

## **PROPOSED NAVITUS BAY WIND FARM**

### **MEETING OF RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS (RAs) ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2012**

#### **MIRAMAR HOTEL, BOURNEMOUTH**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. As result of increasing concerns about the proposal, Hengistbury RA (HENRA) arranged this meeting by contacting RAs from Swanage to Barton-on-Sea, with Bournemouth Borough Council (BBC) kindly providing the venue.
2. The purpose was to establish the key issues, gauge the intensity of local reaction and decide the best way forward. Although a number of RAs were not able to attend, the meeting was lively and productive.
3. This document, which includes agenda, minutes, sketches and contact details, is being circulated by email to RAs, MPs and councillors.

#### **MINUTES**

1. Attendees:
  - Tony Yates (Chairman of meeting and of HENRA)
  - John Lambon (Architect HENRA)
  - Bill Hoodless (Chairman wind farm sub-committee HENRA)
  - Mark Smith (Director of Tourism, BBC)
  - Mark Anderson (Chairman, Wind Farm Task and Finish Group, BBC)
  - Steve Davies (Planning Officer, BBC)
  - Andrew Langley (Challenge Navitus)
  - Hilarie Lewis (Challenge Navitus)
  - Brian Smith (Alliance of Christchurch RAs)
  - Mike Stollery (Purbeck Society)
  - David Gerry (Purbeck Society)
  - Sheila Warner (Talbot and Branksome Woods RA)
  - Ken Sanson (Sandbanks RA)
  - Hilary Passmore (Ballard Estate)
  - Ray Passmore (Ballard Estate)
  - Tony Higgins (Albany)
  - Alan Cowan (Albany)
  - Chris Lewis (Parkstone Bay Association)
  - Syd Vernon (Crag-Head RA)
  - Roy Pointer (Branksome Park and Canford Cliffs RA)
  - Jeanette Cheese (Kingfisher Court RA)
2. Tony Yates welcomed the delegates and explained that the idea was for Mark Smith, Mark Anderson, Steve Davies and Andrew Langley to assist and for the RAs to decide on the key issues. He said that minutes of the meeting would be produced by Bill Hoodless and circulated to RAs and others. For convenience, they would include email contact details. Tony first introduced Mark Smith.

3. Mark Smith's address:

- The impact on tourism and the town's economy is important to Bournemouth but the wind farm application would be decided by the government not the council.
- However, although it is a major national project, councils do have a role in putting forward their opinions.
- Bournemouth wants to bring together all the relevant information before the planning application – hence the Task and Finish Group.
- Views of residents are very relevant and it is important they are based on correct information throughout the lengthy planning process.
- If the RAs can pool their views and act as a single voice, this would be most effective.

- The tourism view is:

Some will find the wind farm offensive and intrusive so affecting their wish to stay in the town and the rates for sea view rooms.

Research in Scotland confirms this is so, as was indeed acknowledged by Eneco on its own website, for another location.

Although the wind company has been asked to do proper research into economic effects, this has not been forthcoming. However, there are signs that the company now wishes to be more transparent.

Since the proposal is not yet clear and visual information remains poor, it is very important to be committed to finding out the wind farm's appearance.

4. John Lambon next spoke about scale and size:

- He first showed his large scale display plan board of the 76 square mile area of the scheme. He pointed out that it was located in the area of greatest impact, probably because it is the most economic area to develop.
- It is broadly 8 miles from Swanage, the Needles and Hengistbury Head, whilst being 10 miles from Bournemouth.
- He felt that the Dutch company was “throwing a monster” at us whilst Holland's scheme was twice the distance from shore and only 60 turbines of half the height.
- There were three boards displayed vertically, each 4 feet by 3 feet showing a side view of the Isle of Purbeck and Old Harry, the Isle of Wight and turbines respectively. The sea in between is not shown.
- The scale comparison was 205 metre turbines compared to 140 metres at Purbeck and the Isle of Wight. The Needles Lighthouse was merely 35 metres.
- Christchurch Priory was shown completely dwarfed alongside a turbine.
- However, the above is a height comparison only and if there are up to 200 turbines on the horizon, the cumulative effect will be tremendous.
- From Swanage the horizon viewing angle is about 68 degrees, from elsewhere typically 45 degrees.
- The world heritage classified Jurassic Coast is also impacted.

- John's visuals are attached to these minutes. One showed (limited number of A4 prints only were available) a much smaller scheme further offshore. When this idea was discussed later, there was no common view on its acceptability.
5. Mark Anderson outlined the council's political position as definitely against the scheme:
- After a group of concerned councillors put forward a motion in July 2011, the Task and Finish Group was formed.
  - The function of the Group is to investigate and report to Bournemouth council about the effects of the proposals on tourism and the local economy.
  - It is operated by Councillors and representatives from Bournemouth, Poole, Christchurch and Dorset – other local authorities may be added in the future.
  - If the Group can continue to bring a coherent approach to its work, that is very desirable and of course much better than if there are conflicting policies being followed by different authorities.
  - In due course, the Secretary of State will have to decide upon the wind company's planning application. In doing so, he must look at and take account of the various Local Impact Reports (LIRs) produced by the various local authorities. These will be detailed descriptions of anticipated impact on the local area.
  - Bournemouth council would consider referring in their LIR to the representations of local interested parties such as RAs. (It follows that all concerned RAs might approach their local authorities asking for their representations to be included in the LIR or at least mentioned.)
6. Andrew Langley spoke both generally and to his PowerPoint presentation and videos (easily found on the Challenge Navitus website) indicating the appearance of the turbines from various locations, such as Swanage, Bournemouth and Highcliffe:
- As a resident of Swanage, he became alarmed at the poor visual graphics provided by the wind company but his report to the company of his concerns was ignored.
  - The risk was that without reasonable pictures being provided, the public would not realise what they were "letting themselves in for."
  - Here we have a national asset which is faced with the biggest change since the last Ice Age – a project so huge it is hard to visualise. Independent information is needed here because the Eneco visualisation is unhelpful and not unbiased.
  - There are 200 sq. kilometres between the Isle of Wight and the Isle of Purbeck to be developed with wind turbines 150-210 metres high and varying in number from 133 and 333. (The wind company will not disclose their plan at present, i.e. number, location and size of turbines.)
  - Taking a realistic assumption of 7 megawatt units, this would require 171 turbines each with a rotor which would appear the size of a full moon.
  - Siting is poor and the shape of the development area is wrong. On a land map, it amounts to the size of the area between Sandbanks, Christchurch, Ringwood and Wimborne.
  - National guidelines say that the current Round 3 offshore wind farms should be mainly 12 nautical miles from land. Navitus Bay infringes this and if it was sited further out, the impact would be mitigated. But the company insist that as "guidance" only, the 12 miles can be ignored. A "rule" would be different. Yet the planning inspector may still have regard to it.

- When describing their Princess Amalia wind farm, Eneco said on their website that it did not spoil the views of beachgoers – that farm was much smaller and further offshore.
- Although it is very large locally, the scheme is small nationally amounting to only 3% of Round 3. Cancellation would still leave 97% of Round 3 intact.
- Some key points: too close to coast; in the mouth of the bay, the worst location; tourism impact; micro-climate issues; loss of views; about 200 obstacles in a prime leisure area; navigation problems in poor weather conditions; a sort of mincing machine for the birds; a highly sensitive area and hence more than 12 nautical miles needed from shore as applies in other countries.
- Although the wind company now agree the Challenge Navitus visual is correct, they claim that the whole panorama is not “seen in one go” so magnifying perceived impact – Andrew disagrees with this.
- Natural lighting is the worst possible as the turbines are seen to the south.
- Mark Smith added that there was a university report commissioned about the correctness of visuals. Its conclusion was clearly in favour of Andrew’s method and against that of the wind company.
- A sheet about conflicts, from the PowerPoint presentation, is attached.

7. There followed a general discussion:

- The Eneco visuals certainly need to be challenged because the consultants who produced them were paid by Eneco.
- It was asked how many wind farm proposals are successful. Brian Smith mentioned an east coast site where the scheme failed or was modified due to a tern colony. Steve Davies referred to the policy of generating a certain percentage of national energy from renewables – that policy is a “given”. Some smaller schemes may be dismissed but so far, not the larger ones. Objections from RAs are most important.
- Mark Smith pointed out that onshore farms were to a degree “taken off the agenda” due to political pressures. The same may happen locally. If growth is affected and there are no real green jobs making the locality a net loser, this would help the objectors’ case.
- He also said that in Great Yarmouth people would be less “put off” the holiday area than here in Bournemouth. The numbers seem to vary from 2.5% to 8% and the latter figure is likely to apply here. It means that businesses relying on tourism could be seriously affected.
- Steve Davies stressed that in planning terms, the loss of a view was not relevant, nor was a fall in property value.
- Bournemouth may well do its own research into the likely impact of the wind farm on employment prospects and businesses in the town.
- Our objection campaign should start early because the planning stage would be too late. We are the guardians of the future. There was the adjournment debate in the Commons last July and up to 5 local MPs should now be told of the strength of feeling. A concerted objection should be made on broad economic arguments.
- The electrics for the scheme involves 40 metre wide trenching with 10 metres each side – total 60 metres. It would be driven through the cliffs at Barton-on-Sea and then heath-lands. Natural England has said that this is a matter for compensation only.

- Brian Smith talked about the major migration routes for birds between the Isle of Wight and Swanage. About 1 million fly North/South and 1 million fly the other way each year. Several hundred thousand swallows at Hengistbury Head and Christchurch Harbour would be at risk. 200,000 finches and meadow pipits, 250,000 wood pigeons (over Hengistbury), many night flights to avoid predators etc. need to be considered. Ospreys use both Christchurch and Poole Harbours before migrating to W. Africa. RSPB is not getting too involved at present. In summary, the scheme is bad news for birds and no proper research has yet been done or made available.
- There are navigation concerns especially at Poole Harbour but the developer has been rather blasé. In fog or bad weather, there would be risks. MCA is in fact doing a risk analysis. However, the radar surveys being done by Eneco will probably conclude that the risk level is “acceptable”.
- At this point, it was remarked that there was a lot of expertise in different areas but what action should now be taken? What would be a good collective approach and what were the key topics? One answer was that it will not work to “take on government policies”. Instead, it would be much better to use them to say that the proposal was not in accord with such policies.
- A main guideline is that an offshore farm should not be “intrusive” and at least 12 miles away – Navitus obviously fails this policy test.
- The PM has described tourism as the “engine room” of the economy – a negative impact on Dorset’s tourism/economy with loss of jobs is also therefore against national policy. It is important not to underestimate MPs’ reactions. If they believe there is a groundswell of opinion against the scheme, they will become more active and effective.
- It is best to work with policy. Hence, it would be irrelevant to point out the very low efficiency of wind farms or their staggeringly high subsidies because wind energy is government policy. However, issues like impact on nature conservation sites would be relevant. LIRs will need to concentrate on policy matters.
- This is really a wind power station that should be located in a place where it will not detract from such a beautiful area as this.

8. The meeting went on to take very informal votes on some issues:

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| • Scheme as far as it is known   | AGAINST   |
| • Visual intrusion   | KEY ISSUE |
| • Tourism impact   | KEY ISSUE |
| • Micro-climate. It was stressed that no accurate information yet existed on the downwind effect of the turbines proposed. However, the meeting took a view on the basis that there would be a significant detrimental effect. Assuming that for now, the vote was | KEY ISSUE |
| • Risks to birds   | KEY ISSUE |
| • Acceptance of wind farm if further offshore  | DIVIDED   |

9. At this stage, the discussion continued:

- Planning comment was made – the main thrust from RAs should be maintaining the character of the area; evidence to the Planning Inspector must compete with the scientific evidence from the wind company; anecdotal comments will not carry any weight; the Inspector will only look at evidence; it may be best to have

simply one reason for objection about how the drastic visual impact will alter the character of Bournemouth.

- If the location was pushed out to at least 15 miles from land, would that reduce the impact by half? Some felt that might be a compromise to consider but others not so, particularly Brian Smith who explained that the birds would remain at the same risk. In any case, the farm could well “creep in” towards the shore at a later stage – there have been such phase two extensions to Round 2 farms.

10. The final item was the way forward:

- Tony Yates said that in arranging this meeting, HENRA felt that RAs may want to form into a group that first had discussions with the developer. It might then go on to raise public awareness with appropriate publicity in due course. However, as can be seen from the above, there was a lot to take in at the meeting and at this point, there were no volunteers to become chairman and secretary of such a brand new organization.
- It was agreed instead that RA representatives would report back and reflect on where we now stand in the light of the Miramar meeting and these minutes. The contact information included here should help views to be exchanged. There could also be input from several people who were unable to attend the meeting.
- There was some discussion about whether an umbrella body might discourage individual RAs to press forward with their own objections to the scheme, but the general view appeared to be that the most strength would come from each RA pressing its views with its council, MP etc. whilst the same was done by some form of association of RAs.
- It follows that as the “current linking body,” HENRA will be pleased to hear from anyone wishing to take forward such an association. At the least, there should be a system of co-ordinating information around the maximum number of RAs. The word is to be spread and any new RAs encouraged to contact and register with HENRA for the time being.
- If an umbrella group is formed, there were two ideas for its name – Residents Against Navitus (RAN) or Poole Bay Sustainable Future Group (PBSFG). When there is another get-together, it may be that another local authority, possibly Poole, would provide a venue. Opinion varied as to timing – two, four or six months hence.

## **CONCLUSION**

There is great local concern at the wind farm proposal but understandably, not yet a clear way forward after the distribution of these minutes.

Would all RAs please now reflect on the situation and contact HENRA by email or telephone with suggestions for the next steps? These views will then be collated and reported back.

Bill Hoodless  
27 September 2012

# **Hengistbury Residents' Association**

( Established 1953 )

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## **INVITATION**

**MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES OF RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS (RAs)**

**TO CONSIDER NAVITUS BAY WIND FARM SCHEME**

**TO BE HELD 2.30 PM ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2012**

**AT HOTEL MIRAMAR, EAST OVERCLIFF DRIVE, BOURNEMOUTH**

You are cordially invited to this meeting, which Hengistbury Residents' Association is pleased to facilitate. Whilst thanks are due to Bournemouth Borough Council which has provided the venue, this meeting is purely about the views and votes of the RAs.

**PURPOSE:** to identify the key issues raised by the scheme and decide the best way ahead.

## **AGENDA**

1. Domestic matters such as Fire Exits
2. Introduction by Tony Yates, Chairman and distribution of feedback sheets to RAs
3. Summary from Mark Smith, Bournemouth Director of Tourism
4. Summary from Mark Anderson, Chairman of Bournemouth Task and Finish Group
5. Summary from Andrew Langley, Challenge Navitus
6. Steve Davies, Planning Officer, to observe and assist during meeting
7. Discussion and voting sessions about impact of scheme:
  - Visual intrusion
  - Tourism
  - Micro-climate
  - Risks to birds
  - Risks to navigation
  - Acceptance of wind farm if further offshore
  - Other issues
7. Way ahead
8. Contacts sheet for RAs including email addresses to circulate with minutes of this meeting to all. Minutes also to MPs Drax, Chope, Ellwood, Syms and Burns
9. AOB

## RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS CONSIDERING NAVITUS BAY WIND FARM

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