

# Esgair Galed Community Liaison Group meeting minutes

Wednesday 22 October 2025

## Attendance

### Present

Maya Bimson (MB) – Protect Glaslyn and Hafren

Paul Buckley (PB) – Clywedog Association

Bryn Jones (BJ) – Llanbrynmair Community Council

Endaf Meddins (EM) – Esgair Galed landowner

Cllr Gary Mitchell (GM) – Powys County Council

Derrick Pugh (DP) – Trefeglwys Community Council

James Green (JG) – Social Mapping, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Lead - Community Investment Team, Bute Energy

Huw Rees (HR) – Esgair Galed Energy Park Project Manager, Bute Energy

Sara Powell-Davies (SPD) – Thirty4/7 Communications (via Teams)

### **Absent (*please note, organisations have been requested to only send one representative to each meeting*)**

Cllr Elwyn Vaughan – Powys County Council (apologies sent)

Cllr Glyn Preston – Powys County Council

Edward Pugh – Trefeglwys Community Council

Elen Williams – Cadfarch Community Council / YFC Bro Dyfi / Maldwyn

Richard Ashton – Llanbrynmair Community Council

Carla Evans – Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust

Sali-Ann Preston – Protect Glaslyn and Hafren

Barbara Richter – Llwyngog Community Co-op

## Agenda Overview

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Apologies
3. Matters arising from last meeting
4. Review and approval of updated Terms of Reference
5. Group membership review
6. Esgair Galed Project Update
7. Introduction to Bute Energy social mapping process
8. Volunteering opportunities
9. Any other business
10. Date and time of next meeting

## Discussions & Notes

### Welcome and introductions

***Each member present introduced themselves and what, if any, organisations they were representing.***

- In addition to the usual members, James Green, Social Mapping, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Lead at Bute Energy was present to explain how the Community Investment Team are gathering information about the local area to try and help inform how the Community Benefit Fund could be used. Input from local people will continue to be key to this process.
- This is the first meeting attended by a representative of Clywedog Association.

### Matters arising from last meeting

***Any outstanding issues or actions from the last meeting were discussed.***

- DP raised concerns about local political tensions and reiterated the impartiality of Trefeglwys Community Council.
- HR reminded everyone that the minutes of all these meetings are available on the Esgair Galed website [here](#). Minutes will be shared with member of the CLG for comment prior to be posted on the website.
- Details of all organisations invited to be included on all future minutes.

- DP referenced other local meeting meetings that have taken place in 2024 and 2025 to discuss how the proposals for Esgair Galed could affect local areas. These were arranged by Protect Glaslyn and Hafren.
- A representative for local tourism businesses was selected to attend this meeting, but as no invitation was sent or actioned from the last meeting they did not feel entitled to attend. HR to ensure this action is completed in time to allow the representative to attend the next meeting.
- PB raised a question on the previous meeting minutes around the Residential Visual Amenity Assessment for properties within a 2km radius.
- HR explained the process the specialist Landscape team have undertaken.
  - Approximately 100 properties were identified within the 2km radius of the site. The Landscape specialist assessed these properties as clusters from publicly accessible locations, to identify properties which had the potential to breach the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold.
  - The team identified 20 properties that met this criterion and were taken forward to the second phase of assessment which included a personal visit and will need further investigation to look at viewpoints from within their properties. Of the 20 properties contacted, 17 accepted and the assessment was carried out on those properties. HR explained that assessments are only carried out on properties on are seen to have the potential to be ‘breaching’ the Residential Visual Amenity assessment ‘Threshold’ and explained other properties are unlikely to be contacted.
- DP raised the issue of if people could be ‘compensated’ for being close to the wind farm.
- JG gave brief details of how it is envisaged that the Community Benefit Fund would be administered via a singular Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) governed by a board of trustees. Local panels would make recommendations of where funds were to be awarded. JG to look at different ways the funding could be used to help people closest to the project.
- Twenty-five per cent of the annual Community Benefit Fund to be targeted at establishing community energy schemes. This could include energy efficiency or small-scale renewable energy generation for residents.
- The issue of compensation for businesses who may be affected by the project was discussed. HR to look at specific compensation for businesses suffering loss of earnings.
- The access route was discussed, and BJ questioned the possibility of improvement of the local road network. HR confirmed the transport route is not yet decided, but it is common for road-widening and improvement works to be done on wind farm transport routes.
- PB asked if arrangements could be made for residents to use any surplus energy produced by the energy park that could not be accepted by the grid (grid curtailment). HR said this would not be possibly due to complexities with the grid.
- HR confirmed battery storage is not included as part of the Esgair Galed Energy Park project.

### **Actions**

- HR to follow up with local tourism business representative  
Deadline – 5 November 2025
- JG to investigate ways CBF could be used for local people  
Deadline – 11 February 2026
- HR to investigate compensation for businesses suffering loss of earnings.  
Deadline – 11 February 2026

### **Review of Terms of Reference**

#### ***Overview of the updated Terms of Reference***

- Chairing duties to be carried out jointly between HR and T47
- Sections in yellow in the Terms of Reference are the updated items
  - Timeline for sharing and publishing minutes has been changed
  - Inclusion of group members has been added
- Terms of Reference were approved by the group, and the updated version will upload to the website.

### **Actions**

- HR to ensure the updated Terms of Reference are uploaded to the CLG section of the project website. Deadline: 19 November 2025

### **Group membership**

#### ***Discussion about group membership***

- HR – still a need to keep number of organisations represented to a manageable number
- Contact details for any potential attendees to be passed to HR or T47 to ensure information and meeting details can be shared by Bute Energy in a timely manner

### **Actions**

- ALL to share details of potential attendees for future meeting with HR or T47  
Deadline – 28 November 2025

## **Project update**

### ***HR provided update of what has happened with Esgair Galed Energy Park since last meeting***

- Work is underway on turbine siting, how to get components to site. However, this is taking a bit longer than anticipated so will be finalised in next two months.
- Next step once this is complete will be to start writing Environmental Statement – a comprehensive report that details the likely significant environmental effects of the project. The main purpose of the ES is to identify potential impacts on the environment and communities, and to outline mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate adverse effects. It is a crucial document for PEDW (Planning & Environment Decisions Wales), who will make the recommendation to Welsh Ministers on whether to grant consent or not, to assess the project's impacts and to ensure the development can be balanced with environmental protection. It will be available for all to see at next and final round of consultation.
- Next consultation will take place in late spring / early summer 2026 and will include public events for people to see more details and specialist team members will be available to answer questions.
- Statutory consultees must provide feedback for this consultation.
- Potential for design of energy park to change following this round of consultation.
- Application will be made to PEDW once consultation is complete, feedback has been reviewed and considered and relevant reports written. This is likely to be late 2026.
- EM raised concern about lead mines in area and how they could affect water quality.
- HR confirmed Bute is in contact with Cadw and Heneb: The Trust for Welsh Archaeology, regarding scheduled monuments, which includes lead mines.
- A discussion ensued about a project led by Mining Remediation Authority in conjunction with NRW to improve water quality in areas with lead mines. HR confirmed Bute is aware and this work will help to shape the hydrology chapter of the Environmental Statement.
- Details of delivery route and access to the site will be included in the consultation documents.
- HR confirmed agreement has been reached with NRW to carry out survey work within the forestry area of the project.
- GM gave details of Powys Council's motion for wind farm applications to be paused until grid applications for them can be confirmed. HR explained the grid solution is reliant on project to be progressed by Green GEN Cymru (GGC) to connect into a substation in Cefn Coch. Bute working with GGC to keep them updated of plans for Esgair Galed. Unlikely that GGC will be able to provide update at present.
- HR confirmed infrared light on met mast is not visible to human eye but visible to aircraft.

## **Actions**

- No actions identified

## **Bute Energy social mapping process**

***JG gave an overview of how Bute will work with communities to identify priority areas to receive Community Benefit Funding.***

- Each Bute energy park offers £7.5k per MW of installed generating capacity as a Community Benefit. This is index-linked for the operational life of the project and for Esgair Galed Energy Park, based on current designs of the 26-turbine layout, this works out in the region of £1.2 million per year.
- As well as the Community Benefit Fund, all companies contracted by Bute must ensure that 2% of their contract value is dedicated to social value commitments. There is also a £20,000 pre-consent budget. The intention is that these funds will help to support local groups, existing projects and provide innovative solutions to address local place-based challenges.
- JG gave an example of how the social value commitments from Bute contractors has been used on another energy park project and suggested way of working this could also be considered for organisations that are local to Esgair Galed.
  - Llyn Lort Energy Park consultants have supported a project led by Actif Newtown, who wanted to upgrade and expand a recreation asset. Consultants working on Llyn Lort Energy Park helped to complete a feasibility study to the sum of £12,000, which then enabled the project to bid for larger investment packages from other funders.
- Models of best practice for grant distribution are also considered to use and adapt for the Bute energy parks. Aim is to aware legacy grants over multiple years that can help to ensure projects and schemes can be sustained over time. Evaluation will also be done to ensure funding can be flexible to allow for changes and learnings along the way.
- Bute has a Community Investment Team comprising five people, each focusing on a different theme:
  - Social Mobility
  - Education
  - Cost of Living
  - Recreation and health
  - Environment and culture
- The team attend consultations, meet with local groups and community leaders to understand challenges and priorities across the communities closest to each of the energy parks. This work helps to identify where and how funds could be used.
- A digital social mapping resource is then created to highlight local challenges, groups operating in the local areas and how these elements relate to each other. A map illustrating this is then created.
- JG presented the current version of the map for Esgair Galed to demonstrate what data has been captured to date.
- Early insight from the Esgair Galed mapping shows the importance of community assets in meeting community needs and the challenges faced by rural communities such as access to banks, digital exclusion and affordable housing and healthy places to live in rural areas.

- Place-based challenges change over time and the mapping that Bute is doing will continue to evolve to reflect these changing priorities, and who the grants are awarded to because of these changes.
- This mapping approach is being used right across the Bute portfolio with some areas being more advanced than others due to the stage the energy park is at. Key learnings will be taken from all the projects to help support and inform the others.
- HR explained that although the initial mapping work is done by Bute, there are many opportunities for local organisations and communities to feed into it and make the data more robust and locally meaningful.
- A discussion was had about what is considered as 'local'. JG explained how we start with a 5km boundary for each energy park but through consultations with communities and groups like the CLG, this area may change. For example, if there is a town with key services outside this boundary which benefit the communities closest to the energy park, it could be considered a priority for grants.
- HR requested that the group start helping with the identification of key priorities, particularly those that can be backed up with evidence, in the local area, and projects that could be supported with skills from Bute Energy staff and the companies working on the project.
- If consent is granted for Esgair Galed, a local panel will be formed that will look at these priorities in more detail.
- GM suggested research into digital 'not spots' in the area as this information is easily available. MB countered that no amount of Wi-Fi will make up for the loss of green spaces, wilderness and nature in the area.
- A discussion was had about how the funding that is set aside for development of community energy schemes could be used. It was felt that a community energy scheme to generate energy could be limited but energy efficiency should be considered as that would help to bring people's homes up to standard and result in lower energy bills. JG said it is possible to do a desktop study on community assets and lands to see what small scale technology would be feasible and the yield that asset could produce.
- The fitting of home-based renewable energy products such as solar panels was discussed and it was felt this would be well received.
- DP raised the issue of compensation and how this may help to address local opposition. He also said that one nearby wind farm is offering free electricity to a nearby resident. HR reiterated that Bute's vision of Community Benefit Funding is to leave a legacy through enhancing and creating assets and services rather than financially contributing to residents' energy bills that will have no long-term impact on the community.
- HR explained how the Bute Energy can offer skills to the community, including specialist skills such as helping to write grant applications or on legal matters. HR used to be a physics teacher and has visited schools elsewhere to talk about careers in renewable energy. Staff have also helped with community-based services such as clearing Public Rights of Way. Everyone was asked to think of possible opportunities to make use of the volunteers and to feed their ideas back to Bute.

### **Actions**

- **ALL** to consider key priorities that could be included in the digital mapping and share with Bute  
Deadline – **31 December 2025**
- **JG** to investigate digital ‘not spots’  
Deadline – **31 December 2025**
- **JG** to investigate community energy models and present options at next meeting  
Deadline – **11 February 2026**
- **ALL** to consider how volunteers could be used in the local community and share these ideas with Bute  
Deadline – **31 December 2025**

### **Any Other Business**

No AOB had been requested prior to the meeting so HR asked if there was anything else that people would like to be discussed.

- DP asked if those people who didn’t turn up to meetings would continue to be invited. HR said they would and there isn’t a need to remove people yet and will continue to encourage people to attend.
- GM asked if we could include in the minutes everyone who has been invited. T47 will include in future meeting minutes.
- DP asked if the issue of compensation could be included in the minutes and considered for the next meeting.

### **Actions**

- **T47** to ensure full invite list is included in future meeting minutes  
Deadline – **5 November 2025**
- **HR** to raise issue of compensation internally at Bute Energy and report back accordingly at next meeting – **11 February 2026**

### **Actions**

- **HR** to follow up with local tourism business representative – **05/11/25**
- **JG** to investigate ways CBF could be used for local people – **11/02/26**
- **HR** to investigate compensation for businesses suffering loss of earnings – **11/02/26**
- **ALL** to share details of potential attendees for future meeting with HR or T47 – **28/11/26**
- **HR** to ensure the updated Terms of Reference are uploaded to the CLG section of the project website – **19/11/26**
- **ALL** to consider key priorities that could be included in the digital mapping and share with Bute – **31/12/25**
- **JG** to investigate digital ‘not spots’ – **31/12/25**



- **JG** to investigate community energy models and present options at next meeting – **11/02/26**
- **ALL** to consider how volunteers could be used in the local community and share these ideas with Bute – **31/12/25**
- **T47** to ensure full invite list is included in future meeting minutes – **05/11/25**
- **HR** to raise issue of compensation internally at Bute Energy and report back accordingly at next meeting – **11/02/26**

## Next meeting

**Wednesday 11 February 2026**

Staylittle Community Hall / Teams link to be circulated