

# RHOSSILI COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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## Atlantic Array Offshore Wind Farm Proposal – Rhossili village meeting 4 October 2011

Nearly 50 people attended the meeting to discuss the proposed wind farm in the Bristol Channel. The following is a summary of the reactions, thoughts and opinions of attendees. Some contributions were presented in more detail. Rhossili Community Council's response to the RWE Consultation will incorporate the views of the meeting.

1. About half of the people at the meeting had attended an RWE public exhibition event.
2. There is a lack of profile about the proposed wind farm especially in the media. Is it a conspiracy?
3. People in Port Eynon don't know about the proposal.
4. At the exhibition, RWE said the development was not yet costed.
5. Crown Estate is co-funding the proposal development phase up to Consent.
6. At the exhibition, concern was raised about how many turbines would be used and the coverage area. RWE said they were presenting the worst case. Opinion at the village meeting was that if RWE get consent for a small area, it will be tacit approval for the larger area.
7. At the exhibition, RWE said that 1500 people responded to the exhibition events in Devon, but they were vague about Wales.
8. What is the opinion of the Landmark Trust on Lundy? There is universal opposition on Lundy. What about marine conservation around Lundy? Lundy is England's only statutory Marine Nature Reserve.
9. RWE is a German company, and they are currently under investigation for brow-beating people to take up their power offers.
10. A report by Centrica to the Government in July said that for every £100bn spent on wind power, £10bn would be required for back-up power. Stations would need to be kept on 'spinning reserve' and the carbon dioxide generated by keeping them on standby is more than that saved by wind farms.
11. Wind power is only 30% efficient. Turbines are turned off at 66mph winds. They don't work in winds of less than 15mph. Presenters at the exhibition said the turbines were 70% effective.
12. Independent calculations suggest that, given the distance perspectives between us and Lundy, the visual height of the large turbines will seem over four times the height of Lundy when viewed from Rhossili.
13. The Bristol Channel is one of the most beneficial areas to develop, because of the wind and shallow waters.
14. Government has made up its mind to go with wind power regardless of what we think. Yet we are subsidising the development.
15. Perhaps we should try to influence them to go somewhere else. We are the stewards of Gower, Britain's first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
16. How many people would be put off Gower by the wind farm? How many would come because of the wind farm?
17. How about off the end of Cornwall? Depth of the water would be an issue. Atlantic Array site benefits from relatively shallow water. This affects costs.
18. RWE have a tidal energy project off Anglesey. Tidal power technology is 5-8 years behind wind. Government targets for 2020 mean wind power development is inevitable for the moment.
19. Extensive comments were presented on RWE's Environmental Impact Study, which is very provisional and the baseline studies are selective. There has been no modelling of the impacts before the public consultation. They are underestimating the effects on the environment.
20. The proposed wind farm will affect currents, waves and the circulation of water.
21. In the 'temporary construction phase' of 6 years there will be a lot of disruption of the sea bed. RWE say they will dump soil on the wind farm bed. They say these will be away from conservation sites but they cannot

- control it. There is no assessment of patterns of sediment (consider Port Eynon sands which some blame on dredging). Sands/sediment is non-renewable.
22. The Bristol Channel has one of the most aggressive tidal flows in the world. If sediment is stirred up, the impact could be even worse than models predict.
  23. There will be effects from noise affecting fish and marine mammals. Acoustic deterrents are proposed – even more noise!
  24. Recreation, especially marine, will be affected. The area will become a no-go zone for boating, sailing, diving and fishing.
  25. There will be an effect on commercial fishing, especially on breeding, feeding and migration.
  26. If the whole Crown Estate area is developed, there will be a barrier from South Wales to Devon. 4-5 hour day trips to Ilfracombe will become 12 hours and therefore unviable.
  27. We could object to the marine area covered by Wales licensing.
  28. Scuba diving in Lundy and Pembrokeshire will be affected. There has been no assessment of the mud stirred up. Wildlife at sea could cease in its current form.
  29. There has been no assessment of surf wave patterns, the wind farm may disrupt pure form waves, and cause interference patterns.
  30. There are many unknowns in the RWE study, including the size of the turbines, which are not being selected until after consent.
  31. Sand eel and larvae have been found in large areas and have healthy populations in the Bristol Channel although they are under pressure in the rest of the UK. Some threatened bird species rely on these for their main diet. RSPB may object to the proposal – they are a big organisation.
  32. Could we agitate other groups to act?
  33. We could write to other councils.
  34. We can contact RSPB and others directly ourselves as individuals.
  35. A web page is going to be set up on [www.gowercc.org.uk](http://www.gowercc.org.uk)
  36. We all need to object, not just as one group but as individuals.
  37. What is the Gower Society view? The GS looked at the proposal 6 months ago and responded for the Environmental Impact Study, but has not attended the latest public exhibitions.
  38. Wind farms at sea are preferable to those on land, but not this sea. The proposal will affect tourism in South Wales, on Lundy and in Devon. Many wanted a barrage, many didn't: there are many dilemmas. Wind farm structures may do more good than bad for marine life. Lights will be seen. Sand moves from east to west. Surfing may be affected. Coastlines may be protected with the South West wind. Acknowledgement that modelling has not been done.
  39. The RSPB objected to the barrage. Lundy, North Devon and North Cornwall are on a major migratory route for birds. RSPB should be concerned.
  40. It was pointed out that this proposed development is the only one ringed by land.
  41. A vote at the meeting was declined: everyone wants green energy but not the consequences.
  42. It was felt the wind farm would never pay for itself – in costs or environment. The amount of concrete alone has severe environmental consequences.
  43. The wind farm has a shelf life of 25 years. What about decommissioning? At the exhibition we were told that decommissioning is part of the scheme, and the structures would be reduced to 1 metre from the sea bed at the end. But who would be responsible?
  44. Discussion about the huge change to the quality of the views, in the context of AONBs (here and Devon), National Parks (e.g. Exmoor), tourism etc. The views are being industrialised with the development of a wind factory.
  45. Part of the development requires a marine licence from Welsh Government; can this be used to help?
  46. If people care, then action should be taken – jointly and individually, by contacting MPs and others to intervene.

47. Are we going to get a better montage representing the views from Rhossili? One has been ordered from RWE. We could prepare one ourselves which is correctly scaled to show the visual impact.
48. We should use the Visit Wales iconic vistas of Worms Head, which represent Wales all over the world to attract people to our country.
49. It is essential for Edwina Hart, Martin Caton, Richard Lewis, and Swansea Council to get involved. Also write to Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (Chris Huhne). It was advised that we don't write to the Liberal Democrat leader (?) whose wife is on the Board of RWE.
50. There should be organisations the length and breadth of the Bristol Channel, both north and south, who are concerned. How could we link to them?
51. Can we contact other Councils? RCC will explore.
52. It was suggested that individuals may wish to copy Rhossili Community Council with their responses, to give power to the Council.
53. An action group (Task and Finish) was proposed to work on what should be done, and it was agreed. Brian Kellett offered to start it. Others who want to be involved to stay behind at the end, or give their names to the Clerk.
54. What are the views of the National Trust? Currently, they are against the proposal because of the visual impact; this needs to be understood further.
55. What about the AONB Development Officer, and the Gower Forum?
56. Attendees signed up for email updates.
57. A follow-up meeting was proposed, no dates set yet, but to enable proper response to be sent to RWE before the consultation window closes on 10 November.

If your own comments have been misinterpreted, please contact the Clerk.

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