

Esgair Galed Community Liaison Group meeting minutes

Wednesday 11 February 2026

Attendance

Present

- Sarah Hackshall (SH) – Local tourism industry representative
- Sali Ann Preston (SP) - Protect Glaslyn and Hafren
- Derrick Pugh (DP) – Trefeglwys Community Council
- Elen Williams (EW) – Cadfarch Community Council / YFC Bro Dyfi / Maldwyn (joined online)
- Sophie Bloomfield (SB) – Esgair Galed Energy Park Associate Project Manager, Bute Energy
- Richard Lawrence (RL) – Recreation and Health Lead, Community Investment Team, Bute Energy
- Huw Rees (HR) – Esgair Galed Energy Park Project Manager, Bute Energy
- Sara Powell-Davies (SPD) – Thirty4/7 Communications (joined online)

Apologies

- Richard Ashton – Llanbrynmair Community Council (apologies sent)
- Maya Bimson (MB) – Protect Glaslyn and Hafren
- Paul Buckley (PB) – Clywedog Community Association – (no longer representative)
- Endaf Meddins (EM) – Esgair Galed landowner
- Cllr Gary Mitchell (GM) – Powys County Council
- Cllr Elwyn Vaughan – Powys County Council

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

- Carla Evans – Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust
- Bryn Jones (BJ) – Llanbrynmair Community Council
- Cllr Glyn Preston – Powys County Council
- Edward Pugh – Trefeglwys Community Council
- Barbara Richter – Llwyngog Community Co-op

Agenda overview

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Apologies

3. Matters arising from last meeting
4. Group membership review
5. Esgair Galed Project Update
6. Update on community energy initiative
7. Recreation and health opportunities
8. Any other business
9. Date and time of next meeting

Discussions and notes

1. Welcome and introductions

Members introduced themselves and confirmed the organisations they represent

- Sophie Bloomfield and Richard Lawrence were welcomed to the group
- Sarah Hackshall joined as the representative for the local tourism industry
- Paul Buckley is no longer the representative for Clywedog Community Association

Actions

- **HR/SB:** Speak to Clywedog Community Association to identify a new representative
Deadline – **31 March 2026**

3. Matters arising from last meeting

Actions from the last meeting were addressed in turn.

- **HR to follow up with local tourism business representative**
 - Complete – Sarah Hackshall representing on the group.
- **JG to investigate ways CBF could be used for local people**
 - This question was framed in the sense that local people felt they wouldn't benefit from aspects the Community Benefit Fund (CBF) could support
 - HR and RL confirmed that the fund could support the following:
 - Community energy projects – 25% of the annual CBF will be allocated towards these projects, aiming to reduce energy bills for people locally whilst also providing the community with an asset they own.
 - Business diversification via grants for local businesses
 - Energy efficiency and bill reduction – e.g. retrofitting properties without central heating / ineffective insulation.
 - The CBF will be administered through a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). Approval is pending with the Charity Commission. A local panel will recommend funding priorities to a Board of Trustees.
 - Timing of funding

- For other Bute Energy projects, 20% of the first year's funding has been released early (approximately 12-18 months after planning permission)
- Concerns were raised about possible impacts on local tourism businesses and whether funding could be used as compensation. It was confirmed that the CBF is not intended as compensation to individual residents or businesses.
- Some members expressed concerns about:
 - Visual and landscape impacts
 - Tourism decline
 - Use of funds outside Staylittle
- Bute Energy explained that the project is still at an early stage, and engagement will continue to shape priorities.
- **HR to investigate compensation for businesses suffering loss of earnings**
 - As above, HR confirmed that compensation won't be offered via the CBF to local businesses
- **ALL to share details of potential attendees for future meeting with HR or T47**
 - None to share
- **HR to ensure the updated Terms of Reference are uploaded to the CLG section of the project website**
 - Minutes and Terms of Reference are available on Bute website here - <https://bute.energy/escgair-galed/overview/local-engagement/>
- **ALL to consider key priorities that could be included in the digital mapping and share with Bute**
 - The following suggestions were made by the group with respect to CBF priorities:
 - Solar panels and energy retrofitting
 - Education and skills for green jobs
 - Electric car charging schemes
 - Defibrillators and maintenance
 - Community resilience and youth retention
 - Tourism support and promotion
 - Involvement in mobile mapping project, led by Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (PAVO)
 - Creation of turbine trail, decoration of turbines

- Social mapping work is underway to identify local priorities.

- **JG to investigate digital ‘not spots’**
 - Bute Community Investment team are aware of regional projects e.g. the Mobile Mapping Project Launched to identify ‘Mobile Not-Spots’ in Mid Wales and are reaching out to PAVO to get engaged with this project.

- **JG to investigate community energy models and present options at next meeting**
 - A feasibility study has been completed for a small-scale renewable energy project near another Bute Energy site after it received planning permission.
 - This work was carried out by Dulas, a supplier from Machynlleth and forms part of Bute Energy’s Social Value Standard.
 - Producing these feasibility reports is a growing priority across the portfolio and Bute team are currently investigating the realistic timeline for when this might be possible for Esgair Galed. HR to provide a further update at the next meeting.

- **ALL to consider how volunteers could be used in the local community and share these ideas with Bute**
 - Bute Energy offered support for community volunteering, such as:
 - Legal advice
 - Grant applications
 - Community maintenance
 - Some community members expressed concern that accepting support could be seen as endorsement of the project.
 - It was clarified that support does not imply agreement or support.

- **T47 to ensure full invite list is included in future meeting minutes**
 - Complete

- **HR to raise issue of compensation internally at Bute Energy and report back accordingly at next meeting**
 - As above, HR confirmed that compensation won’t be offered via the CBF to local residents.

Actions

- **HR:** Provide further details and timelines for Esgair Galed Community Energy feasibility study
Deadline: **20 May 2026**

- **HR / SB:** Speak to PAVO to see if opportunity to link in with mobile mapping study
- Deadline: **31 March 2026**

4. Group membership

Discussion about group membership – standing item on agenda

- The purpose and role of the group were reiterated.
- Members were invited to suggest additional organisations.
- Bute confirmed that CPRW is not currently represented in the CLG.

Actions

- No actions identified

5. Project update

HR provided update since last meeting

- Project Timeline:
 - Statutory consultation has been delayed and is now expected towards the end of 2026.
- The reason for this delay is associated with:
 - Additional environmental constraints have been identified.
 - The planning regime for onshore wind projects is changing. The project may be submitted under either:
 - Developments of National Significance (DNS), or
 - The new Infrastructure Consenting Regime.
- The planning application is now likely to be submitted in 2027.
- The next consultation will be a Pre-Application Consultation.
- Private water supplies will be assessed.

Members asked questions about aviation lighting.

- The site is recognised by the Cambrian Mountains organisation as a Dark Sky Discovery Site, but doesn't hold an International Dark Skies designation
- Aviation lighting requirements are not yet confirmed and mitigation measures will be considered before the next round of consultation.
- Relevant statutory consultees such as MOD (Ministry of Defence) and NATS (National Air Traffic Services) will be involved.

Actions

- **HR:** Update on likely timescales for statutory consultation of project at next meeting
- Deadline - **20 May 2026**
- **HR:** Provide update on aviation lighting
 - Provided as Appendix A at end of this document

6. Update on community energy initiative

This agenda point was addressed when discussing actions from prior meetings. No further discussion or actions identified on this agenda item.

7. Recreation and health opportunities

RL shared examples from other projects

- Improved access for cycling and horse-riding including corrals and hitching rails
- Picnic and community spaces – speaking to local school to see if they can make picnic benches
- Educational and event facilities
- Improved parking and trail infrastructure

Local discussion focused on

- Ideas need to be community-led and shaped by local feedback
- No 'one size fits all' solution and other projects could serve as inspiration
- Safety concerns on Dylife Mountain Road – particularly when weather is bad and road is officially closed but warnings not heeded
- Discussions with Council underway but could be opportunity for Bute Energy, or specialist traffic and transport consultants to help
- No decision made yet on how turbines will be transported to site

Actions

- **EW:** Send details of safety issues and specific locations to Project Team email
Deadline – **28 February 2026**
- **HR / SB:** Report back on possible support
Deadline – **20 May 2026**

8. 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.

- Members requested clearer and shareable information to improve communication locally.
- Concerns were raised about mistrust and delays.
- Bute Energy committed to considering how best to share information at future meetings.

Actions

- **HR / SB / RL:** Provide a written project update ahead of the CLG meeting to provide members with more opportunity to process and understand the update given during the CLG meeting.
Deadline – **31 March 2026**

9. Next meeting

Date: Wednesday 20 May 2026

Time: 18.30

Location: Staylittie Community Hall / Teams link to be circulated

Summary of actions

Action	Lead	Deadline
Identify new representative for Clywedog Community Association	HR / SB	31 March 2026
Follow up with PAVO	HR / SB	31 March 2026
Community energy feasibility details	HR	20 May 2026
Project timing update	HR	20 May 2026
Aviation lighting updates	HR	20 May 2026
Road safety details	EW	28 February 2026
Road safety support updates	HR / SB	20 May 2026
Information sharing ahead of the next meeting	HR / SB / RL	31 March 2026

Appendix A – Aviation Lighting Response

Due to the current stage of development of Esgair Galed, we don't yet have a finalised aviation lighting strategy.

When the site layout is sufficiently developed, we will conduct further work to produce the exact aviation lighting strategy that will be consulted upon in the next round of consultation for the Esgair Galed project.

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Policy Statement on Lighting of Onshore Wind Turbine Generators sets out the below guidance related to light which we would need to comply with in the design:

Lights should be operated by an acceptable control device (e.g., photocell, timer, etc.) adjusted so the lights will be turned on whenever illuminance reaching a vertical surface falls below 500 LUX. The control device should turn the lights off when the illuminance rises to a level of 500 LUX or more.

If the horizontal meteorological visibility in all directions from every wind turbine generator in a group is more than 5 km, the intensity for the light positioned as close as practicable to the top of the fixed structure required to be fitted to any generator in the windfarm and displayed may be reduced to not less than 10% of the minimum peak intensity specified for a light of this type.

The CAA considers every proposed development on a case by case basis, taking into account the specific environment, including the existing developments and lighting as well as benefits of reduced lighting schemes where light pollution is an issue.

Typically speaking, for sites like Esgair Galed, the Aviation Lighting Report will outline the minimum possible number of turbines that need to be lit with 2000cd visible lights. You can see an example Aviation Lighting Report from Llyn Lort's recent Pre-Application Consultation here: <https://bute.energy/llyn-lort/overview/the-project/project-documentation/volume-iii-technical-appendices/volume-iii-chapters-1-to-5-introductory-es-chapters/>

We will be able to demonstrate that these lights are dimmer at lower angles of elevation. Furthermore, as described above, there are time periods where these lights can be dimmed down to 10% intensity. More detail on this will be shared in the next round of public consultation.

From an infrared light perspective, most turbines will likely need infrared lights. This is yet to be confirmed.