



Scotland

AGAINST SPIN

Dear Supporters,

Here we go then folks: the most significant democratic vote in living memory takes place in Scotland in just under three weeks from now, and in this newsletter we take a peek at the SAS crystal ball to see what the consequences will be for wind energy policy north of the border.

In the meantime, the Scottish Government's renewable energy policy is pushing more and more people to the courts. Sustainable Shetland have taken the huge decision to continue their legal fight in the Supreme Court and tell us more about their current position on pg 4. And news has just broken of a new legal challenge to the government from The John Muir Trust over the 67-turbine windfarm at Stronelairg in the Highlands (see pg 3.)

Is this just the thin end of the wedge, and is the Scottish Government going to find itself having to defend more and more consents as Scotland becomes ever more full of wind turbines? One Reporter, Michael Cunliffe, from the Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA) has decided that enough is enough and thrown out an appeal made for the 8-turbine Barrel Law windfarm near Hawick (see [Protect Wild Scotland website.](#))

In rejecting the appeal he made specific reference to the fact that the Scottish Government had almost reached its target of generating 16GW of energy from renewables by 2020 and therefore the proposal was superfluous to requirements.



Montage of Barrel Law

All planning applications for turbines use government targets as the over-arching reason for consent, so Mr Cunliffe has given us an authoritative counter-argument. Anybody submitting an objection to a wind application should refer to Mr Cunliffe's decision. We've attached a template paragraph to this newsletter which you can paste in to any objection. Don't forget that so long as objections are still being accepted, you can add additional comments to any objections you have already made, and also that if an application you have objected to is appealed, you can send further comments into the DPEA!

It is unlikely that the Government is going to take Mr Cunliffe's lead well especially if it means other decision-makers in local and national government follow suit. What now for the grand plan to fund independence by selling the excess energy to rUK?

August 2014, Issue 21

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Yes or No? You decide....

SAS is officially neutral on the question of Scottish independence. This isn't just because the views of our Supporters on every non-wind issue cover the whole spectrum of political opinion, or because anything but a strictly non-party-political stance would compromise our ability to lobby politicians of all parties. It's also because independence is an even bigger and more emotive issue than wind – hard as it may be for some of us to admit!

The nationalist position is simple. Its premises are that Scotland's renewable energy resources are among the best in Europe, and renewable energy development is key in the SNP plan to re-industrialise Scotland. The most obvious contender for this role is wind energy, particularly offshore wind, as other renewable technologies such as wave and tidal are a very long way from being market-ready.

How will this happen? On the one hand, the SNP believes the UK's integrated electricity market which currently exists will carry on, and there will be ready export markets for iScotland's green electricity in the UK and Europe. On the other hand, control of all the economic levers of government will enable an independent Scottish Government to attract the investment which has been unforthcoming up to now.

The unionist position is also simple. The single UK energy

market cannot '*continue in its current form*' after separation, and all three Westminster parties have categorically ruled out this possibility. It is hard to imagine rUK consumers happily subsidizing existing turbines in Scotland, let alone funding a significant increase in their number plus the expansion of infrastructure required to harness and export the energy they will generate. Moreover, rUK will have other sources for obtaining low-carbon or wind-generated electricity, and the basis for buying it from iScotland will be purely commercial. The EU's ruling quashing the requirement for countries to pay subsidies as well as the market value of the electricity to another country has made this all the more likely.

The upshot for iScotland will be much higher electricity bills as the whole cost of subsidizing wind

energy and funding further infrastructure development will fall on Scottish consumers. Without an integrated electricity market, security of supply in an iScotland will be jeopardised because the expected closure of its two nuclear plants in 2023 and Longannet coal-fired power station soon after will mean it loses virtually all of its baseload capacity.

The nationalists reject this argument on the grounds that it will be in rUK's '*best interests*' to continue with the integrated electricity market. This of course echoes the SNP's stance on the pound, and both sides have marshalled experts to bolster their predictions.

As with the more general economic case for independence, the problem is that we do not know what sort of country iScotland will be. Much would depend on negotiations, and even more would depend on the events that followed, including elections.

Staring into the SAS crystal ball, however, shows the days are numbered for the Scottish wind industry whichever way the vote goes on 18th September.

If you vote 'No'

As Scottish anti-wind campaigners are all too enviously aware, the political appetite for onshore wind development in the rest of the



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UK has cooled considerably. Consumers have balked at energy bill hikes due to green policies and rural voters have turned against inefficient turbines ruining local landscapes. Electricity Market Reform is cutting the subsidies available, and the Tories have promised to stop all onshore wind subsidy if they win the general election next year. England and Wales have 19 operational offshore wind farms but firms are stalling further investment because of subsidy caps.

Only a new flood of public money into subsidising wind energy could reverse this trend, and public finances as well as the

growing need for more reliable and secure energy (which wind isn't) make such a reversal inconceivable, whichever Westminster party wins the election.

The Scottish Government is looking more and more isolated as its renewable energy ambitions diverge from UK energy policy. Whatever the outcome of the referendum, it is hard to see a Westminster Government subsidising significant further expansion of Scottish renewable energy and energy networks.

If you vote 'Yes'....

The SAS crystal ball sees the plug being pulled even more quickly in the event of a YES vote. In

particular, existing UK subsidies for operational Scottish turbines and promises of infrastructure investment would be curtailed or cancelled altogether, with the Scottish Government aka Scottish taxpayers and consumers left to pick up the tab.

With all the other financial and regulatory uncertainty and instability which would be initially created by separation, wind speculators will become as rare as hen's teeth in Scotland.

If your only aim when voting is to bring the SG's wind policy to its knees as quickly as possible, there is only one way to vote on September 18!

John Muir Trust makes legal challenge....

News has just become public this week that the John Muir Trust (JMT) is going to challenge the Scottish Government's decision to grant consent to a 67-turbine windfarm in the Monadhliath Mountains.

Stronelaig Wind Farm, the largest such development in the Highlands, was granted consent in June 2014 by Fergus Ewing MSP. This was despite overwhelming opposition and came very shortly before the Scottish Government introduced new protection for Wild Land Areas in new national planning policies. At the last minute, the Government asked for the area around Stronelaig to be removed from the new Wild Land Areas map.

The John Muir Trust, whose main purpose is to protect the landscape so beloved in Scotland, believes the decision to give the go-ahead to Stronelaig was wrong, and made without full and proper democratic scrutiny. JMT Chair John Hutchison said, 'It [the development] was opposed by both the government's own advisory body on nature and landscape, SNH, and by the Cairngorms National Park Authority.'

Mr Ewing made the decision without holding a Public Local Inquiry. As such, the decision is thought to be inconsistent with the Government's measures to protect Scotland's wild landscapes. The JMT feel they have little choice but to challenge the decision in the courts via a judicial review, especially as the case will have far wider implications for wild lands elsewhere in Scotland.

You can read more about the case on [The John Muir Trust website](#) and/or make a financial donation to help them cover the financial costs of bringing this action.



Sustainable Shetland fights on....

Last month's news that the Scottish Government's appeal against Lady Clark's ruling on Shetland had been upheld came as a great disappointment to us all, but a recent email from **Sustainable Shetland** revealed that the fight may not yet be over. Frank Hay, Chair of SS sent us an update:

After due consideration of last month's findings of the Inner Court judges, our legal team has advised that an appeal to the Supreme Court is an option. There are of course no guarantees of success but our legal team felt the case was worth pursuing. Committee and Members meetings of Sustainable Shetland on the 6th of August were both unanimously in favour of continuing our action to the Supreme Court and our legal team has been instructed to proceed. Whilst high, estimated legal costs are judged to be manageable, and naturally fundraising efforts will need to continue. It has been estimated that it will be autumn 2015 before any court of appeal hearing so we do have time on our side.

The proposed development is on such a scale that we continue to believe that it is wholly inappropriate for Shetland. The environmental damage that its construction would cause cannot possibly be justified. The arguments that supporters continue to use are mainly financial ones - if Viking Energy comes along with the required interconnector then this will be a great boon to the islands with opportunities for yet more renewables to be developed. We, on the other hand say that the likely impacts on birds and other wild life, landscape, peatland and the health of local residents have not been properly addressed or even acknowledged.

The local council could have avoided all this legal wrangling by requesting that the Scottish Government hold a Local Public Inquiry. In any case the weight of objections should have persuaded the Scottish Government to be cautious about its approval of such a project. In particular, its own advisory body SNH objected along with the RSPB, the John Muir Trust and Shetland Amenity Trust.



The proposed Viking windfarm development on Shetland – although those turbines in the top group near Scatsta airport were refused permission.

This is an extremely divisive issue in Shetland and Sustainable Shetland members have been vilified in the local press for our decision to go to a further appeal, by two councillor proponents of the project. In a letter to the online Shetland News, Councillor Wishart said:

'True to form, Sustainable Shetland plans to throw any spanner in the works in its attempts to delay the Viking development.

It seems inconceivable that a relatively small group of islanders will do anything to jeopardise an opportunity to harness a natural resource which can be of huge benefit to Shetland and its inhabitants. Here could be the chance for Shetland Charitable Trust to finance fixed links to Bressay Whalsay, Unst and Yell. Here as well is an amazing opportunity to deal with 'fuel poverty' by providing insulation and double-glazing, as other communities near windfarms have done. Provision for disadvantaged, elderly and indeed all less fortunate islanders could be within our means. Education? Yes, of course it needs an overhaul – would that not be so much easier with better transport links?

As Councillor Jonathan Wills' remarks on Radio Shetland have revealed, any positive views about Viking Energy are dismissed and ridiculed by the same people trotting out the same rubbish about the damage to Shetland's landscape, peat, wildlife and so on. Important as they are, those issues have all been rigorously vetted and approved by the relevant organisations that have the authority and expertise to do so.'

And a response from one of our members, Evelyn Morrison in the same online newspaper (Mrs Morrison has the misfortune to live in close proximity to the proposed windfarm site):

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So Allan Wishart has now stepped up and shown his true colours in his letter "Fanatical opposition". He thinks it is "inconceivable that a relatively small group of islanders" want to jeopardise the wind farm.

Is it also inconceivable that this small number of around 3,000 people who signed an objection to the Energy Consents Unit should actually want to protect the environment?

Mr Wishart, is it also "inconceivable" that people should want to protect their health and the value of their property?

Is Allan Wishart so uninformed as to believe that the development of this massive wind farm can be constructed without causing vast areas of environmental destruction?

He calls these concerns "trotting out rubbish" - this is the type of derogatory language wind farm objectors have become used to. Since the wind farm was first mooted the proponents have been absolute in their unwillingness to address any of the objectors' genuine concerns. So who are the real fanatics here?

While I am on the subject, Councillor Wills used the adjective "weary" with regard to the ongoing issue - try replacing that with "stress and anxiety" for the past eight years. Fortunate indeed he's not had to live with that.'

Behind the scenes Shetland's MP and MSP have been lobbying hard for an interconnector to the Scottish Mainland - essential if the project is to go ahead. Where the Supreme Court appeal leaves the case for an interconnector is not clear.



Scallafield – just one of the Shetland landscapes under threat from the proposed Viking Windfarm development

The whole idea of linking faraway islands to the national grid for the supply of intermittent renewable energy seems to be economic madness. The cost of building a windfarm on Shetland and connecting it to the national grid really cannot be justified in any sensible affordable energy policy. Scottish and Southern Energy have lodged plans for a new Shetland power station twice as big as the existing one so wind power isn't reducing the required power station capacity. Wind power will always require a back up facility at even more cost to the consumer.

Earnings from the windfarm have been projected to be high by Viking Energy but it is doubtful if this has been subject to independent scrutiny. Income projections were

put forward before information was available as to what the charging regime would be for feeding into the grid. There has tended to be enthusiastic acceptance by windfarm supporters of everything that Viking Energy has put forward. If we stop to consider where any windfarm income will come from then it becomes apparent that it is the energy consumer who pays through higher bills and therefore this will lead to increased fuel poverty.

It is however the human and environmental cost that concerns Sustainable Shetland the most and this is why we have decided to continue our opposition as far as we can go. Any support for our cause, financial or otherwise, will be gratefully received.

Here's how you can help:

- Through direct payments to Sustainable Shetland – Sort Code 83-24-22 and Account No. 00124384
- By cheque, payable to Sustainable Shetland and sent to Mrs E Jamieson (Treasurer, Sustainable Shetland), 34 West Baila, Lerwick, Shetland, ZE1 0SG

If you want more information, you can visit [Sustainable Shetland](#) at their website or call them on 01595 695117, and please remember to include your contact details/name on bank or cheque payments. Should more money be raised than is needed, Sustainable Shetland would like to offer refunds to contributors proportionately.

Water, water everywhere....

Scotland is almost surrounded by water, and with so much inland fresh water in the lochs and rivers as well, it's easy to take for granted that we will always have a plentiful and safe drinking supply. With windfarms becoming so prevalent however, we may no longer be able to afford to make that assumption.

Dr Rachel Connor's video presentation, *Windfarms Water and the Smoking Gun* (see last month's *Newsletter 20*) has had over 1000 views in twenty countries, and across the globe people are coming forward with reports of water pollution and peat slide being caused by windfarm construction and their associated access roads. [One of the repeated comments from several countries is 'It seems insane to have a Government that actually legislates to allow industrial construction activity on water catchment areas and around reservoirs.' Quite!]

More documented evidence is appearing of severe water contamination and complete disruption of private water supplies from windfarm construction. In one case this was so extreme, that in two consecutive years in the depths of winter, without water, families had to be put up in hotels. Eventually, alternative public mains water supplies were piped in at vast cost to the developers. Unbelievably, local residents had voiced their concerns to local Councillors and Scottish Power, that turbines had been sited over the source of their local private water supply prior to consent being awarded. Despite this, Argyll and Bute Council awarded consent for the 30MW windfarm, regardless of the human and environmental cost.

What is important about the pollution of public water supplies is that this affects city dwellers. Traditionally, these large numbers of voters have been unaffected by the

visual and noise impacts of windfarms but they will have been drinking in and bathing in unacceptable water as the result of windfarm construction, with potential long-term health impacts. Young infants drinking formula milk using contaminated water supplies is a cause for particular concern as most children are more susceptible than adults to the effects of carcinogens (cancer causing substances). This is an issue about which the public needs to know.



Photograph – Allt Achadh na Moine
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Most local authorities do now consider noise as a detailed submission within planning applications, but to date, there is often only lip service paid to the significant impacts on private water, public water and surface water. Not enough attention is paid by local authorities to ensure development companies adhere to often already inadequate planning conditions to protect groundwater and private water supplies.

Dr Connor's experience with the consented, but not yet built,

Sneddon Law windfarm (CWP Ltd) is that although an Ecological Clerk of Works has been approved by her Council to oversee water contamination on the site, the ecological company concerned is a non-accredited company, with no qualified experience in the monitoring of surface and private water supplies or in the design of effective mitigation.

This is the sort of problem that we all face if irresponsible windfarm construction companies are prepared to jeopardise our health to reap the glittering subsidies on offer. Of course, if the press is not prepared to take up these reports in order to inform the general public, then the public will remain ignorant of much of this, now and in the years to come.

In an effort to get things moving, Dr Connor has now written to the Acting Chief Medical Officer for Scotland asking her to call for a moratorium on building or consenting any further wind turbines on water catchment areas – either public or private, until this matter has been properly investigated by independent and properly qualified authorities. Dr Connor's video presentation has also been widely distributed to all MPs, MSPs, and Scottish Councillors. Graeme Pearson MSP has asked Parliamentary questions, the answers to which were posted on 18/08/14. They can be seen in full on the parliamentary website - [Questions S4W-22219 and S4W-22216](#) – but they raise yet further questions. Why, for instance, are the number of water tests for Trihalomethanes decreasing, when these substances are known to be hazardous to health? Which water treatment facilities were treated and when? Why were the public

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not told when in Kilmarnock the water quality failed to meet regulatory standards and contained unacceptable levels of carcinogens for at least three years?

Other elected representatives have been less helpful; Dr Connor's own MSP, Willie Coffey doesn't seem to think that her video presentation provided enough evidence of cause for concern about the carcinogens that at least 50,000 of his constituents have been exposed to over the last three years to initiate any further investigation on his part.

We shouldn't need to question what comes out of our tap! But it seems that it is necessary to ask our local authorities and elected representatives what they're doing to protect both our public and private water supplies, now under such pressure from wind turbine development.

Scotland in breach of international law....

In July the 5th meeting of the Parties to the UNECE Århus Convention took place in Maastricht and concluded with bad news for Scotland's wind industry. Scotland remains in breach of international law because the cost of court action in environmental cases remains prohibitively high. Despite the introduction of new rules in Scotland, which limit to £5,000 the amount for which individuals going to court in the public interest could be found liable, they still have to pay their own costs as well.

Frances McCartney, a Scottish solicitor who attended the conference welcomed the ruling, and stated: *'It is welcome that this decision against the UK has been upheld as it is clear that access to justice in environmental cases is severely hindered by the issue of excessive costs. Several of my clients have been unable to access justice on issues affecting their home and immediate environment.'*

'However, it is important to note that the decision does not fully reflect the key problem areas specific to Scotland, such as the particular difficulties in obtaining legal aid in environmental cases. The Government must reform not only legal aid, but also look again at liability for expenses and court fees.'

If Scotland becomes independent and joins the EU in its own right, will we be allowed to continue flouting international law like this?



Community windfarm goes bust...?

A piece of news came in last month that may well be useful for those campaigning against community owned wind developments. At the beginning of July, a member of the public who was researching *Carbon Free Developments Ltd (CFD)* stumbled across news that the company, who own 72% of the Neilston Community Windfarm, had been in Members' Voluntary Liquidation since the beginning of January.

The other 28% of the windfarm is owned by *the Neilston Development Trust (NDT)*, who you would expect to be concerned for the financial safety of the considerable investment that they made in the project, particularly as from May 2013 to March 2014, the average output at Neilston was only 20.23%, and not the anticipated 38%. In a statement on his website, Jackson Carlaw MSP said, *'Great hopes of investment and benefit to the community were dependent upon the success of this joint venture... Residents will rightly be concerned for their investment and that this voluntary liquidation has been kept very quiet to date. I intend to write to the appointed liquidators to clarify this situation and try and ensure the best result for the local community.'*

However a statement issued by *NDT* later in the month caused further confusion. It is commonly understood that *NDT* and *CFD* form the partnership that own the windfarm. *CFD* are mentioned as partners on the *NDT* and *Neilston Community Windfarm* websites, as well as other sources. But these details reflecting the windfarm's ownership appear to be incorrect.

Asked to account for the references to *NDT*, Ms Gallacher, their Acting Chief Officer said: *'Carbon Free Developments Ltd does not and has never held an interest in the windfarm. The reference on the website to Carbon Free Developments as a partner is technically incorrect, just as Neilston Development Trust being described as owning the community share in the windfarm is technically incorrect.'*

This appears to be news to members of the community who will be seeking further clarification on the matter via their community council and elected representatives in an effort to find out exactly who owns what!

Public petition progress....

Although it now seems a long time ago, many of you will remember Aileen Jackson's Public Petition calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to consider a change in planning regulations to enable an increase in the current neighbour notification distance of 20 metres in relation to wind turbine planning applications. Aileen has finally been given an update on progress.

Progress so far...

16 April 2013: The Committee took evidence from Aileen Jackson and Graham Lang, Chairman, Scotland Against Spin. The Committee unanimously supported the petition and agreed to write to the Scottish Government and COSLA.



Aileen and Graham outside Holyrood (above) and hard at work with the Public Petitions Committee (right)

10 December 2013: Following a deferment in June, the Scottish Government finally responded by saying it appreciated the concerns raised and agreed to issue guidance on good practice in relation to public engagement on proposals for wind turbines. In compiling that guidance it would consider the different approaches that may be appropriate in different circumstances, including where the notification of individual properties may be appropriate. It would engage with stakeholders in this process, including a public consultation on a draft of the guidance before finalising it for publication.

The Public Petition Committee agreed to refer the petition, under Rule 15.6.2, to the Local Government and Regeneration Committee for consideration as part of its work programme on the draft National Planning Framework 3 and review of Scottish Planning Policy. At its meeting on 20 August 2014, the Local Government and Regeneration Committee agreed that the Scottish Government should undertake the following steps in relation to the proposed consultation:

- ensure that, as part of your consultation on the draft guidance, you specifically consult the Petitioner, Ms Aileen Jackson, and that any views she expresses are taken into account by the Government before you finalise the guidance;
- request that a copy of the finalised guidance be provided directly to Ms Jackson, and that the Committee be notified of this by you, when the guidance is published in the spring 2015, and
- ensure that the finalised guidance is properly publicised and brought to the attention of all planning authorities in Scotland by the Government, as well as to the attention of all those making applications for the development of onshore wind farms, and any other relevant persons or organisations whom the Government considers it appropriate to notify about the guidance.

The estimated timescale for this project is as follows.

- Draft document – Ministerial clearance followed by consultation – Autumn 2014
- Analysis of responses and finalising of Guidance – early 2015
- Ministerial clearance and publication – Spring 2015

We will of course inform you of progress at key stages of the project, including publication of the consultation on the draft guidance.

New code of conduct for developers...?

Earlier this month, Alex Fergusson, MSP for Galloway and West Dumfries asked the Scottish Government to consider a code of conduct for windfarm developers. This came after he had received several complaints voiced by his constituents regarding the activities of one particular developer in the region. The developer's tactics in trying to generate support for its proposed windfarm have been viewed as less than honourable.

Speaking from his constituency office, Mr Fergusson said:

'...it would seem that one company in particular has angered a large number of my constituents by negotiating secret agreements with individuals to ensure that they don't object to the development in return for an undisclosed sum of money.'

This activity causes suspicion between neighbours, division within communities and is the polar opposite of the levels of openness and accountability that ought to characterise the local negotiations that precede any wind farm development.'

In my opinion, a code of practice for developers would ensure that all affected communities and individuals would be treated with respect as negotiations move forward and remove the atmosphere of distrust and suspicion that clearly exists in at least one particular local situation.

Well, here at SAS we fully agree that something needs to be done to curb the worst excesses of some windfarm developers whose activities are in fact, little short of bribery. The example Mr Fergusson is referring to is not the only instance of dubious and underhanded behavior from this particular company that we have come across.

In order to make it effective, any new code of conduct will need to have some 'teeth' and we want to ensure that this is the case. We have written to Mr Fergusson offering to assist in the formulating and drafting process, and hope that by being involved at the start, we can contribute our knowledge and experience. We will also be contacting Derek MacKay MSP, the Local Government and Planning Minister, urging him to take up Mr Fergusson's suggestion. We'll let you know when we receive a reply.



Independence jitters....

Infinis Energy Plc stated early in the month that they will not be building two windfarms in Scotland until the outcome of the referendum next month is known, giving the lie to Mr Salmond's claim that the referendum is not affecting business or investment in Scotland.

The DECC has already stated in April that rUK would not continue with subsidies to renewable generators north of the border should Scotland vote 'Yes' and that power bills or taxes in Scotland would have to rise as a result.

Meanwhile, Alex Salmond has continued to insist that rUK would need to buy Scottish energy and that in an Independent Scotland, bills will actually go down. Which do you believe?

It's official - EU produces less hot air than it used to...!

The EU recently published their latest available statistics on the reduction of greenhouse gases - *The Greenhouse Inventory Report* - by the member states, and on a superficial reading, the news is that the EU is making progress on reducing its emissions. There is an overall decrease of 1.3% across the 28 member states from 1990 to 2012, and no doubt the wind industry will be trumpeting this as a triumph of renewable energy and wind turbines in particular. However, start reading the small print and placing these statistics alongside other trends and events and a very different picture emerges.

The overall 1.3% decrease includes year-on-year decreases in Spain, Greece and Italy, attributable largely to the economic recession in 2008. In fact, between the years 2007 and 2009, there was a massive reduction of 9% but these decreases are of course counter-acted by increases in other countries. Germany and the UK both fall into this latter group, which doesn't exactly look good for two countries who are amongst the most vocal about the need to reduce emissions.

In Germany, the economic recession has meant some progress has been made, but mostly in the field of fuel efficiency and the shutting down of inefficient East German power production and industry after reunification. In the UK, their 'successes' were achieved mainly through the liberalizing of the energy markets and the subsequent shift from oil and coal in electricity production to gas. However, the economic recession has remained lingering over the EU and the question has to be asked, can economic growth actually return if they continue with their current renewable energy policy initiatives?

Publicly the German government remains optimistic, but the current 'rebirth' of coal-fired electricity generation in order to sustain their energy levels may well cancel out much of the reductions they have so far achieved. And to put things into perspective, between 2009 and 2012, the UK managed to reduce their overall emissions by approximately 1.5% - about the same amount that China is producing each week. It's all down to wind turbines, you know!

It's a steal....

The cost of wind energy might just go up a little more as police in France are reporting a rise in metal thefts from the industrial structures.

A highly organised network of criminals have been breaking in through the access doors in the turbine bases and using the internal stairs to climb up to the engines where they cut and strip out the mostly copper wiring. It is estimated that they can remove up to a tonne of the copper wiring in each theft, currently estimated to be worth approximately £3,600.

Windfarms are almost perfect targets, with the chance of being caught being reduced by their isolated locations. In France, at least 20 incidents have been recorded over the early summer, so turbine operators have installed video surveillance systems, and police have begun patrolling larger windfarms with helicopters equipped with cameras in efforts to foil the thieves. So who will be footing the bill for all the extra security? As if we didn't know.

SAS out and about....

Recently, Graham and Marion Lang represented SAS at the Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland (APRS) members' day in Gatehouse of Fleet, and enjoyed a lively day of presentations and discussion about the rural landscape and of course, the threat of windfarms.

Anna Johnson National Scenic Area Officer with the local authority gave an illustrated talk on '*Galloway's National Scenic Areas – connecting landscapes and communities*' and Dr James Fenton talked about '*The Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere – what kind of landscapes should it seek to conserve?*' These excellent presentations were followed by a lively general discussion, with windfarms being seen as a major threat to the rural landscape, closely followed by blanket forestry. Roger Crofts, former Chair of Scottish Natural Heritage, led the consensus that this area and many others in Scotland had all passed saturation point and it was time to stop further development of windfarms. Visits in the afternoon, to Knocktinkle NSA Viewpoint, Dromore and Gatehouse Station amply illustrated many of these issues. There are still many windfarms in the early stages of the planning process here and there will be many battles ahead, but sadly Dersalloch the first windfarm in the very special Biosphere has already been approved by Scottish Ministers. The new National Planning Framework which protects wildlands from windfarm development did not include the Biosphere.

On the way back to Fife Graham and Marion drove past Markhill, Arcleoch, Hadyard Hill, Whitelees, and Middleton windfarms, came in sight of Black Law and Forth windfarms and finally passed by the turbines of Little Raith and Earlseat. ***Not one turbine turning!***

Berlin blog....

With such good weather here in Berlin, we have been taking advantage and exploring lots of the green spaces dotted around the city, and Berlin has its fair share. Just to the south of the city centre though is a park with a difference, which my children (both keen roller-hockey players), have been eager to take advantage of, and which has been intriguing me since we first visited a few weeks ago. The park was opened in 2010 though the space and its name has a longer, more well-known history - Tempelhof.

For the historians amongst us, this name may evoke memories of the face-off between Stalinist Russia and the Western Allies in the heart of Berlin in the late 1940s. It was here that the Berlin airlifts of 1948/49 landed, as the Western allies sought to defeat Russian attempts to cut off all supply routes into Western controlled Berlin. Vital supplies of food, blankets and medicines were flown into the city for 15 months, landing at Tempelhof from June 1948; a mammoth task designed to keep the western sector of the city, and its 2 million citizens, literally alive. This series of events brought the irreconcilable differences between the WWII allies from East and West to a head and ultimately led to the building of the infamous Berlin Wall in 1961 and the development of NATO.



Airlifts coming into Tempelhof in 1948

Although still active as an airport long after this, the Berlin authorities had repeatedly tried to close it down, finally succeeding in 2008. This left a space nearly three times the size of London's Hyde Park in the middle of a major city. Imagine if that was Glasgow or Aberdeen or Edinburgh. The space would have been bought for development before the public was even aware that the airport was closing down, but in Berlin there is a different story.

Following its closure, the Berlin authorities were indeed under huge pressure from developers to sell it to them, eager as they were at the money potential of this prime development opportunity in the heart of the city. Ordinary Berliners however had other ideas and banded together as 'Tempelhofer Feld', gathering 185,000 signatures from the 12 districts of Berlin rejecting development plans for 4,700 'affordable housing' apartments on the land (when is it ever affordable?) and campaigning for the historic site to remain in public ownership and use. So far, so familiar, but in May of this year, the Berlin authorities put it to a referendum and 65% of respondents voted to keep the park as it is. And so they have. Amazing!

While there are plans being drawn up to 'develop' the park facilities, for the most part it looks exactly as it did when the last planes took off from its runways. The huge Nazi-built terminal building still dominates the site, which is mostly tree-less and utilitarian. Only one small patch of trees exists in the beer garden created for US military during the Cold War; the rest is a completely open space of tarmac runways and concrete, yellow airport signs and markers, and in one corner, a decaying fuselage slowly disappearing under the weeds. Just a few concessions have been made to its new use as a park; a couple of ice-cream kiosks near the entrance gateways, one or two information booths and sign boards documenting its history and future plans. Large parts of the grass areas have been roped off to create 'nature reserves' and bird watchers come to spot and photograph the kestrels hovering a few feet above the ground in search of prey. Most of all, people come to enjoy the space, whether it's on skates, bikes, skateboards, go-karts or on foot, cooking barbecues, eating picnics and drinking in the 'stuck in history' atmosphere that gives the park such resonance.



Airlifts coming into Tempelhof in 1948

I find this beguiling, although I struggled for a while to figure out why. I think the word 'referendum' confused me, conjuring similarities with Scotland just now, but I soon realised that it was not this fact alone that had struck such a chord. It is because of the sheer rarity of the '*will of the people*' being upheld by the powers that be in opposition to big business. How often have we in Scotland campaigned to keep turbines away, generated huge public support, persuaded local authorities of our case only to have that overturned by a government in thrall to the Wind Industry? A very different outcome indeed. So here's to People Power Berlin style!

Oh, and by the way... it isn't until you've walked down a runway on your own two feet that you appreciate just how big and long it really is!

SAS Bookshelf....

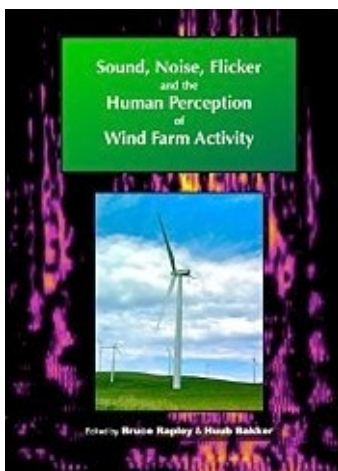
Everyone that gets involved in an anti-turbine campaign cannot help but pick up at least some of the rudiments of the planning system in Scotland, as this is often the arena in which battles are played out.

Planning Democracy is an organisation set up to campaign ‘...for a fair and inclusive planning system in Scotland’ and if you are in the midst of a fight centred on planning, it is well worth taking a look at their website. Packed with information, you can find out about the latest developments in Europe about Aarhus, the UN push to reduce the cost of going to court for Environmental Court Cases in Scotland, (see article pg 7) and an assessment of the new NPF3 and SPP in Scotland as examples of inclusive, democratic (or perhaps not) planning processes.

Of particular interest may be their recent study and report on the personal experiences of some individuals who have been directly involved in giving evidence to Public Local Inquiries. The language that many individuals seem to use to describe the experience – ‘dehumanising’, being ‘harangued’ and feeling ‘dirtied’ – is really quite shocking. Although not a large enough study to be of statistical significance, it is nevertheless useful reading for those who may be involved in such a procedure. We attached a copy for you to read, but thoroughly recommend that you visit their [website](#) as well, and even sign up for their regular updates.

Sound, Noise, Flicker and the Human Perception of Wind Farm Activity by Bruce Rapley and Hubb Bakker is a review of how wind farms affect people through the sound and flicker that they produce.

In a series of peer-reviewed papers, areas such as health impacts, economic management, noise prediction, assessment and management are all looked at for their effects on those that live in close proximity and/or are paying for the energy wind turbines produce.



Sound, Noise, Flicker...

Bruce Rapley and Hubb Bakker

*Atkinson & Rapley Consultants, New Zealand and
NMS Ltd, Australia (2 July 2014)*

Available as a [Kindle e-book from Amazon](#)

Although this is more of an academic book in style, which for some can be rather dry and off-putting, there are long introductions to the subject areas of each chapter, giving background information in an attempt to make this information more readily accessible to the

layman. The result is an interesting journey through some of the more technical aspects of the problems that current wind turbine technology and windfarm economics are causing us. Not for everyone, but if this kind of information is your thing and/or you need it for campaigning work, it makes a useful addition to your digital bookshelf.

White elephants....

Last month we bought you news of the turbine in Aberystwyth that has finally been dismantled after it produced only £5.00 worth of electricity.

Well of course that set a few individuals off searching for other examples of ‘*sound, environmental investments*’ around the UK. It didn’t take long for some kind contributors at **Not a Lot of People Know That** to come up with a list and it makes for an amusing and very interesting read.

Did you know for instance about the turbine at Hinckley College in North Warwickshire that has used more electricity than it has generated, or the one at Inverclyde Academy set to be removed because the manufacturer has gone bust and it can’t be repaired?

Well they do say that there’s no such thing as bad publicity and, true to form, the PR guys have come up with a line designed to make the best of a bad job. See if you can spot it - it’ll raise a smile and leave you asking just who it is they think they are kidding!



Your Contributions:

At SAS we are always keen to hear your news and views on wind issues, and to include them in the Newsletter.

Send your contributions in to us and we will include them in the next Newsletter.

*Send them to
info@scotlandagainstspin.org*