

Summary notes of Workshop 2

9 March 2006

1 Background

Sheepdrove Organic Farm is an award winning food producer and an innovative farm business always looking to improve the sustainability of its operations. To date, it has installed solar water heating, solar electricity and heat exchangers.

The Farm is currently investigating the potential of using renewable energy. Wind power is one of the many possible solutions being considered by the farm. The Farm would aim to meet a proportion of its electricity needs using small scale installations (as clarified in the first workshop, *not* a commercial wind-farm) that fit in with the landscape.

Given the Farm's location in the North Wessex AONB, such an installation has the potential to be of great benefit but also to affect the character of the landscape and views across it. The North Wessex AONB has therefore provided funding to support a case study in order to better understand the issues this raises for a wide range of stakeholders with an interest in the topic and the area.

2 Introduction

This is a note of the **second** of two stakeholder discussions organised by Sheepdrove Organic Farm, to explore the potential for introducing an element of wind energy generation into the Farm's renewable energy generation portfolio. It has been prepared by Alison Millward – the independent facilitator.

It was explained to stakeholders that the case study is only an **academic exercise** at this stage, and whilst it is possible that Sheepdrove may submit a planning application in the long term, this is not a possibility in the short term. The discussions should also **not** be considered to form any part of any formal pre-application discussions that might be required should a planning application be forthcoming in the future.

A total of 56 people attended the second stakeholder discussion (please see Appendix for full details) drawn from local businesses, Non Governmental Organisations, residential neighbours, local authorities and statutory agencies.

3 Presentations

Jason Ball, Manager of Biodiversity and Alternative Energy at Sheepdrove Organic Farm explained that the Farm was hoping to source circa 25% of its total energy use (for transport, electricity and heat) from renewable sources in the future. Of this a realistic target for electricity generation from wind might only be 25%. This amount of electricity might potentially contribute to a total from renewable sources as follows:

- Propane > 40-50% replaced with Bio-Gas (10% of total energy usage)
- Electricity > 25% from Wind Power (5% of total)
- White diesel > 100% replaced by Bio-Diesel (5% of total)
- Red diesel > 10% replaced with Bio-Diesel (3% of total).

Jason explained that the photomontages to follow were intended to help the delegates to consider a wide range of factors; that they were hypothetical; and that the Farm wished everyone to consider how to mitigate and minimise impact using factors such as numbers, slope and proximity to buildings (factors identified during Workshop 1).

Kevin Clutter from Future Energy Solutions presented details about the wind turbine options portrayed by the photomontages as follows:

Turbine	Number of turbines in photos	Total Capital	Total Net Yield kWh pa.	% of required electricity	Total Number of turbines required	Simple Payback years	Capacity factor
Fuhrlander FL 250	1	£316,570	517,640	78%	1	8	24%
Entegrity Wind EW15	4	£360,000	437,200	66%	6	12	25%
Gazelle Wind Turbine	7	£666,190	261,600	39%	18	49	21%
Building Mounted	4	£64,000	10,000	2%	266	61	11%

Ian Houlston from LDA Design presented the results of the initial landscape assessment as follows:

- Strong structural landform of rounded hills and ridgelines forming successive horizons
- Remote, open and large scale agricultural landscapes
- Limited accessibility - remote character
- Predominance of arable with some grazing, particularly on steeper slopes
- Surviving chalk grassland habitat
- Archaeological sites and historic landscape patterns but some fragmentation
- Sparse settlement patterns - hamlets and villages in valleys
- Isolated farms
- Clear ridgelines and skylines, punctuated by tree groups, beech clumps and shelterbelts
- Numerous gallops and rides.

Direct Impacts would be created by:

- Turbines
- Loss of landscape features (trees/hedgerows/farmland) – however, turbines have a small footprint so impacts are limited.
- Turbine infrastructure (cabling, access tracks)
- Ancillary structures
- Temporary impacts during construction phase such as traffic, plant and materials storage.

Indirect Impacts

- Movement
- Noise
- Glare/shadow flicker.

The impacts of turbines in this particular landscape would potentially affect:

- Farm workers and residents
- Residents in neighbouring farms and settlements
- Recreational users of local bridleways and footpaths
- Motorists

- Users of local gallops
- Wildlife.

4 Questions

A couple of questions were asked for clarification about the figures in the table above. One person questioned how the capacity factors had been derived.

5 Discussion session

Participants were asked to comment on the positive and negative aspects of four different hypothetical scenarios based on the types and numbers of turbines outlined in the table above and the possible locations they had suggested at Workshop 1.

These hypothetical scenarios were presented as photomontages, three of which incorporated two views from distances around 0.5km and 1.6km away, and the fourth (building mounted) at close quarters only. It was acknowledged that these hypothetical scenarios did not exactly reflect the revised electricity target of 25% - the first three turbine options producing more than the target and the last producing considerably less. It was explained that getting an exact fit was not possible because the amount generated depended on the particular wind characteristics of the landscape and the design and size of the turbines.

The discussion points from the five tables have been amalgamated and are presented in table form below.

Positive aspects	Negative aspects	
Hypothetical Scenario 1: 1 x Fuhrlander close to farm buildings		
<i>We have to address climate change</i>	Eye is immediately focused towards it	Not appropriate for the area
<i>Destroys only one vista</i>	Non-starter because does not comply with planning guidance	Too visually intrusive
<i>Existing power cables are more intrusive</i>	I am against wind energy here on the farm and in this landscape	No positive aspects
<i>I'd prefer one large one to lots of small ones</i>	Assume it would have to have a red warning light on it?	Not appropriate for the area
<i>Would not set a precedent</i>	Has anyone consulted the hot air balloonists about these ideas	The turbine would be more acceptable if situated amongst or near woodland with trees around the base
<i>Man made monument</i>	Very stark	Would set a precedent
<i>Reduces CO₂</i>	Ancillary structures	AONB policy
<i>Visual impact</i>	Too white	How desperate are we for space that we have to put turbines in AONB
<i>Near to building is good</i>	One very big one is not acceptable	Facombe turbine is very tall and Fuhrlander is even bigger
<i>Distinctive landmark</i>	Noise	Mr Kindersley should have the turbines
	Disorienting effect	Doesn't fit comfortably into landscape
	Infrastructure	
Hypothetical scenario 2: 4 x Entegritys on mid-slopes		

Positive aspects	Negative aspects	
<i>Preferable to have 3 Entegrity turbines rather than 7 Gazelles</i>	Concerned that the photos soften the impact of the view. Would appear more stark in reality	Not appropriate for the area
<i>Seems to offer the best option re pay back</i>	Not a fair impression because turbines set against a cloudy sky – we do have blue skies here	The turbine would be more acceptable if situated amongst or near woodland with trees around the base
<i>I'd prefer one large one to lots of small ones.</i>	Intrusive close up and from far away	Not appropriate for the area
<i>2 or 1 would look better and still generate 25% of electricity</i>	No positive aspects	Too visually intrusive
<i>Less obvious on mid-slope</i>	It represents development in the middle of a field	Higher than ridge
<i>Less negative than Fuhrlander</i>	Mid-slope looks worse	No turbines over 25m
<i>Group of turbines – integrated with each other gives better visual coherence</i>	Hideous blot on landscape	Doesn't sit appropriately in landscape
<i>Reduces CO₂</i>	Lots of cables and access impacts	Access track to it is a 200 year old, unsurfaced drove road – against surfacing with hard material
	Reduce number and find more productive location – eg 400m from ridge byway	Impact on walkers
	Looks like a line of pylons	Whiteness against field
	It's visually very intrusive in a particularly beautiful part of the farm	It will be very prominent and noticeable in the northern part of the farm
Hypothetical Scenario 3: 7 x Gazelles on mid-slopes		
<i>It may not be visible from the Ridgeway</i>	Too many	These would be visible from my house
<i>Might only need 5 in a good place</i>	Concerned that the photos soften the impact of the view. Would appear more stark in reality	The total number of blades rotating all at different times would be horrible
<i>Reduces CO₂</i>	Not a fair impression because turbines set against a cloudy sky – do have blue skies here	There will be potentially more noise because of the greater number of turbines
<i>Less visible than Entegritys</i>	It represents development in the middle of a field	Visually, it would be worse to have more smaller turbines than one tall one – although we do not want them at all
	Intrusive close up and from far away	Use a better place
	Concerned that the scenario used is very close	More is worse

Positive aspects	Negative aspects	
	to the bridleway	
	Concerned that the distances the photos were taken from varied between scenarios 1 and scenarios 2 and 3	Greater visual impacts
	New architecture in the countryside affecting natural form	Too expensive
	Greater disruption to farming operations due to numbers	More turbines have more access and more cabling
	More blades = more danger to birds	New roads produce loss of land for farming and fauna
Hypothetical scenario 4: 4 x Building mounted turbines		
<i>Would fit within planning guidance</i>	Would be worried about the noise generated if there were many of them, given their proximity to people working within and around the buildings	I thought I would prefer them on buildings, but actually, they look worse than I thought
<i>Although they are horrible, you might not be able to see them</i>	Would be very intrusive in the landscape because would be so many of them	They are not economically worth the effort – very expensive
<i>Away from public access (areas)</i>	Visual impacts on look of buildings	They are hideous
<i>Limited visibility</i>	Need too many (to meet target)	Energy requirements are higher because importing chickens
<i>No ancillary structures or access tracks needed</i>	May need ancillary structures	Not a serious option
<i>Have as many as you like of these</i>	Not acceptable on buildings like the Red Barn	Visual impacts on farm residents
<i>Good means of demonstration</i>	Better not to have any	Potential precedent
<i>Good for visitors</i>		

Participants were also asked having studied the separate hypothetical scenarios, whether there was a particular mix of the different types of turbines that they would consider more favourable. The following suggestions were put forward:

- There should be the fewest number of turbines of the smallest possible size. One at the largest size you could get permission for would be ideal
- Methane (or other renewables) would be a better option for the farm
- Should have had a 25m tip height turbine – why were we considering turbines twice as high?
- 1 or 2 mid-slope Entegritys
- 2 is best but still concerned about impact on birds
- No turbines.

General comments made by participants throughout the discussion

- With all this public opposition, why don't they cut wind energy out of their sustainability equation altogether and aim for 18% green energy rather than 23%.

- Have the scenarios been tested against visibility from the Kindersleys' house
- Who is benefiting from this? It is us (local residents) who will be making the sacrifice
- The turbine at Facombe has become more acceptable over time as it has become part of the landscape
- Strong concerns about the impacts on wildlife
- The emphasis should be on saving energy
- The attractions of the AONB and the reason why this landscape has been designated as an AONB is the nature of the downland and the open wide horizons – anything that sticks up and interrupts this shouldn't be allowed, otherwise why bother with the AONB designation
- Worried about the thin end of the wedge
- Don't want to see turbines anywhere in the AONB
- Some of the reference material on the table refers to the farm as 'Sheepdrove' (ie fact sheet). This is incorrect. It should be Sheepdrove Organic Farm.
- To collect in the pictures of the turbines before the discussion was finished was inappropriate
- The photomontages do not show the movement of the turbines or demonstrate the noise that they make
- Concerns of the potential strobe effect
- Sheepdrove should buy green energy from elsewhere, or make it for themselves elsewhere – not in the AONB
- Farm's press release lit a blue touch paper – my phone hasn't stopped ringing – would have been in a better position tonight if this had not gone out.

A number of participants queried why hypothetical scenarios that did not seem feasible, by reason of current planning guidance or financial costs, had been put before them.

6 Conclusions

The press interest in the study and issues (generated between the first and the second workshop) greatly increased the number of local people who attended the second workshop. However the audience still reflected a range of interests.

A much larger number of negative aspects were raised than positive ones, and several participants felt that turbines of any size or number would be totally unacceptable in the AONB. A few felt that they might be acceptable and that the aim should be to use the minimum number possible, in the least intrusive location, to generate the required target.

Appendix 1: Attendees

9th March -Workshop 2

- 1) Mrs P Miller. Sheepdrove Area Resident
- 2) Guest of Mrs P Miller
- 3) David Proud. Sheepdrove Area Resident
- 4) Mr P Martin. Sheepdrove Area Resident
- 5) Mrs Martin. Sheepdrove Area Resident
- 6) David Rutter. Sheepdrove Area Resident
- 7) Sheila Stansfield. Sheepdrove Area Resident
- 8) Andrew Dancey. Sheepdrove Area Resident, and employee at farm
- 9) Mr Savage. Sheepdrove Area Resident
- 10) Mrs Savage. Sheepdrove Area Resident
- 11) Jane Gwillim-David. Sheepdrove Area Resident
- 12) Dominic David. Sheepdrove Area Resident
- 13) Chris Chamberlain. Sheepdrove Area Resident
- 14) Jane Chamberlain. Sheepdrove Area Resident
- 15) Ms Merrigan Norwood. Sheepdrove Area Resident
- 16) Mrs Val Evans. Sheepdrove Area Resident
- 17) Mr Ivor Evans. Sheepdrove Area Resident
- 18) Mrs Greenham. Sheepdrove Area Resident
- 19) Mr Greenham. Sheepdrove Area Resident
- 20) John Lee. Sheepdrove Area Resident
- 21) Penny Lee. Sheepdrove Area Resident
- 22) Rupert Upton. Sheepdrove Area Resident
- 23) Linda Bowden. Sheepdrove Area Resident
- 24) Barry Read. Sheepdrove Area Resident
- 25) Anne Read. Sheepdrove Area Resident
- 26) Cliff Lambert
- 27) Unregistered person – from Lambourn area
- 28) David Barratt. Neighbouring Farm
- 29) Neil Walker. Neighbouring Farm
- 30) Alice Walker. Neighbouring Farm
- 31) Peter Walwyn. Lambourn Trainers Association
- 32) Ian Maclean. Lambourn Woodlands Resident
- 33) David Long. Hungerford area
- 34) Dr Phil Chadwick. Lambourn Parish Council
- 35) Michael Bailey (Parish Chairman) Letcombe Bassett Parish
- 36) Julie Davenport (Clerk) Letcombe Bassett Parish
- 37) Nicola Gardiner (Clerk) Letcombe Regis Parish
- 38) Louisa Down. Kennet DC Planning Dept.
- 39) Gabriel Berry. Thames Valley Energy (TV-Energy)
- 40) Barry Flisher. Lambourn Sustainability Forum
- 41) Vincent Taylor. Lambourn Sustainability Forum
- 42) Jane Mackenzie Overton Biodiversity Society
- 43) Jane Kiely. West Berks Ramblers
- 44) Mr. Kiely.
- 45) Huw Williams. North Wessex Downs AONB Planning Policy Advisor
- 46) Alison Millward – the independent facilitator. Alison Millward Associates
- 47) Ian Houlston. LDA Design
- 48) Colin Goodrum. LDA Design
- 49) Rivka Fine. LDA Design
- 50) Kevin Cloutter. Future Energy Solutions
- 51) Jason Ball. Sheepdrove Organic Farm
- 52) Hayley Smith. Sheepdrove Organic Farm
- 53) Lynn Long. Sheepdrove Organic Farm
- 54) Martyn Smith. Sheepdrove Organic Farm
- 55) Stuart Minick. Sheepdrove Organic Farm
- 56) Pippa Regan. Sheepdrove Organic Farm