



## Torphins Community Council

Serving the Electoral Districts of Torphins, Campfield and Tornaveen  
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Meeting Minutes Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 7:30 pm Learney Hall, Torphins		
Item No.	Description	Owner
1.	<p><b>Present:</b> Peter Argyle (PA) (Chair); Andrew Brazier (AB); Eric Day (ED); Iain Firth (IF); John Lucas (JL); Will Maclean (WM); Liz Moore (LM); Colin Rouse (CR) Stephen Salter (SS)</p> <p><b>In Attendance:</b> David Birch (DB); A. J. Ingram (AI); Jenny McDiarmid (JM); Rod McGovern (RM); Anna Toye (AT)</p> <p><b>Apologies:</b> Andrew Macpherson (AM); Cllr. Geva Blackett (GB); Cllr Sarah Brown; Cllr Anouk Kloppert</p>	
2.	<b>Intimation of noted interests:</b> None	
3.	<b>Confirm adoption of minutes of meeting 2 November 2023 previously by email:</b> Adopted as proposed without changes. Proposed: John Lucas Secoded: Eric Day	TCC
4.	<p><b>New Items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><b>Visit of David Birch, Head Teacher, Torphins School</b> PA welcomed David to the TCC meeting and invited him to speak.</p> <p><b>Inspection Report</b> DB referred to the recent Torphins Primary School Inspection Report. The school was disappointed by the “weak” findings, particularly given the significant and ongoing pace of change. The school is optimistic the re-inspection during first term next year will reflect the robust action plan for quality improvement which is well supported by the strong, motivated, caring school staff. The school is committed to be well above “satisfactory” by then.</p> <p>The inspectors recognised certain strengths including community engagement and support to kids from less advantaged backgrounds. Specific initiatives are progressing. Development of the “inclusion and equity fund” supports children less able to afford more costly activities and who may not qualify for other assistance. Thanks goes to Bread of Life for seed funding and other funding sources are being pursued.</p> <p>The way learning is planned has shifted to increase community focus and to use skills and talents within the community. For example the ongoing initiative supported by Torphins Paths Group members to support the P6 children in the idea of developing a new path at Bridge Crescent to enable a safer route to avoid the many vehicles on that road at school time.</p> <p><b>Parking</b> Regarding the subject of parking at the school, the Parent Council is very concerned and active to improve the dangerous situation. They are challenging poor parking at the school, driving the Junior Road Safety initiative, and managed to get a Police presence on two days recently. The lack of proper road markings</p> </li> </ul>	DB

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	<p><b>New Items (Continued):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><b>Visit of David Birch, Head Teacher, Torphins School (Continued)</b>  outside the school is being pursued with Aberdeenshire Council, Active Travel with Walk and Stride is encouraged, and parents and others are being directed to use the existing formal parking areas. DB asked for questions or comments. LM expressed concern that parents ignore the formal road crossing point at the traffic island. This island and the extension of the south side pavement area to narrow the road, was installed many years ago to provide a safer crossing point, however it seems largely ignored. DB expressed the view the location is not widely recognised as such. TCC feels there is an opportunity to promote the use of this feature.</p> <p><b>Thanks</b>  There were no further comments save for PA to thank DB for his informative and helpful presentation, to wish him and staff well, and to keep in touch to develop community relationships.</p> </li> <li> <p><b>Hill of Fare Wind Farm Application to ECU for Section 36 Consent</b>  PA introduced the discussion of the Hill of Fare Wind Farm application to the ECU for Section 36 consent. Due to an error in the newspaper publication the date for comment has been extended to 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2024, which is a small benefit given the regrettable timing of the application coinciding with the holiday period. TCC have discussed the application, watched developments, engaged with the community, the exhibitions, etc., and have issued two questionnaires, which returned 71% and 75% against the development with 11% in favour. PA then invited comments.  CR said we should submit a letter reflecting the views of the community and bulleting the main reasons for the objection.  IF asked if there is any indication of Aberdeenshire Council thinking, while PA explained an objection by AC would result in a public enquiry, which will be costly, involving experts and a KC. AC has four months and decision would go to Area Committees and ISC or full Council.  LM noted there are three area committees within the areas of the affected CCs. WM wondered if the views of the four CCs within the area of the actual development have any more influence than the views of other CCs, the answer being no.  PA advised the recently approved developments were in very different circumstances from Hill of Fare development.  SS recognised RES have not followed through on Community Benefits offerings at all with the communities, thus failing in their obligations and presenting a reason for objection.</p> <p>PA moved to propose TCC object to the proposal, which would represent the community feedback received. The motion to OBJECT was carried unanimously with all members present at the meeting.</p> <p>Comments from the floor continued with RM concerned about what he considered a low number of community responses, however PA said 75% of respondents were against and “non voters” as always effectively have no vote. WM thought the response rate was actually not untypical and likely above average for any survey.  AI believed the developer picked the time to apply to correspond with the winter and holiday period to limit meeting and other activity, and secondly that many</p> </li> </ul>	TCC

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	<p><b>New Items (Continued):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><b>Hill of Fare Wind Farm Application to ECU for Section 36 Consent</b>  people think they are not listened to anyway and there is no point being active. The application if approved opens the door to applications for more turbines. Responding to the community benefit question IF said it is clear RES are offering £5K per MGW. They claim there is no water supply contamination risk despite little information. The whole area is huge with even the batteries covering up to 5 football pitches. The total groundwork is 150,000 square meters.</p> <p>PA reported the recent meeting of CC Chairpersons was very productive. There is one HoFWIG member on the group. Access routes are a major concern with the preferred route by Elrick and Echt requiring the removal of three roundabouts and the alternative by Raemoir extremely concerning. Given any objection has to be based on material planning considerations the CC Group identified some key elements.</p> <p>Landscape and visual impact (NPF4 and mitigation)  Noise, particularly for near by dwellings  Hydrology, geology, hydrogeology (potential to change geology of the hill)</p> <p>Returning to the open discussion AT believes wind farm developments actually raise major challenges strongly negative to the Green initiative. Is the claimed 50 years turbine life realistic? Is the socio economic benefit real? The detrimental landscape impact outweighs the potential benefits. A thorough analysis of the figures will demonstrate the tenuous benefit argument. The long-term jobs for locals are in fact low grade. The construction and maintenance is simply not environmentally friendly.</p> <p>JM said we should seek out evidence of the actual outcome on benefits in areas of existing developments to prove the weakness. Noted NatureScot have funded peat land restoration on Dunecht Estate in recent past. What is the position of NatureScot now the peat land is to be impacted by this development?  AI wants savings in nighttime lighting to reduce electricity demand.  IF thinks the lack of a connection to the grid, which is yet to be applied for, should mitigate against the development, as the Scottish Government has stated a priority for developments with existing access.  SS recommended a model to assist with submission of comments.</p> <p>PA turned to the HofWIG meeting next Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December at Mid Deeside Church, Torphins, which should be attended if possible. HofWIG have made a huge effort to prepare for the application and raised funds for advertising, to engage a landscape expert and a KC, which will be required for a public enquiry.</p> <p>PA will prepare a press release to report TCCs position to object to the development.  PA will also start to develop the response to be filed.  IF will investigate and report on economic factors and other volunteers are sought to help with other areas.</p> </li> </ul>	<p>PA</p> <p>PA  IF  All TCC</p>
5.	<p><b>Finance Report:</b>  The balance is £11.011.13, represented by TCC general funds £733.25, a negative balance of £389.06 on Festive lights fund to be met when funds received from an awarded Marr Area grant, Hardship Fund £1,396.49; and TORCH funds £9,270.45. Many thanks for the Bread of Life donation of £1,000 toward the new Festive lights.</p>	ED

