meaningfully. There is no coordinated planning process, no overall assessment of cumulative impacts, and little time or capacity to represent community interests effectively.

Developers are pressuring Community Councils (CCs) to establish trusts or similar bodies to receive so-called “community benefits.” This is a complex and time-consuming process for CC members, and we’re concerned that entering into such agreements may be interpreted as us endorsing the proposed wind farms.

Developers are also claiming that wind farms will be the only source of financial support for local communities. They've even suggested that if CCs don't cooperate, they may bypass us entirely and hand the funds directly to Highland Council.

As a CC, it's very difficult to take a clear stance when responding to planning consultations. Our role is to represent the whole community, which includes a wide range of opinions. We were advised by Highland Council to run online polls to gauge public sentiment. We followed this advice, and the results showed around 75% opposition to the four wind farm proposals we were reviewing. However, we acknowledge that this polling method has its limitations.

We believe the Convention is a timely opportunity to highlight these concerns and to press for a more joined-up approach to energy planning across the Highlands.



## **20 – SLEAT CC**

### **Tim Shone**

My name is Tim Shone, past Chair and still a member of Sleat Community Council in the very South of the Isle of Skye. The garden of Skye.

Although our specific area has not to date been subjected to any large scale Major Energy Infrastructure, the potential is there for future issues. Community Councils immediately to the North of us are experiencing issues related to Grid upgrades and large scale wind farms, and we are pleased to support them in their efforts to have some kind of influence on the outcome.

Sleat Community Council is supporting small scale wind generators, mini hydro electric schemes, and solar panels and we feel strongly that this is the best way forward. Having several local smaller generating units which can more easily blend into the countryside while still feeding the grid with unused power. The idea of having large scale turbines thrust upon us without local consultation or consent is abhorrent.

We will be pleased to add Sleat Community Council to the Convention of Highland wide Community Councils presenting a conjoined front to get local opinions throughout the Highlands listened to and respected.





## **21 – STRATHDEARN CC**

**James Duncan**

At this very moment in Strathdearn, we have thirteen wind farms surrounding our community, but we also have another six in the pipeline, bringing the total number to 19 wind farms. surrounding our beautiful and idyllic landscape

The Community Council has had to deal with all the complexities and rules of planning to understand how we go about putting our concerns to the ECU and the Highland council. In doing so we have incurred costs and a great deal of time and effort to respond professionally to these Section 36 Applications all in the space of the last 6 months. When these windfarms are all up and running our wee Glen, which is 22 miles long and about six miles wide will produce enough power to run 70% of all housing in Scotland, all this while we pay more for our energy than anywhere in Europe and watch almost helplessly while our beautiful flora and fauna are irreparably damaged.

All this without including the dominant and unsightly power lines, pylons, transmission stations, battery storage facilities, and a lack of, in my opinion, local democracy

We must, as the Highlands community council convention, get together to bring back democracy to the Highlands power grab and stop the destruction of our world-renowned scenery and quieter way of life, and protect the wildlife and wild lands that are iconic in our Highlands.



## **22 - STRATHGLASS CC**

### **Humphrey Clarke**

I am Humphrey Clarke, representing SCC. I am not a climate scientist, but I am a Chartered Engineer.

Like other communities we are surrounded by windfarms and applications for many more. Even more alarming is a 60-acre sub-station at Bingally that is home to Black Grouse and Water Voles, supposedly protected species. It will overlook the adjacent historic village of Tomich and be clearly visible to walkers on the mountains opposite. In the Planning Application this is dismissed as having a minor effect on Tourism and the local residents! The cumulative effect of the construction traffic alone for all these sites will destroy tourism for anyone who wants to experience tranquillity and wild beauty.

The infrastructure plan as stated by the Government is intended to decarbonize the grid and provide cheap reliable energy. As we, the taxpayers and users of this energy, will have to pay for all of this in some way or other it seems reasonable to question how this massive destruction of our environment is actually achieving those aims.

For those outside Ivory palaces of government, it is clear that wind is not reliable and cannot be controlled to meet demand. We had three weeks of very low wind in January when UK electricity demand was high. On 8 Jan 25 when the UK demand was 41 GW, wind provided only 17.5% of that requirement, (which, incidentally, would have more than powered all of Scotland), imports from the continent provided 13 % and 2 gas fired power stations were fired up especially to cover peak demand and were paid 50 times the normal rate to do so. Had a Russian ghost ship been in action we would have had a black out much worse than the one in Spain earlier this year. Wind is unreliable we do not need any more turbines. Most of the nation, especially industry actually want cheap and reliable energy, never mind the greenery.

Wind turbines cannot be a cheap source of power because the operators have to be guaranteed rates that will compensate them for their investment in plant which does not run continuously or consistently. Furthermore, all wind power has to be backed up with other means of generation that is otherwise idle, wasted capital expenditure, (for which we have to pay in some way.) BESS and

pumped storage are not effective at backing up wind because they can only provide power for hours, not for days or weeks.

Whether or not you believe that decarbonizing the grid will actually achieve anything for the climate it is not unreasonable to ask SSE how much carbon will be saved as a result of this massive destruction which in itself will emit vast quantities of carbon and therefore what the carbon payback period will be? In the same vein we have asked what the financial payback period will be from the improved efficiencies of the new substations and DC transmission? To date we have no answer to these specific questions suggesting the SSE either have not thought about this or that they do not wish to admit the payback times involved.

Regardless of the above UK only emits some 2% of the world's CO<sub>2</sub>, if we throw the unbelievable amounts of money at net zero and achieve it the result on climate will be imperceptible and unmeasurable because none of the major or potential major polluters have made any significant commitment to net zero. Net zero is therefore a political fantasy for which our governments are prepared to sacrifice our irreplaceable natural beauty, our businesses and home tranquillity. A fraction of this proposed expenditure devoted to mitigation, improving existing housing, flood prevention, firefighting aircraft and the like would have far more benefit than throwing money into a bottomless net zero pit.

For anyone who is listening the solution is not wind turbines but conventional, reliable local generation which avoids the huge sub-stations and pylons in beautiful places, reduces transmission losses and leaves us far less vulnerable to attack by hostile forces. If we must have green generation tidal power is absolutely predictable and fits well with pumped storage.

We totally support a moratorium on the whole project until a quantified end solution and a rational route to it is agreed.

Eur Ing RH CLARKE CEng, M I Mech E

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## 23 – STRATHNAIRN CC

Phil Mackintosh

### STRATHNAIRN COMMUNITY COUNCIL'S STATEMENT

RE: HIE'S EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & IMPACT OF MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS ON COMMUNITIES

#### 1.0 CONCERN ON CUMULATIVE AFFECT ETC

**(So called) 'Regional Transformational Opportunities' (RTO's) directly impacting Strathnairn with some bearing on the 3 Straths (Stratherrick, Strathdearn, Strathnairn) include:**

- Planned and current upgrading of NESO's / SSEN's grid
- Dualling / upgrading of section of A9 – as improvement to major infrastructure routes - plus 'improvements' or otherwise to minor roads to allow construction / development to happen
- Individual and cumulative effect of operating / consented / scoping Onshore Wind Farms
- Associated pump hydro storage and bearing on Lochs
- Change of pace, equals number of 'sites' simultaneously being developed, with lack of planning for overall impact and its effect on community / residents / a range of land users
- Proximity to Port areas of Inverness & Ardersier (in particular) for 'enabling' or provision of supporting infrastructure and all by association a movement of goods / services to and from here (including aggregates etc).

#### 2.0 CONCERN OVER PACE

The reports states:

Both public sector and additional sectoral activity will increase competition for people, skills, supply chains, etc. **Reflecting this and given that the Highlands and Islands is not the only region chasing these opportunities, it is critical that a collaborative, holistic, and place-based approach is adopted in realising these RTOs. And this must happen at pace.**

Concern: Disregard for Importance of Place and (Cumulative) Effect on Communities. **Policy is currently changing to increase pace / reduce the number of barriers** without sufficient consideration of the communities / people that are most affected and who have already invested into or are directly contributing to the area.

Communities are not part of the equation.

### 3.0 CONCERN ON CLUSTERING & IMPORTANCE OF PLACE

The report states:

#### **The Important of place**

There is **clear clustering** of potential investment activity:

- The Great Glen – typically energy-focused around onshore wind and pumped storage hydro;
- Inner Moray Firth and Moray - energy-related investment, supporting infrastructure, and onshore wind
- (As the examples cited which directly impact on Strathnairn Community Council area).

Concern: Disregard for the Importance of Place & Cumulative Effect being born by Communities. Saturation / concentration / industrialisation which is changing the nature of communities, landscape, heritage, biodiversity, dark skies and other things which contribute to place and are valued.

### 4.0 CONCERN OVER GROWTH OF ONSHORE OVER OFFSHORE

The report states:

#### **Onshore wind and pumped storage hydro**

As the backbone of the energy transition and to meet our energy security needs, a huge increase in variable power generation in the form of wind power, including onshore wind is required, in turn increasing the need for longer duration energy storage such as pumped hydro storage. There has been rapid growth of the onshore wind sector in the region and the associated supply chain, creating jobs and a wealth of knowledge and expertise. Continuing to support the supply chain is essential to build capacity and capability for the growing market. **Maintaining the infrastructure investment and capacity for onshore wind is also critical. Innovative solutions to onshore wind component transport and onsite construction techniques need to be explored if many of the remote rural high-capacity wind sites are to be accessed by the industry.**

The geography of the Highlands and Islands lends itself to the development of pumped storage hydro projects and a new surge in large-scale pumped storage hydro schemes demonstrates the scale of the opportunity that the region's hydrological resource offers. This includes the future potential to convert current hydropower projects into pumped storage hydro. However, access to a stable and consistent framework for investment, competition for resources including technology, supply chain and workforce and skills are constraints to development. There is also a need to explore solutions to remove transport related barriers arising during the construction of projects.

Concern: Appears to be directly connected to job creation, rather than energy generation, if you look at figures / data. All wind farm development could be offshore, instead of destroying the very nature of what is great about the Highlands by industrialising it; then solutions would not need to be found.

## 5.0 CONCERN OVER TRADE-OFFS & SACRIFICES & NATURAL CAPITAL

The report states:

**There must be a shared and agreed acceptance of the economic reality that there will be trade-offs. Decisions will need to be taken to drive growth, but some options may need to be sacrificed for another.**

The combined potential of the RTOs is arguably unprecedented in the Highlands and Islands and it will be best achieved by taking a holistic approach, recognising the synergies between the RTOs and the intersection of constraints and enablers such as housing, ports and transport.

Stakeholders should plan and work towards a multi-model economy with a basket of diverse, strong and innovative sectors that are forward looking. This will ensure a healthy, strong, resilient and sustainable regional economy that will be a very attractive and competitive destination for people, industry, and investment.

The RTOs and enablers such as transport, housing and planning cut across a range of functions and areas. **Rather than working in silos, there needs to be joined-up thinking, working and resourcing across governments and relevant agencies**, to arrive at an integrated approach to solutions which make best use of resources. **Where do communities – as hosts - feature in this?**

There is considerable scope to proactively seek out and support the development and adoption of synergies across RTOs and their supply chains. This will include co-location to alleviate pressures on land and in the marine space, and the Orkney Research and Innovation Campus (ORIC) is a good example on this. Alongside this, a vital consideration is how to pursue growth and at the same time ensure the sustainable management of natural resources and biodiversity on land, and in seas and rivers.

**Many of the RTO sectors are highly dependent on the region's natural capital. This must be done responsibly and having secured the necessary social license.**

And yet – as stated in the report - Natural Capital is not seen to generate jobs / does not form part of the equation.

**Is there no planned protection of it? Only exploitation? What about the flip side / twin problem which is being 'addressed' along with Climate Change which is Nature Restoration?**

**[Definition of natural capital: Geology, soils, air, water and all living organisms (biodiversity).]**

Concern: In short this about attracting investment into set industries / industrialisation of areas, growth of jobs, and aiming to stem population decline. It has little to do with Climate Change & Nature Restoration; and even less to do with Communities & The Importance of Place.

## 6.0 CONCERN ON ONSHORE ENERGY GENERATION & EXPRESSION OF FIGURES & PRESENTATION OF DATA

The report states:

With onshore wind – 26,320 Full Time Employment or Equivalent (FTE) JOB YEARS.

(Using this as an example of presenting data) Over a working man's lifetime of 39 years (according to the EU in 2023) this equates to **674 jobs for just under 40 years, across the entire Onshore Wind Sector in the whole of the Highlands.**

Concern: The figures are expressed in a particular way to sound very attractive. This is the tactic throughout the report (and also features in all the documents presented as Scoping Studies/ Planning Applications).

## 7.0 CONCERN ON ONSHORE ENERGY GENERATION & 'LIVE' SCOPING PROJECTS > FOR STRATHNAIRN THIS IS LYNEMORE WIND FARM

**On Galileo's Lynemore Wind Farm (as an example of a project) which is currently being considered for planning / impacting Strathnairn**

- 14 turbines on Carn Na H-Easgainn (a prominent Graham or 'Fiona')
- 200m to the tip of the blade
- No longer carefully sited to reduce impact
- Has little regard for constraints in the area
- Will be visible from Farr, Inverness, the Black Isle, Cairngorm National Park, The Monadhliath Mountains, The Great Glen, Glen Affric, The Fannaichs, Ben Dearg / Over to Ullapool, Easter Ross, Ben Rinnes etc.
- Across the 3 Straths (Strathnairn, Stratherrick, Strathdearn)

Operating: 215 turbines, max height 117m

Consented: A further 76 turbines, max height 149.9m

- **Subtotal / consented: 291 will be in place**

Scoping: A potential 108 turbines, max height 230m

- **If consented: 399 turbines** (or as HIE do, round up to the nearest 10, **so 400 turbines across the Straths**).

Concern: 400 onshore turbines could be consented on for this area of the Highlands alone (as the 3 Straths. What about the communities, landscape, wild land areas, heritage and biodiversity?

**Where is the balanced argument? Where do communities feature in this at all? What is the real lasting legacy which we are leaving for future generations?**

JM 14.06.2025



## **24 – TORRIDON & KINLOCHEWE CC**

**Caroline Hamilton**

This is to wish everyone at the Convention the very best from Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council. We are sorry to be unable to join you.

We believe it is absolutely essential that local people should be involved at the highest level within local and national government when issues, such as the major proposed renewable energy projects for the Highlands, are discussed. These projects could have a devastating impact on people's lives and livelihoods, not to mention our precious landscape. It is therefore vital that communities are listened to and concerns within communities addressed.

Put simply, without local voices such as those represented at the Convention, we fear our very democracy is under threat.

Best regards and thank you for organising what I am sure will be a great event,

Caroline Hamilton





## **List of Community Council Attendees**

The following Community Councils had representatives in attendance at the Convention:

**Ardross CC**  
**Balintore & Hilton CC**  
**Beaully CC**  
**Berriedale & Dunbeath CC**  
**Broadford & Strath CC**  
**Brora CC**  
**Caithness West CC**  
**Contin CC**  
**Creich CC**  
**Cromarty & District CC**  
**Dalwhinnie CC**  
**Dingwall CC**  
**Dornie & District CC**  
**Dunnet & Canisbay CC**  
**Duror & Kentallen CC**  
**Edderton CC**  
**Ferintosh CC**  
**Gairloch CC**  
**Garve & District CC**  
**Glengarry CC**  
**Glenurquhart CC**  
**Halkirk & District CC**  
**Helmsdale & District CC**  
**Invergordon CC**  
**Killearnan CC**  
**Kilmorack CC**  
**Kiltarlity CC**  
**Kiltearn CC**  
**Kinlochbervie CC**  
**Kirkhill & Bunchrew CC**  
**Knockbain CC**  
**Laggan CC**

**Latheron, Lybster & Clyth CC**  
**Lochardil & Drummond CC**  
**Marybank, Scatwell & Strathconon CC**  
**Morvern CC**  
**Muir of Ord CC**  
**Nairn River CC**  
**Rogart CC**  
**Saltburn & Westwood CC**  
**Scourie & District CC**  
**Skeabost & District CC**  
**Sleat CC**  
**Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge & Achnacarry CC**  
**Strathdearn CC**  
**Strathglass CC**  
**Strathnairn CC**  
**Strathpeffer CC**  
**Strathy & Armadale CC**  
**Tannach & District CC**  
**Uig CC**  
**Watten CC**

The following Community Councils were unable to attend on the day but expressed their support:

**Ardersier & Petty CC**  
**Torridon & Kinlochewe CC**

