

Garn Fach Wind Farm Community Liaison Group
6pm, Thursday 24 February 2022
Via Microsoft Teams
MINUTES

Attendees - members

Name	Organisation
Angharad Davies (chair)	Cadno Communications Ltd
County Councillor David Evans	Nantmel ward
Catherine Fairclough	Farming families
Harvey George	Montgomery YFC
County Councillor Karl Lewis	Llandinam ward
Cllr Robin Lewis	Mochdre with Penstrowed Community Council
Cllr David Lowde	St. Harmon Community Council
Simon Morgan	EDF Renewables
County Councillor Rachel Powell	Beguilyd ward
Nick Venti	PAVO

In attendance

Name	Organisation
Sarah Jones (minutes)	Cadno Communications Ltd

1. Welcome

The chair welcomed members to the meeting.

2. Introductions and apologies

Apologies were received from Ceri Stephens, Cllr James Powell and Cllr Roy Gardner.

3. Approval of minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

- The minutes of the last meeting had been approved by the group via email since the last meeting.

Fay Jones MP survey

- AD updated the group on the results of the survey conducted by Fay Jones MP. 230 leaflets were distributed within a 5km radius of the Garn Fach site. 27 returns were received. 77% said they were supportive of Garn Fach, 19% were opposed, and 4% were indifferent.
- There were no other matters arising.
- NV proposed that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting, seconded by RP.

4. Project update: Simon Morgan

- EDF Renewables had intended to submit the planning application for Garn Fach at the end of 2021. This was delayed due to CADW and Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) raising concerns regarding the geophysical work and requesting EDF Renewables undertake trial trenching. EDF Renewables' consultants dug seven trenches, nothing of archaeological value was found.
- The site layout is almost unchanged following the statutory consultation, there are 17 turbines, 149.9m to tip height. The physical location of the turbines and all other

infrastructure is unchanged except for a slight change to the internal track layout which is an improvement, reducing the internal track length by approx. 1km.

DNS application

- The Environmental Statement (ES) has been finalised and the application will be submitted to PEDW (Planning and Environment Decisions Wales) next week.
- The application will comprise: ES volume 1 (written statement), ES volume 2 (figures), ES volume 3 (technical appendices), pre-application consultation report, planning statement, and design and access statement.
- Once the DNS application is submitted to PEDW, it will be validated PEDW.
- An inspector will be appointed to the project who will determine how examination of the application will run, whether by written representations, hearings or public enquiry. It is expected that the examination will be run via hearings as there is good awareness of the project amongst stakeholders.
- It's useful for the inspector if EDR Renewables gets Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) in place with key stakeholders to ensure issues are narrowed down. This helps the examination process to be more streamlined. EDF Renewables has had very positive engagement with officers at Powys County Council and a SoCG is being finalised with Powys County Council. EDF Renewables has started to look at a SOCG with NRW, and is looking to get one in place with CADW.
- PEDW will undertake all consultation on the DNS application. All information will be available via PEDW's portal. EDF Renewables will put the information on the Garn Fach website. The full application will be available on USB sticks.
- PEDW will write to statutory consultees. Individuals can write to PEDW to raise comments and notify PEDW if they would like to be involved in a hearing on a given topic.
- Cadno will inform stakeholders and people who have asked to be kept up to date to inform them that the process has started.

Common Land Application

- In addition to the main DNS application EDF Renewables (on behalf of the landowner) is making a secondary Common Land application to deregister a 300m strip of land in the north of the site. Replacement land will be provided which is larger than the release land, increasing the overall size of the common. EDF Renewables has had very positive engagement with Open Space Society, Powys County Council, NRW and CADW regarding this.
- EDF Renewables will run the consultation on the Common Land application. On 4th March a notice will be placed in Powys County Times informing people how they can respond.

Q. What does the hearing process look like?

It's expected that it will take place at local venues. Upper Ogmores Wind Farm in south Wales is the only application to have gone through the new DNS process, and as this took place during the pandemic, everything was conducted virtually. It's likely that the Garn Fach examination will be done via hearings. EDF Renewables' will present the application to the inspector without cross examination, and if there are differences of opinion the inspector could decide to examine these issues under cross examination.

Pre-application Consultation

- 450 pieces of information were returned. 420 expressed an explicit view: 62% support, 30% did not support, 8% unsure.

- A lot of people will have heard about the project over the last two years and the two informal consultations, and will have understood the impact of the project.
- The group agreed online consultation will have helped to get a good number of responses.

Q. How do those statistics fit with the pattern for wind farm developments? Is it significantly more support than in the past?

It appears that there is more support in the area for Garn Fach than for previous similar projects. It's likely that opinions have shifted because the climate agenda is more visible, effects are being felt more locally, and there is a greater acceptance now that renewable energy is part of the answer to climate change. EDF Renewables has done a thorough job of engaging over a very long period.

Q. Has there been any movement regarding network distribution?

EDF Renewables has secured the grid connection with National Grid. Welsh Government is conducting a holistic review of electricity and gas networks which will report around late summer.

Q. As part of the Growth Zone deal Powys have done a hydrogen study, and the potential for wind power to produce hydrogen.

Dulas who produced the Environmental Statement for Garn Fach received Welsh Government funding to look at hydrogen production and EDF Renewables has agreed that they can use Garn Fach as a test case. EDF Energy has a dedicated Hydrogen division. EDF Renewables is looking for green hydrogen production from renewable assets, not grey or blue hydrogen.

5. Date of next meeting

The group agreed to meet in May when PEDW start the process formally.