

# Meeting Minutes

<b>Doc No</b>	LN000046-COM-CA-MOM-0002 - Viking CLG minutes 20.7.21	
<b>Meeting Title:</b>	<b>Viking Community Liaison Group</b>	
<b>Date/Time/Venue:</b>	20.07.21 at 7pm – Microsoft Teams	
<b>Issue Date:</b>	30.07.21	
<b>Attendees:</b>	Chair Andrew Archer, Tingwall, Whiteness & Weisdale Community CI	Vice-chair James Garrick, Sandsting & Aithsting CC
Willie Simpson, Nesting & Lunnasting CC	John Priest, Sandsting & Aithsting CC	Neil Leask, Tingwall, Whiteness & Weisdale CC
Alistair Laurenson, Nesting & Lunnasting CC	Moraig Lyall, SIC councillor – Central	Aaron Priest, SSE Renewables (SSER)
Julie Graham, SSER	Craig Park, SSEN Transmission	Chris Finnigan, SSEN Transmission
Ryan Maclean, RJ McLeod	Sharon Powell, SSEN Transmission	Greg Clarke, SSEN Transmission
John Robertson (minutes), SSER		

Item	Agenda Item	Action	Due										
1.0	<b>Welcome and introductions</b> Group chair Andrew Archer presided. He sought introductions from everyone present and welcomed representatives of The Shetland Times (Ryan Taylor), Shetland News (Hans Marter) and BBC Radio Shetland (Jen Stout) to their first CLG meeting.												
2.0	<b>Apologies</b> – [omitted on the night] SIC development director Neil Grant; Duncan Goudie, SEPA.												
3.0	<b>Approval of previous minutes</b> - Formally approved.												
4.0	<p><b>Matters arising</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Previous actions</th> <th>Status</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Neil Grant (representing SIC planning) to provide information on sterilisation of land for development purposes outwith the 30-metre wayleave of HVDC cables due to EMF radiation.</td> <td>SIC chief executive declared no issues outwith 30m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. SSEN-T to provide a map of the cable route to help the group understand where was being referred to.</td> <td>Completed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. SSER to provide link to document on decommissioning the wind farm. [Link <a href="#">here</a> and scroll to 6<sup>th</sup> Dec 2019]</td> <td>Completed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. SSER to convey concerns to the project team that dust suppression was reactive rather than proactive.</td> <td>Completed</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Previous actions	Status	1. Neil Grant (representing SIC planning) to provide information on sterilisation of land for development purposes outwith the 30-metre wayleave of HVDC cables due to EMF radiation.	SIC chief executive declared no issues outwith 30m	2. SSEN-T to provide a map of the cable route to help the group understand where was being referred to.	Completed	3. SSER to provide link to document on decommissioning the wind farm. [Link <a href="#">here</a> and scroll to 6 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2019]	Completed	4. SSER to convey concerns to the project team that dust suppression was reactive rather than proactive.	Completed		
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5.0	<b><u>Project update presentations from Viking/SSER and SSEN Transmission</u></b>		
5.1	<p><b>SSEN Transmission update on construction of the HVDC Converter Station and the HVDC cable link</b></p> <p>Craig Park discussed a series of slides of work in progress. The project is into its eleventh month, making great progress and staying on programme, he said. The bulk of recent works has been construction of the platform to put the converter station building on. Much of the earthworks and rock extraction has been undertaken. Materials have been used onsite, minimising the carbon footprint and disruption from export and import by lorry. No pollution incidents have been reported and no serious safety incidents have taken place under contractor BAM Nuttall. Steel works for the building have just begun and these will proceed, along with cladding works, over the next six months. Reinforced concrete works are also under way for foundations and bases. Drainage and watercourse diversion works are taking place in environmentally sensitive ways.</p> <p>Site offices are now established. Staffing levels are to increase to around 140 over summer to make use of the daylight hours. Within the site at Upper Kergord, work on the AC GIS substation began in early July and Viking Energy is expected to start work on its substation in August.</p> <p>BAM Nuttall continues to use local suppliers and engage with the local community to bring benefits. Overall, it has been a successful project for almost a year and is in a good place for going forward.</p> <p>In response to a question from the chair, Mr Park said the concrete supply was being sourced from local firm EMN Plant which transports it to site for pouring. Pre-cast concrete units are also being used to limit the number of concrete wagons travelling about and to provide more certainty to the project programme and less risk. About 60% of the requirements are in the form of pre-cast concrete.</p> <p>Chris Finnigan gave an update on cable installation works. He was pleased with progress and performance on health and safety and environmental safeguards. Around 1km of the ducting is installed from the converter site at Kergord to the Kergord Access Track. Temporary site access bellmouths have been created off the A971 at Stenswell and Scord of Sound. Around 250 metres of temporary haul road and ducting are in place from Stenswell and another 500m of haul road is installed from Setter corner northwards.</p> <p>Cable work has started this week on the A971 at Scord of Sound and will continue in 300m sections until spring 2022. SSEN-T is keen to make as quick progress with that as possible. Critical work is also taking place in Caithness and with the offshore and marine surveys, including in Weisdale Voe where the near-shore survey is complete.</p> <p><b>SSER update on construction of the wind farm</b></p>		
5.2	<p>Mr Priest discussed a series of slides showing works in progress. He said Siemens-BAM was due to start on site in August to build VEWf's substation at Upper Kergord. Around 80 of more than 200 people currently working on the wind farm are local. Later this year the wind farm workforce will rise to nearly 300. When combined with SSEN-T's workforce, numbers will peak at over 500 in the early part of 2023 when turbine erection starts.</p>		

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	<p>So far, 43km (60%) of the tracks have been formed out of the 72km network required. These are to a standard for construction traffic and need to be capped and brought up to finished standard later for deployment of wind farm components. Of the crane hardstandings, 48 of 103 have commenced and 30 turbine bases have been excavated, 12 of which have been blinded with a concrete layer.</p> <p>Up to now, around £9.6m has been spent by the wind farm project on the local supply chain with 48 local businesses engaged as contractors or suppliers.</p> <p>The North Compound near Voe has two concrete batching plants being set up to use once most of RJ McLeod's workforce returns from a short summer break. The last section of the wind farm site is being opened up in the North Nesting area, east of Scar Quilse. Work was suspended for 3 weeks in part of the area while bird chicks fledged. The discovery of ground water-dependent ecological systems, or plants of interest, had led to a borrow pit in the area only being opened up to half its consented size.</p> <p>Turbine anchor cages are being built and installed on turbine sites, followed by specialist steel-fixing ready for the concrete pouring. Around 107 tonnes of reinforced steel is used in each base along with around 700 cubic metres of concrete.</p> <p>Wind farm tracks are opening up access to spectacular viewpoints which walkers and cyclists will be able to enjoy in the future.</p> <p>Updating the group on the community benefit fund, Mr Priest said it was worth £72 million index-linked over the lifetime of the wind farm. There have been 78 applications of which 44 had been approved across Shetland to a value of £140,000.</p> <p>Responding to a question from Neil Leask about the national shortage of cement potentially causing problems for the construction timetable, Mr Priest said there had been temporary delays to some supplies but sufficient cement was getting through to the project so far. Ryan Maclean of RJ McLeod said structural concrete pours were not due to start until week commencing 9<sup>th</sup> August. Suppliers said it should be okay for August but he couldn't guarantee that. There had been two significant breakdowns and delays in June and July but the supplier said it wouldn't happen again.</p> <p>Mr Leask suggested it might be of interest and good public relations to set up a time-lapse camera on a turbine base to show the amount of work that went into it. Mr Priest said that was being organised.</p> <p>In response to a question from the chair, Mr Maclean confirmed that a stockpile of sand on the quay in Lerwick was around 6,000 tonnes for the wind farm because concreting sand is not available in Shetland.</p>		
6.0	<p><b>Questions from community council representatives</b></p> <p>Six questions were submitted in advance via Tingwall, Whiteness &amp; Weisdale Community Council and others were added on the night.</p> <p><b>1. The track that is being built from the head of Weisdale Voe up to Setter looks like a substantial construction. If the landowner's application to keep the track is unsuccessful, will this be removed and the ground reinstated once the cable has been installed?</b></p>		

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	<p>Answer from SSEN-T: Our obligation is that, in the event that the landowner does not get planning permission, SSEN-T will reinstate the tracks when it has finished using them. Arrangements are in place, should they need to do that.</p> <p><b>2. A local resident looked at the windfarm site the other day and commented that it looked like a scene from a western, with clouds of dust as things moved across the hills. Some people are concerned that the dust will alter the pH of the ground, affecting the peat, and also that the dust will end up in the watercourses. At the last CLG meeting you talked of the measures that were being introduced to tackle this. It's clearly still a problem. Are all your proposed mitigation measures now in place? What measures are in place to enforce the 15mph speed limits to reduce the dust? There is a perception that vehicles appear to be travelling a lot faster than that.</b></p> <p>Mr Priest said dust on any construction site was common during long periods of dry weather. As long as tracks are being constructed, or heavy plant was running on them, it is an issue that Viking has to manage throughout the lifetime of the work and on a daily basis. Since issues were first raised there had been improvements, including an increase in the number of tractors and water bowsers (now six) on site to spray water on the road and track surfaces. Twelve approved water abstraction points are in use and a further three applied for. Perforated hoses are in use along the new Sandwater road and the Kergord access track to spray water onto the running surfaces. In the coming months the wind farm tracks will be capped and finished to a more compacted standard, becoming less dusty. Less heavy traffic will also mean less dust.</p> <p>On the issue of pH levels and water courses, the rock being used is largely processed and deployed in-situ and therefore the natural soils and peat are similar in pH values to the rock. An exception in the future could be one potential borrow pit which may have limestone in it. It has not been opened yet but, if and when it is, the pH of the materials will be checked on a constant basis. Beyond that, across the site, the Ecological Clerk of Works and his team are consistently monitoring the condition of the surrounding ecological systems. All the water courses and lochs have got ongoing independent monitoring regimes in place. To date, no issues have been found with pH and dust and none are expected.</p> <p>Regarding enforcement of the 15mph speed limit, all the HGV vehicles and plant on site have got tracking devices and cameras to ensure adherence to the low speed. This is not just to reduce dust but for health and safety purposes. Dust can be an issue on sites, even when travelling at very low speeds. The fact that dust may be seen behind heavy vehicles is not necessarily directly related to speed. Speed is being monitored and is not being found to be an issue. Smaller vehicles are subject to induction and ongoing management on the site and their performance is observed. If there are issues, people are reminded of the requirement to adhere to the speed limit across the site.</p> <p>Mr Maclean said RJ McLeod's 4x4s were tracked on and off the site by the health and safety department. Asked if anybody had been reprimanded, or whether records were available to the public, Mr Maclean said that, across the company, a worker could lose their bonus if caught</p>		

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	<p>driving over 60mph offsite. In Shetland, and on Viking Wind Farm, the company had seen quite an impressive record. People get rewarded for the least braking and most improved driving performance and last month three of the four awards among the company's 480 employees went to wind farm workers on Viking.</p> <p><b>3. Are the dust control measures only used on the tracks that are closer to the roads or more visible? How do you decide which bits to deal with?</b></p> <p>Mr Priest said safety and the environment were the two main factors considered in dust suppression. It was a key consideration in the vicinity of anywhere people were working and potentially exposed to dust, for instance people working on steel-fixing on the Mid Kame ridge. Therefore, that might be an area where dust suppression is prioritised on the advice of the planning authorities and the council's planning enforcement officer. There is also additional dust mitigation at access points and areas adjacent to public roads so that there is no impact on vehicles when passing the works on public roads. Sensitive ecological areas would be prioritised but generally dust suppression is applied right across the site. It is a case of deploying suppression equipment wherever dust is seen and not just in areas where the public see it. Ultimately the aim is to suppress it right across the site.</p> <p><b>4. What is the current position with the plans for the concrete batching plants? The leaflet that went out last week said that there will be two batching plants but there are still two planning applications in, in addition to the existing batching plant at the North Compound.</b></p> <p>Mr Priest said VEFW awaited confirmation from the SIC on the final status and outcomes of the applications. All the information required has been passed to the SIC for review and a decision on the batching plants, east and west in the South Nesting and Kergord area. Essentially the site could be run in terms of concrete batching from the North Compound's two batching plants but the preference is to have the flexibility of the two additional locations in the east and west. As discussed before, and at community councils, this is to allow more efficient pours and reduced vehicle movements across the site.</p> <p>Asked if the existing batching plants would be moved to the new sites if planning permission is granted, Mr Priest said the default case for the project was to have two plants in the north pending the decision from the SIC. The optimum case is, if the east and west ones are approved, there could be up to three concrete batching plants at the site: two at the North Compound and one deployed either in the east or west as required. There will be no more than three plants on the site at any point and, even then, the secondary plant in the north might only be used as a backup. Mr Maclean said if a third batching plant was brought in then one of the two at the North Compound would become a back-up plant in the event of a breakdown.</p> <p>The chair moved proceedings to an additional question submitted late.</p> <p><b>5. The chair said an issue he had discussed with SEPA was the water source for the proposed west side batching plant. The planning</b></p>		

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	<p><b>documents said the intention would be to use a bore hole or water course – is that still the case? Somebody had been in touch with him who was concerned about water levels in the trout lochs on the west side.</b></p> <p>Mr Maclean said the borrow pit location was not close enough to a watercourse so it would be supplied by bore-hole, if planning permission was granted. The company employed to do this has to comply with SEPA regulations, including surveying to ensure there is no interference with water courses. They go down a fair depth, the last one he was concerned with having been over 100 metres deep to get to the water levels needed.</p> <p><b>6. What measures are being used to stabilise the peat? There was talk last year of using old salmon nets. Is that still the plan? People have raised concerns about the plastic and the anti-fouling agents that are used.</b></p> <p>Mr Priest said he wasn't sure where discussion about nets first came in but it might be a conflation with potential measures discussed historically as part of the Habitat Management Plan, which includes peat restoration areas. There is peat restoration going on in-situ as wind farm construction work continues. The peat is stabilised through a design process; there is clear guidance, a peat management plan and a Geological Clerk of Works to assess the different reinstatements and restoration plans, monitoring throughout and advising of any concerns. Salmon nets are generally made from man-made fibres, non-biodegradable, and therefore have been discounted for use in peat stabilisation within the HMP. There might be some consideration in the HMP of using natural geo-jute fibres in small areas where stability might be a concern but generally peat is going to be restored in areas with slopes less than five degrees. Retaining bunds are incorporated into designs, including stone potentially in the middle of the bunds, to ensure the long-term stability in the peat in these relatively flat areas. Also, there is a dedicated HMP officer in place and the Shetland Wind Farm Environmental Advisory Group (SWEAG) is going to provide oversight on measures to be developed and implemented as part of the peat restoration initiatives within the overall HMP.</p> <p><b>7. How will the long-term health of the peat that is re-used be monitored?</b></p> <p>Mr Priest said within the HMP and within the wider details of the consents for the project, peat restoration areas will be monitored for the first five years of the wind farm being operational, from 2024. After five years the environmental team's HMP officer has a duty to prescribe ongoing long-term monitoring requirements and agree those with SEPA and the SIC, as planning authority. SWEAG will also be overseeing the efforts throughout the HMP initiatives, including peat restoration.</p> <p>The chair asked whether excavated peat all went to restoration areas or did some go to fill borrow pits. Mr Priest said it went to both. Much of it was used in-situ or went to areas of eroded peat close to works which are being restored. Also, 260 hectares of peatland is to be restored under the HMP, which has started and is a longer-term programme.</p>		

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	<p>Asked by the chair whether SWEAG had appointed a chair yet, Mr Priest said it was meeting tomorrow on site and an academic had been nominated to be the chair.</p> <p>Mr Leask asked why nothing had been decided yet about how to stabilise peat in steeper areas, particularly given the slide that occurred next to a borrow pit above Kergord. Mr Priest said restoration wasn't going to take place on sloping areas. The minor slippage referred to was part of ongoing construction works, not peat restoration work. A pile of turves that were being stored to one side had slipped a bit down a slope. They were for use in reinstatement along the road, not for restoration. All the work on site is governed by plans to ensure construction is done in a managed way and things like turves are stored in a way that doesn't cause slippage etc.</p> <p>Councillor Lyall asked whether the five years of peat monitoring was for the restoration areas or the areas of peatland disturbed during construction. Mr Priest said he understood it would be both but he would take it away to follow up. The chair also asked that Mr Priest find out how borrow pit reinstatement would be monitored too.</p> <p><b>8. Will the turbine components for the south-west area be transported on the A971 or will they all go via the new Sandwater Road?</b></p> <p>Mr Priest said it was anticipated that both routes would be used to minimise journey time for turbine components. Vestas, as turbine supplier, are in the process of putting together a specific transport route assessment for possible use of the A971. That is addressing areas highlighted by the SIC that they require further information on. SSER is waiting on the final report of that assessment and discussions between Vestas and the SIC before it is definitive that the A971 will be used. Examples of areas highlighted by the SIC for further discussion and for the surveys are hold points along the route, details around convoy arrangements and how they would be timed to avoid peak periods, school pick-up and drop-off times and times when people might be using the A971 to get elsewhere, such as to catch ferries.</p> <p>The chair said the A971 came up at most of his community council meetings with a particular section a safety nightmare already. People in his area would be alarmed at the idea that they were going to meet enormous loads on the horrible bends and drop-offs. Mr Priest said the important thing was to have comprehensive studies in place and timing of deliveries to minimise interaction with other road users and avoid any pinch-points or potential for disruption, hence the survey to gather the facts to consider it based on facts and data collected. He said use of the A971 was a matter for Vestas to justify but he expected it was to keep their options open and maximise their flexibility.</p> <p>Additional question submitted by the chair:</p> <p><b>9. Given that the bird breeding season is over, are the bird scarers going to be taken away or are they a permanent addition while work is going on?</b></p> <p>Mr Priest agreed to take the question away and provide an answer soon.</p>	<p>AP</p> <p>AP</p>	

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7.0	<b>Any other business</b> – no items raised		
8.0	<p><b>Date and time of next meeting</b> – members agreed to meet on Tues 19<sup>th</sup> Oct 2021 at 7pm. Due to Covid-19 considerations, the chair said a decision would be made closer to the time as to whether the meeting would be in a public venue or on Teams once more.</p> <p>The meeting ended at 8.19pm.</p>	JR send invitations	