

# Minutes of a meeting held in Eardisley on 31 March 2010 to discuss the proposal for trial runs transporting wind turbine components along the A4111 through Eardisley

*The meeting was held at Eardisley School – thanks to Head Michelle Chapman*

## **Chair:**

Clive Skelton            Eardisley Group Parish Council

## **In attendance:**

Gary Kruger            Scottish Power: Engineering  
Kirsty Melrose        Scottish Power: Planning  
Maxine Helliwell     Scottish Power/Colletts: Transport  
Martin Jackson       Amey: Bridges  
Andrew Lee-Jones    Herefordshire Council/Amey: Highways  
John Hope             Herefordshire Councillor  
David Perridge        West Mercia Police: Traffic  
                                  Upwards of 50 Eardisley residents

Note: The meeting was noisy and confused with many interruptions and repetitions. Therefore I have presented these minutes in the form of information given and key comments/questions from the floor, to give people who were not at the meeting a readable summary.

## **Information:**

*Andrew Lee-Jones*

- The purpose of the meeting - to inform residents of proposals which are in their initial stages
- Not a discussion about wind farms but about supply routes and their effects
- Herefordshire Council's view – to see and support what is going on, and take account of how it will affect the road network
- The decision will be made by Herefordshire Council – “There is no legal reason why we cannot say NO”

*Gary Kruger / Maxine Helliwell*

- (showed a map of the affected route and a diagram of the proposed width and length of the loads; both diagrams were too small to be seen from the back)
- This is the only viable route (!)
- Other routes were examined and rejected; the route from the north has too many technical constraints, like a low bridge at Newtown; the vehicles cannot manage the right turn in the middle of Builth Wells on the route from the south through Wales
  
- Maximum width = 4.3 metres; height = 5 metres; total length = 48.5 metres
- Number of loads per day = 1 to 2 convoys of about 3 vehicles each with a maximum total number of loads = 7
- Gross weight of each load = up to 130 tonnes; maximum axel weight 15 tonnes
- The bridge in Eardisley is capable of taking this weight
- Speed of travel = 20 to 30 mph
  
- There will be police at the front and rear of the convoy
- Eardisley “should be given” an idea of the time of arrival
- The trial will be done with 2 options – with cars parked as usual and with no cars parked

- The trial vehicle can be collapsed to a shorter or narrower size should it not be able to get through a space.
- A video will be made of the trial runs through Eardisley
- The actual time of the test runs through Eardisley has not been decided
- The regular flow of convoys will start in 2012
- This allows time "to do any traffic management which would otherwise prevent the convoys from getting through"

#### *David Perridge – Police*

- All the plans for getting these loads through villages are in the hands of the contractors and Herefordshire Council
- The Police only come in at the end of this operation when we are paid for escort services
- "Transport management plans must be agreed by everyone"
- What they are trying to now, with the trial runs, is to prove whether or not the loads will go through Eardisley and the rest of this route,
- "If the answer is YES, they will then do things to make it legally correct" to move these loads through the village.
- The Welsh Government has identified many sites at which wind farms might be built. So far only 2 are connected to the national grid. In future other sites might well be connected, meaning that established transport routes could be used again and again. (ref Technical Advice note 8)
- On the trial runs, the police will check how far back traffic needs to be held up to let the convoy go through
- There will need to be lay-bys where 2 convoy vehicles can pull off the road to let traffic go past, e.g. to the south and north of Eardisley
- The contractor will build these lay-bys
- "The test runs will identify whether parking in Eardisley is possible or not when the convoys are moving through the village."
- "Herefordshire Council will identify whether parking restrictions need to be in place"
- "Many discussions need to happen to consider shops, school, etc"
- "The trial runs will determine the conditions that need to apply"

#### **Key questions and comments from the floor**

Note: many of these comments were made and questions asked during the information-giving session, so the answers appear above. Where an answer was given but does not appear above, I have included it with the question below.

- The road is too narrow; this will close the village and endanger pedestrians
- As the owner of a listed building how can I know these loads won't cause cracks in my property?
- If we have no parking we will have to stop our lives. This is a very active village and you may be preventing access.
- Where will Tarmac, sheep lorries and other heavy lorries go?
- How will Herefordshire Council look after Eardisley? *Answer:* A L-J – "HC wants to protect the whole environment"
- Our businesses will suffer – we need parking for custom.
- Will compensation be paid for loss of business? *Answer:* GK – "Scottish Power has never paid for that before."

- Alarmed to hear you've never compensated for loss of shop business before – shops cannot take this.
- In its Future Planning Document, HC wants Eardisley to be a Rural Service Centre, but you want to risk closing the shops which would make that not possible!!
- Will HC and SP come back and talk again if the permission is granted?
  
- Can you change the route altogether / reconsider the Welsh route? *Answer:* Other routes are still under consideration but have bigger difficulties
- What is the timescale? What has to happen between the planning application and further discussion with us? *Answer:* GK – “planning consent may require certain changes”
- Will you tell us what is required? *Answer:* GK – “er, yes we could”
  
- Can the loads go through at night? *Answer:* DP – “the police view is there are more collisions when loads like these are moved at night”
- Does power ever have to be turned off? *Answer:* MH – “No, the maximum height is 5 metres and overhead wires are 6.5 metres”
  
- You won't get your 4 metre loads through with parked cars – we can't get through with a 3 metre tractor. *Answer:* “Well we will only really do the trial with NO parked cars” (Note: the contradiction with the earlier 2-option statement is accurate)
- You said you'd do a trial with and without parked cars – were we misled?
- How will HC handle the trial run? *Answer:* A L-J – “We'll get a temporary road closure order for those dates. Since it's a rolling closure we can't give accurate times. We'll use cones to restrict the parking on those dates”
- If a car was left parked what would happen? *Answer:* DP – “It depends on how HC enforces – if it's cones, yes the police could remove it.”
- The PC will try to offer parking to affected people and shops for those dates.
  
- Was HC consulted about a Pembridge route? *Answer:* A L-J – “no, only this route”
- Will Scottish Power offer compensation for loss or damage? *Answer:* GK – “Yes”
- You are writing a report after the trial. Can Eardisley have a copy? *Answer:* GK – “er... yes”
- Can Eardisley have a copy of the DVD of the trial? *Answer:* MH – “yes of the relevant bits”

End of minutes

Note: After the meeting several people had conversations with the people presenting the information. Two further points emerged of real relevance to the understanding of the whole picture. They are:

1. Cones can be used legally only for the trial
2. If parking restrictions in Eardisley are a condition of the planning permission, and if HC agrees, HC will be legally obliged to implement yellow lines (probably single lines with stated time restrictions) as the long term solution to ensuring future convoys have unrestricted passage though the village

Follow-up since the meeting:

Scottish Power has agreed to provide as much info as possible in advance about the timing of the runs to limit the impact on the village.

Scottish Power has also agreed to provide off-street parking for residents who need it during the trial run days. This has been organised.

Phone Clive Skelton on 01544 327583 after 7.00pm or weekends.