

VoSBrief

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Strange bedfellows

Big energy, cash and the 'green' lobby



Pictures on this page from www.se-alliance.org.uk

Above left: as the design of its T-shirts suggests, merchandise from the Sustainable Energy Alliance (SEA) aims at encouraging informed debate on complex issues. The group is part funded by npower – see page 18. Above right: an SEA member demonstrating in February 2006 in support of npower’s application to erect 250 turbines off the Llandudno coast. Polar bears make for an emotive icon but the extent of the threat that climate change poses for the species is debated. Claims in Al Gore’s *An Inconvenient Truth* that bears are already starving as Arctic ice recedes have been shown to be spurious.¹ Species numbers have risen in recent years following hunting curbs.

“The Western Isles Council has given its approval, by 18 votes to 8, for the proposed 181 turbine wind farm on the Island. This will be the biggest onshore wind farm in Europe if it is further approved by the Scottish Executive! SEA believes this is excellent news and the building of this wind farm is a clear demonstration that wind power can and must play a vital part in the mix for our energy needs.”

from the Sustainable Energy Alliance web site

Given that the SEA touts wind power as an alternative to nuclear power, that Lewis Wind is a joint venture by nuclear giants AMEC and British Energy (who describe wind and nuclear as “perfect partners” not alternatives), that objections to the Lewis Wind scheme have been lodged by major conservation bodies such as the RSPB, that it most likely falls foul of EU environmental law and has been overwhelmingly rejected time and again by a majority of locals, the SEA’s stance probably represents “New Age Colonialism” at its most extreme.

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- This report is based on reports from contacts and supporters of VIEWS OF SCOTLAND.

Thanks to all who generously passed on their research.

VIEWS OF SCOTLAND alone is responsible for the final text.

If you know of similar events at sites not mentioned here, please let us know.

Front cover: golden eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*. The RSPB and SNH expressed concerns that the recently-approved development at Stacain in Argyll will have “a significant adverse impact” on golden eagles and other species in an area currently being assessed for EU designation on account of its raptor populations. The scheme’s developer, on the other hand, reported that Greenpeace helped it to win public support for the scheme. Nothing in the record suggests that those that Greenpeace had “involved” were made aware of objections lodged by conservation bodies.

We need clean, green answers

WITH MARKETING RESOURCES beyond the dreams of many corporations, let alone community groups, Greenpeace has run several populist campaigns over the years supporting wind-driven power generation.

The political alliance between ‘big energy’ and eco-lobby groups is neither new nor secret. The 2002 marketing deal between Greenpeace and nuclear and coal-firing giant RWE, for example, was controversial but at least open.

The activities revealed here are less public but add an unsavoury dimension to the group’s campaigns.

- On its own behalf or in alliance with leading members, Greenpeace has campaigned to win planning consent for wind-power projects even when these pose a serious risk to protected species and should not proceed.
- At Stacain in Argyll, it presented the developer’s case on a web site without reporting that the scheme would put a population of golden eagles at considerable risk.

In what capacity is unclear but its members campaigned locally in a way that suggested wide public support for the scheme. It was consented and the eagles are now at risk.

- It did the same at Scarweather Sands (South Wales) except that here it at least played its huckster role openly and it was the risk to harbour porpoises that it failed to publicise.

The group says it never benefits financially from its campaigns. This is not disputed but it is shown that supporters of a Greenpeace campaign vehicle, Yes2wind, *have* benefitted financially from campaigning for developers.

They may be at the far end of the renewables trough but feed from it they do.

The report reveals how a prominent Greenpeace member runs a company which conducts ‘street level campaigns’ for developers in a way that makes them appear as a Greenpeace activity or at least Greenpeace sanctioned.

It describes how, when Greenpeace and RWE npower quietly parted ways, a different group, the Sustainable Energy Alliance, moved into the gap and how npower recently admitted to paying it ‘expenses’ to campaign on npower’s behalf.

It suggests that wind-power developers are turning almost as a matter of routine to Greenpeace and other activists for support in forcing through controversial proposals over the heads of those most impacted by them and against the environmental evidence.

Judging by their publicity material, the activists are motivated by the perceived need for an unbridled expansion of wind power to provide what on the one hand they (wrongly) claim is an alternative to nuclear-generated power and on the other its ability to halt or even reverse current changes in climate.

Their avowed aim is to undermine those who legitimately object to development proposals on the clearly-defined grounds that planning law allows.

The conduct reported here reveals an almost colonial contempt for those whose lives will be impacted, often severely, by the developments in question and for those with a passion for, and properly motivated concerns about, areas they seek to defend against industrialisation.

Over the years, eco-lobby groups have sought kudos and funding as champions of the vulnerable. There was even a time when Greenpeace fought to stop corporate bullying. That it should condone, never mind indulge in, the practices described is a sign of political crisis.

Given their reputation as guardians of threatened species and defenders of communities, some will find it hard to believe that Greenpeace or its members, really do what is revealed in this report.

Others will view their conduct not as the work of serious lobbyists but as the antics of a sect.

To retain credibility in planning circles, Greenpeace *must* explain its conduct. VIEWS OF SCOTLAND has called on its director to do so but, so far, without success.

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Location: Berwickshire

Wind farm activists paid by developers

No surprise at latest tactics by company

By Janice Gillie

WINDFARM activists from England were in Eyemouth last week, drumming up support for the proposed Coldingham Moor wind farm on behalf of the development company P M Renewables who admitted paying their expenses to travel to Berwickshire.

"We asked campaigners to speak to local people"

Simon Morton

Coldingham residents' group STAG, who are against the proposed 22 turbine wind farm at Drone Hill, are fighting a bitter war of words against the developers, and the protesters are angry but not surprised at the wind farm company's latest tactics of paying green activists to travel to the area while at the same time claiming that the majority of local people are in favour of the development.

A spokesperson for STAG said: 'We are hardly surprised at the tactics of the developers – after all, this windfarm is worth millions of pounds in profits. Of course P M Renewables will claim that objectors are in the minority – but the facts simply do not bear out their arguments!'

"Windfarm activists from England were in Eyemouth last week drumming up support for the proposed Coldingham Moor wind farm on behalf of the development company PM Renewables who admitted paying their expenses to travel to Berwickshire."

Berwickshire News, 27 Sep 2006 (see page 16).

Windfarm company calls in eco-warrior

EXCLUSIVE

By Robert Brooks

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A WINDFARM developer is paying an eco-warrior from Yorkshire to boost support for a 10-turbine scheme in Northumberland.

Seasoned Greenpeace campaigner Richard Claxton last night confirmed he is working as an agent for Your Energy Ltd.

The company wants to build a renewable power site at Moorhead, near Berwick, but has met with stiff resistance from the local Action Group.

Just three weeks ago, a new protest group sprung up in the area, with Mr Claxton acting as its campaign consultant. And since then, it has managed to secure more than 500 signatures – many on pre-printed letters of support.

Mr Claxton has also persuaded a planning committee meeting in Axwell on Tuesday, where the site plan was due to be approved, it is scheduled on the night to be a major step challenge by MAs against Berwick through Council.



POUNCE TO THE PEOPLE: The wind farm activists, left to right, Benjamin Wordsworth, Ben Wordsworth as the polar bear, Kevin Mooney and Richard Claxton during their campaign at Moorhead in North Yorkshire.

Above: "Seasoned Greenpeace campaigner Richard Claxton last night confirmed he is working as an agent for Your Energy Ltd."

The Journal, 18 December 2006 (see page 12).

Strange Bedfellows

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Developers’ friends in windy places

THE CUTTINGS opposite illustrate how ‘activists’ linked to mainstream green lobby groups have been intervening in the planning process on behalf of developers mainly by soliciting letters of support for wind-power proposals from the public. They do not always inform those whose signatures they seek about any environmental hazards that the projects may pose. It is not known whether ‘greens’ approached developers with the wheeze or the other way round. Observers from around the country have researched the issue and show that the activists:

- tend to live a long way from the sites they target and be ill-informed about the areas in which they campaign;
- know little or nothing about the developments they campaign for, especially about their potential for environmental impact even if these perturb statutory and other authorities;
- lack the local expertise that the public consultation process was designed to harness;
- seek to convince the public that wind power is a viable alternative to nuclear power when it isn’t;
- mislead people into giving formal support for a particular wind-power application under the guise of supporting renewables in general;
- judging by comments on letters forwarded to planning authorities, do not make those who sign them fully aware that they are proffering support for the progress of a specific wind-power planning application.

Stacain – a grim day for eagle conservationists

“The local joiner . . . is not going to make a living because there are a couple of eagles up the glen.”

*Stacain landowner the Duke of Argyll
commenting on the approval*



SNH advised planners that “It is our opinion that the [Stacain] development will have a significant adverse impact upon those species . . .”

Yes2wind campaigned for the scheme without reporting SNH and RSPB objections or provisional site designations aimed at protecting golden eagles.

WIND PROSPECT’S APPLICATION to erect fourteen 3-MW turbines on Allt an Stacain, by the Lochan Shira reservoir due east of Argyll county town Oban, was always going to be controversial.²

Unusually, the strongest objections came from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). It stressed that site access roadworks could damage the Glen Shira Special Area of Conservation (which protects prime oak woodlands), noted that the issue was not considered in the applicant’s Environmental Statement and argued that the risk to local raptor populations had been under-estimated:

Results from the 1982, 1992 and 2003 national golden eagle survey confirm that the nest site at Glen Shira [is] the most productive in Argyll and Bute. The results also confirm that the territory is one of the most productive in Scotland . . .

SNH disagrees with the ES which concludes that the death of a golden eagle every year and the death

of a hen harrier every three years through collision will not have a significant effect upon those populations. It is our opinion that the development will have a significant adverse impact upon those species.

It also outlined how the applicant had not assessed the risk to protected species such as water vole and objected on landscape conservation, cumulative impact and other grounds. SNH invited Wind Prospect to amend its proposal but it did not do so.

The RSPB expanded on the failure properly to assess the risk to eagles, noting that:

. . . certain critical pieces of information are lacking from the Environmental Statement, particularly with regard to appropriate habitat management to mitigate the effects of the wind farm and the assessment of collision risk.

It also remarked on the potential for damage to the prevalent blanket bog habitat:

This habitat type supports a wide range of flora and fauna and is a priority UK BAP habitat . . . Blanket bog is composed of peat, which is a store of carbon. The principal aim of wind farm development is to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and combat global warming. Serious consideration must therefore be given to whether the reduction in CO₂ emissions arising from this development justifies the reduction in carbon storing properties of the peatland.

The area is currently being assessed for designation as an (EU) Special Protection Area to protect its raptors. Under EU law, if an area qualifies for designation then, for planning purposes, it should be treated as if already designated.³

In short, whatever its take on the merits of wind power, strong legal and environmental objections meant that Argyll and Bute Council could not light-mindedly approve the application especially as the planning officer was recommending rejection.

Before going to the planning committee, it was examined by a local ‘area’ committee. It is rare for an area committee to be overruled: its decision was critical if the scheme was to proceed.

The weight of expert opinion suggested that the chances of approval were slim.

Enter Greenpeace. The first public hint of its intervention was an odd appeal on Yes2wind for supporters to attend the area meeting. It argued Wind Prospect’s case, highlighted promised

This announcement, prominently displayed on the Greenpeace-managed Yes2wind web site, supports the notion that the group was directly involved in campaigning for the Stacain application. Director John Sauven has some explaining to do.

community benefit (which planners cannot legally consider), made wildly exaggerated claims about CO₂ savings (see page 22) and told readers that SNH and others had been ‘extensively’ consulted.

- It did not tell readers about the objections from SNH and RSPB or the site’s designation status.

The next most locals knew was at the area meeting. In a discussion about a claimed 800 *pro forma* letters of support for the application, Wind Prospect’s Damien Aubrey told councillors that the company had ‘involved’ Greenpeace in visiting Inveraray and Oban to solicit people to sign them.⁴

Whether it was Greenpeace or members such as Richard Claxton (who works for Wind Prospect elsewhere – see pps 12-15) that were ‘involved’ is not known. What is known is that the letters were produced with the aim of strengthening the developer’s case, that they did not make points germane to a planning decision and that the hearing was told that Greenpeace had solicited them.

It is reasonable to assume that signatories were not told of SNH and RSPB concerns. It is believed that some letters were withdrawn when signatories found they had supported a planning application rather than green issues in general.

In the end, there was a bizarre political lineup; a commercial developer, a land-owning duke and Greenpeace (or its activists) in the true blue corner eye-balling avowed wind-power fans SNH and RSPB in the green. The eco-lobbyists were helping the money boys defeat the conservationists.

Weak as they were, apparent populist support and aristocratic angst about joiners were possibly the strongest counters to the scientific case. It would take an unusually confident or ill-informed committee to overrule the planning officer’s advice.

Which it did, six votes to two. A month later, the full committee, after another discussion about the letters, endorsed the decision seven to five. Stacain was approved.

Given the European dimension, Scottish Ministers will be hard put not to intervene either to persuade

the applicant to withdraw the application or call it in for Public Inquiry. If they don’t, Eurocrats could be feeling ministerial collars sooner rather than later.

Whether Greenpeace ‘involvement’ swung the meetings in Wind Prospect’s favour cannot, of course, be established but there is little doubt that it intervened (directly or by proxy) in a controversial planning application with the intent of securing consent despite the scientific evidence against.

At best, it was culpably ignorant of the important environmental issues at stake, at worst it sought to persuade others improperly to ignore them.

Either way, it may prove to have played a role in putting a population of a protected species at risk.

Scarweather Sands, discussed next, shows that Stacain is not the first time it has done it.

Wind Prospect advertised Yes2wind in a local newsletter in November 2004. The company has since used – and reportedly paid – Greenpeace activists to drum up generic letters of support at other UK sites.

Scarweather Sands

How Greenpeace was silent on the risk to porpoises

With news that the risk to harbour porpoises at the Scarweather Sands off-shore wind-power scheme in South Wales has been taken up by the EU's Environment Commissioner, Greenpeace found itself at public loggerheads with conservationists for the second time in barely a week.⁵

The group had conducted a sustained campaign across South Wales in 2003 and 2004 with the avowed aim of ensuring consent for an electricity generation scheme it favoured. At stake were the effect on the economic prospects of an area reliant on tourism and the risk to EU-protected populations of marine mammals. Greenpeace belittled the first issue and ignored the second.

UNITED UTILITIES APPLIED under Round 1 of the off-shore licences to erect thirty turbines (108 MW) in Swansea Bay in January 2003. The chosen spot, Scarweather Sands, lies about five km off the shore between Port Talbot and Porthcawl.⁶

In March, after objections from Swansea and Bridgend Councils, the Welsh Environment Minister announced a Public Inquiry. Her hints that the decision was a response to 3,100 letters of objection (and nine of support) were disingenuous since, once local authorities objected, an inquiry was mandatory.

It was to start in November. Opposition was inevitable given plans to regenerate Swansea's waterfront, the wider area's reliance on tourism and the affection in which locals and their visitors hold its seascape.

Things were unlikely to go the developers' way without a battle. In the event, objectors and councils had to confront a well-resourced and strident eco-lobby group as well as a big player in the utilities sector. Greenpeace was to show that it was determined to defend a policy which director Stephen Tindale had been influential in formulating in government circles as well as within the group.⁷

Councils had objected to the scheme on the



Porpoises were once much more numerous inshore and appeared on pre-war posters advertising holidays in the south west. Their restoration would be welcome ecologically, culturally and, to the holiday industry at least, commercially.

grounds of its impact on tourism and the risk to development plans. Tourism is key to Porthcawl's economy – up to a million visitors a year spend nearly £60 million in the area.

An August 2003 Bridgend Council survey had suggested that almost ten per cent of them would not return if a wind farm was constructed – a loss of £6 million in income and, inevitably, jobs. In planning terms, this was a powerful argument.

With the inquiry barely three months away, Greenpeace pulled out the stops. A late August press release announced the results of a bank-holiday 'poll' questioning 650 visitors to Porthcawl:

The vast majority (96%) said they would be just as likely or more likely to return to the resort if the turbines go up. Just 4% said they would be less likely to return.

However, conducted as it was by local Greenpeace members, it was worthless despite the Kim il-Sung-style majority. It seemed to be aimed mainly at discrediting Bridgend Council's more sober work:

The results destroy one of the main claims made by groups and politicians opposed to the construction of the wind farm. The campaign against the clean energy development have said that a wind farm would wreck the popular resort's tourist industry.

The next move brought Greenpeace International's *Rainbow Warrior* into Cardiff Bay:

Yesterday's arrival of the 55-metre vessel, famous for her environmental campaigns across the globe, was a show of support for controversial proposals to erect a wind farm three miles off the coast of South Wales at Scarweather Sands.

The distinctive green hull and blue sails were moored within metres of the National Assembly where the power generation plan's future will be decided following a public inquiry in November . . . Greenpeace believes the wind farm would help counter the threat [of global warming] by providing clean, green renewable energy and that it would also boost local tourism.⁸

The publicity stunts were accompanied by street-level campaigns soliciting letters from the public to the inquiry supporting renewable energy in general terms. These were interpreted as explicit support for the Scarweather Sands scheme. As a member noted:

Throughout August, September and into October 2003, Greenpeace volunteers hit the high streets of South Wales, encouraging those who are in favour of wind power and support the proposed wind farm at Scarweather Sands to speak out and say Yes to Wind in Swansea Bay . . . So far, volunteers and campaigners have collected around 3,000 letters of support, and over 6,000 e-postcards have been sent.

The last stunt before the inquiry was a survey of local opinion. Claims that it showed that ‘Support for Scarweather wind farm [is] over three times greater than opposition,’ while strictly correct, were misleading unless qualified. What pollsters ICM found was rather more complex: strongly support 27%; somewhat support 27%; neither support nor oppose 21%; somewhat oppose 6%; strongly oppose 8% and don't know 10%.

As far as the inquiry went, the Greenpeace campaign was a flop. The inspector noted that:

At an early stage, a petition of several thousand objectors was submitted by [objectors' group] SOS Porthcawl. Subsequently, several thousand letters and e-mails of support were submitted, many in the form of standard letters, via Greenpeace . . . In general these letters do not help my considerations as they either express general support or objection to the principle of windfarms . . .⁹

In March 2004, he passed his report to the Welsh Assembly. Its procedure for handling decisions like this is unusual: it appoints a Public Decisions Committee (PDC) of four Assembly Members (AMs) with a remit to consider the report (which is not publicly available), meet in secret (the minutes are not publicly available), decide whether to accept it (the reasons are not publicly available), inform the Assembly, the developer (and even the public) of the decision – and disband.

The report (which was published after the PDC's decision) had found against the development. Rightly, the inspector ignored lobbying by objectors and Greenpeace alike and decided on the evidence before him. The Head of Planning Decisions for the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) recommended ‘that the order should not be made’.

The PDC met in July 2004. After a discussion lasting, according to press rumour, two hours only, it ignored the inspector and consented the project.

Many, including some AMs, saw its decision as capricious and questioned the propriety of a procedure that relied on what was almost a cabal.

Pertinent Greenpeace statements included “Scarweather Sands – no negative environmental impact” (22 July 2003), “Scarweather Sands won't ruin the view” (23 July), “Latest update from Swansea Bay” (25 July, quoted), “Poll shows wind farm could be boon for tourism” (26 Aug), “Rainbow Warrior docks to support wind farm plans” (29 Sept, quoted), “Thousands of letters of support written for Scarweather windfarm” (27 Oct) and “Support for Scarweather wind farm over three times greater than opposition” (3 Nov). In all, there were over 20 prior to or reporting the Assembly go-ahead but none thereafter.

The then Welsh minister, Peter Hain, who had been lobbied by the developer, took a different view. He wrote to the WAG in October and commented in the *Western Mail* that ‘There is worrying nimbyism rife in Wales which seems to object to any project regardless of its value and environmental worth’.

The claim undermined Greenpeace claims about widespread popular support but few AMs seemed to mind that. On 4 November 2004, they voted to accept the PDC decision without debate. The very idea of a debate, some suggested, was improper.

Greenpeace had aimed at pressurising the inquiry (it failed) and the Assembly (it may have succeeded).¹⁰ Whatever, it had the result it wanted even if the UK's first public inquiry into an off-shore wind power project had ended in a bit of a fiasco.

Things were soon to get worse



In September 2004, Greenpeace/Yes2wind reported a stunt at the Welsh Assembly. Pressure was crass but apparently effective: the Assembly voted not to debate the *in camera* decision overturning the inquiry inspector. A crowing Greenpeace has been equally coy about the risk to harbour porpoises.

United Utilities sold half the Scarweather Sands project to Danish developer EnergiE2 in June 2004 and, soon after consent, the other half to E.ON UK. In December 2005, the new partners put the project on hold:

We've taken a close look at the tenders and have reluctantly decided that building Scarweather simply isn't possible under current market conditions.

Developers do publicly blame delays caused by environmental problems on issues of supply. It is not clear if this is the case here but the authorities have yet to resolve issues relating to the harbour porpoise. If Greenpeace was not aware of these issues, it should have been.

After the Assembly rubber-stamped the PDC decision, members of Save Our Sands (Porthcawl), an active and informed objectors' group, gradually resumed their normal lives whatever worries for the future they may have had.

The authorities, meanwhile, had to decide on measures to protect the harbour porpoises known to use Swansea Bay – the project had been consented but still needed a FEPA licence.¹¹

(Under the 1985 Food and Environment Protection Act, activities adding material to or removing it from the sea bed must be licenced by DEFRA as advised by environmental agencies.)

The agency in this case, the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), initially argued that the licence should prohibit construction during the porpoise breeding season. Its outline terms had been noted with approval in the public inquiry report:

The main concern regarding cetaceans was the possible disturbing effect of noise on the harbour porpoise population, particularly during the construction phase. Agreement appears to have been reached with the CCW about a monitoring scheme with only the details of the period when work should not take place to be agreed.¹²

Mindful that a construction freeze would not be viewed favourably by the developer, volunteers from the Porthcawl Environmental Trust (PET) did not share the inspector's optimism.

They first became suspicious when the CCW did not turn up to the inquiry. PET was later to find that, a matter of weeks after the Assembly ratified the PDC decision, the CCW told DEFRA that 'the timing restriction *should be removed completely*'.

It gave the advice following reports from Denmark's National Environmental Research Institute (NERI) on monitoring at two Danish off-shore projects – an 80-turbine scheme at Horns Rev and a 72-turbine scheme at Nystad.

The Horns Rev study suggested that, while porpoises did leave the area during construction, they returned once it was over. The CCW later told PET that it therefore concluded that techniques including 'soft starts, pingers and seal scarers' would allow year-round working while providing 'the best option to give a high standard of protection to marine mammals in Swansea Bay'.¹³

However, as PET later found, the results from Nystad were very different – during the first year of operation, porpoise activity at the site fell to a fifth of pre-construction levels. NERI's scientists explicitly cited construction activity as the probable cause for the failure to return.¹⁴

It was, therefore, reasonable to suggest that different porpoise populations might react differently to disturbance and that mitigation proposals for Scarweather Sands that relied only on the Horns Rev data were not inherently safe.

In August 2004, the Gower Marine Mammals Project reported on a 2002-04 (CCW-funded) survey of harbour porpoises in the vicinity. It noted that Scarweather Sands was among areas 'of particular importance to porpoise'.¹⁵

The Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, (which collaborated with Greenpeace on a 2002 cetacean survey of the West Wales coast) reportedly wrote in 2005 to the WAG to question the competence of the CCW about turn.¹⁶

A February 2006 pre-construction monitoring report which the authors obtained informally (the CCW declining to release it to PET under Environmental Information rules) noted that:

The presence of porpoises with neonate calves in Swansea Bay suggests, therefore, that calving takes place locally . . . calves and female porpoises accompanying neonate animals may be particularly prone to disturbance during wind farm construction.

As harbour porpoises are protected by European Directive, PET raised the matter with the EU's Environment Commission. If DEFRA issues a FEPA licence, its officials could be asking tricky questions.

As evidence mounts about the risks from the scheme to the porpoises, has Greenpeace, whatever its previous excesses, at least supported calls for environmental law to be upheld?

Should conservationists look forward to seeing those distinctive blue sails publicising the plight of the porpoises?

Probably not. Before the Assembly go-ahead, Greenpeace issued over 20 statements or reports on the scheme.

It has issued none since and seems rather to have lost interest. Porthcawl Town Council wrote to it for advice on the porpoise issue but got no reply.

Double standards?

IN MARCH 2006, the government rejected an application to build a wind-power scheme at Whinash in Cumbria. Then Greenpeace director, former New Labour renewable energy special advisor Stephen Tindale, attacked the decision in no uncertain terms:

Any government that wants to expand airports and turn down windfarms is simply not fit to govern. It's hard to believe that the nuclear industry has not played some role in this.

Climate change will ravage beautiful areas like the Lake District. I hope those responsible will be willing to explain to future generations how they played their part in allowing the savage grip of global warming to trash the countryside and claim hundreds of thousands of lives.¹⁷

At 67 MW, Whinash wasn't unduly large and it was certainly smaller than Scarweather Sands' 108 MW.

In December 2005, a year after it had been consented, Scarweather Sands owners E.ON and EnergiE2 announced they were mothballing it for at least two years in the hope that, by 2008, 'market conditions will have changed in our favour'.

We reportedly face what Greenpeace calls a

'climate change emergency'. Driven by this imperative, the group pushed propriety to the limit to get Scarweather Sands consented.

In the light of its slightly manic reaction to Whinash, one would have expected a response of some sort to the E.ON/EnergiE2 announcement only a month or two earlier. There was none.

What we now know about its conduct lends weight to the argument that Greenpeace sees its wind-power role as getting planning consents for the industry by any means necessary.

That done, 'climate change emergencies' seem to become less pressing.

If it *is* serious about getting renewable energy projects up and running, why is it not campaigning for E.ON/EnergiE2 to start work?

It didn't show much concern about market conditions for small businesses in the South Wales tourism industry so why the discreet silence about market conditions for E.ON?

Why are Yes2wind's people not projecting light shows on its head office in Coventry?

Or did Greenpeace know about the porpoises all along and now prefers just to keep quiet?

Dead dolphin delivered to Government's doorstep 
Monday, 7 June 2004



Dead 'bycatch' dolphin encased in ice at DEFRA

A dead dolphin encased in ice was today delivered to the Government's doorstep by Greenpeace, in protest at the numbers of dolphins killed by UK fishing boats and the Government's lack of action to stop the problem.

The dolphin was killed by a trawler, and was recovered recently in the Channel by a Greenpeace ship investigating dolphin deaths caused by fishing fleets. The dolphin bears the tell-tale signs of having been caught in a net, including cut and torn fins and flipper and a broken

Scarweather sands: no negative environmental impact



wind turbines at sunset

A crucial part of getting the go-ahead for any wind power proposal is an assessment of the potential environmental impacts that may occur. By law, the developer has to pay a consultant to assess these impacts. This process is called an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). It covers all stages of the development (building, operation, and decommissioning). The EIA looks at potential ecological effects and also any potential impacts on natural processes like coastal erosion, or on human activities such as fishing.

Above left: in June 2004, Greenpeace dumped a dead dolphin on DEFRA's door "in protest at the numbers of dolphins killed by UK fishing boats and the Government's lack of action . . ."

Above right: much less worthy was a July 2003 claim that "no negative environmental impact" was expected at Scarweather Sands. If the group did not know that harbour porpoises used Swansea Bay and would be impacted by the project, it should have. Not only had it sponsored a survey of the Welsh coast by the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society the year before (Swansea Bay was not included, perhaps because it was the already the subject of a GMMP survey) but the issue had also been discussed in the project's EIA and by the statutory consultee.

Green Campaigns Ltd – the eco-mercenaries



Richard Claxton (above) and Jeff MacDonald (below, with microphone), photographed in Berwick.

RICHARD CLAXTON is a prominent member of Greenpeace. Describing himself as an area networker for its Hull and East Yorkshire branch, he has, for example, assisted in organising ‘Street Campaigning Skillshare and Training Days’ for the group.¹⁸

In May 2005, he formed a limited company called Green Campaigns Ltd. East Yorks design agency Revelator reports the initiative on its web-site:

When demand for the services of volunteer environmental campaigner, Richard Claxton, reached a high level, he decided to establish Green Campaigns Ltd . . .

Revelator managed and produced the entire project – as well as the obvious website design, this extended to brand consultation, stationery design, photography and search-engine optimised copy writing guidance.¹⁹

Claxton describes the venture as offering ‘professional campaigning and public relations services’.

He claims that his clients include wind-power developers E.ON, Wind Prospect, Your Energy, Novera Energy and West Coast Energy.

He has told Newcastle’s *The Journal* at least twice that he is an agent and campaign consultant for Your

Energy, the developer of a proposed scheme at Moorsyde, near Berwick.²⁰

Another live project is Wind Prospect’s Green Rigg scheme in Northumberland, one of three applications considered at a Public Inquiry in January 2008. (The others were Ray Fell and Steadings.)

Evidence before the Inquiry includes letters from Green Campaigns explaining that Claxton, commissioned to solicit support for the scheme and assisted by one John Everett, spent a day in Newcastle and another in Hexham in September 2007 collecting signatures. He returned to Hexham in November for two more days of ‘collecting support letters’.

When Claxton visited Montrose in July 2007 with Jeff MacDonald to solicit support for Novera’s Rossie Moor application (see below), residents questioned them about their relationship to the developer. They described themselves as ‘activists’ working on behalf of Novera.

Novera project manager David Taylor has denied that the company paid ‘professional activists’, stressing that ‘consultation on the scheme had been “extensive” involving all relevant audiences with information stands in Montrose, Arbroath and Brechin the staff of whom identified themselves as working for Novera’.²¹ As, indeed, they did.



When campaigning in Montrose, Claxton and MacDonald described themselves as ‘activists’ working on behalf of Rossie Moor developer Novera.

Montrose? . . . it must be Monday



Top: Rossie Moor. A turbine would be sited just behind the path, immediately adjacent to the Rossie Moor SSSI.

ROSSIE MOOR IN Angus is a good example of how the self-styled ‘activists’ conduct their interventions.

A formal application for a wind-power scheme in the Rossie Moor area was submitted by developer Novera in February 2007.

Local people had overwhelmingly rejected local wind-power proposals early in the planning cycle.²²

In July, the area was targeted by campaigners from the north of England.

Richard Claxton and Jeff MacDonald, both closely associated with Greenpeace, visited three nearby towns to engineer support for the project.

They set up a stall in busy parts of Arbroath, Montrose and Brechin. Covered in a cloth looking like the Saltire, the stall displayed Novera’s publicity material, blank *pro forma* support letters, leaflets from the Sustainable Development Commission and Greenpeace membership forms.

Passers-by were engaged about the need to choose between nuclear power and wind turbines and urged to ‘sign-up to avoid nuclear’ on the *pro forma* letters.

Claxton and MacDonald clearly knew nothing about the area, the location of the site, the proposed scheme or its proximity to the Rossie Moor SSSI and the EU-designated Montrose Basin SPA.

They couldn’t even point in its general direction and, when asked why it was suitable for a wind-power development, answered only that ‘wind turbines are better than nuclear’.

The area is known locally as Rossie Moor but the developer calls the scheme Mountboy after the farm on which it would lie. People were later to admit they had not realised they were signing letters to support turbines on and around the moor.

Many, if not most, of the letters submitted to Angus Council were undated and did not mention the application.

The Council received complaints about these tactics and at least one letter was withdrawn.

This supports the view that people were merely



A support letter for the Rossie Moor application solicited by Claxton and associates in July 2007. The signatory later wrote to Angus Council to say:

. . . I would like my name to be taken off the lists for the ‘Erection of a Wind Farm at Mountboy Rossie Moor’. I hastily signed a sheet offered by people on my local high street. I was thinking that anything that pollutes or destroys the environment could only be made safer . . .

But after hearing residents’ views and also write ups in my local paper I have discovered that maturing trees may have to be felled. And also it would destroy or disrupt the habitat of a few and scarce population of Red Squirrels which occupy this area. Therefore I wish my name to be withdrawn from the petition/application for the development standards committee.

expressing general support for wind power as an alternative to nuclear.

The two men even put the false nuclear-versus-wind argument to children and allowed them to sign up, saying that the children ‘wanted to sign’.

Other Claxton targets

Green Campaigns Limited (est. 2005) offers professional campaigning and public relations services in the fields of environmental protection, environmental sustainability and action to tackle climate change . . . Clients include E.ON, Wind Prospect, Your Energy, Novera Energy, West Coast Energy.

Evidence to the Green Rigg, Ray Fell and Steadings Public Inquiry

THE 'SIGN-UP' tactic was being used by Claxton and others in the north of England as far back as 2004.

- In October 2004, Claxton was one of five Greenpeace members from north and east Yorkshire to make three visits to Selby town centre. They collected over 600 signatures supporting a Wind Prospect proposal for Rusholme. Calling himself a Greenpeace Area Networker, he noted on the group's web site that:

The *Yorkshire Evening Press* will give us coverage so long as we give them a good picture – so the plan for the next visit to Selby is to illustrate the nukes/renewables choice with radiation suits and wind-turbine headgear.

We have met our first target – letters of support now outweigh the nimby objections. Our next step is to demonstrate to councillors and planners alike that there's a huge, silent majority strongly in favour of wind power in the district.²³

In all, 1,200 letters were submitted in favour of the application. It was consented in late 2006.

- In March 2005, he is described by a local paper as a spokesman for Yes2wind at a 'sign-up' event in Doncaster where he collected 300 signatures in support of E.ON's proposed development at Tween Bridge near Thorne.²⁴ This went to Public Inquiry in January 2007.
- Signatures were harvested for Your Energy's proposal for West Hinkley in the West Country at the 2005 Glastonbury Festival and from holiday makers stopping at service areas on the M5.²⁵
- In March 2006, just before planning permission was granted, the *Scunthorpe Telegraph* reported that 393 identical letters had been received in support of an application on the Normanby Estate near Scunthorpe.²⁶ Locals report that 390 letters from outside Lincolnshire swamped the 20 local objections. The developer is Wind Prospect.

- Your Energy applied to erect 14 turbines at Allerdean near Berwick in January 2005. The project, which Your Energy calls Moorsyde, attracted over 200 objections and 12 letters of support, five of these from the landowners and their tenants.

The scheme was cut to 10 turbines and resubmitted in July 2006. This attracted 36 *pro forma* letters of support, believed to be from local Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace members.

After Claxton appeared in the area in November 2006, weeks before the planning meeting, *pro formas* began to flood into the planning authority. From comments written on some collected in Berwick, it is not clear that those who signed were made aware that they were being asked to support a planning application.

- In evidence to a Public Inquiry, Claxton reports how he was hired to solicit support for Wind Prospect's Green Rigg (Northumberland) scheme. He spent two days collecting 265 signatures in Hexham (15 miles away) and Newcastle (even further away) in September 2007 before returning to Hexham in November to collect 305 more.

In July 2007, unidentified campaigners solicited signatures for E.ON's Dungavel proposal in S Lanarkshire. They set up stalls in East Kilbride and Hamilton (about 10 miles from the site) and in Strathaven, six miles away. E.ON is named as a client of Claxton's company.

In October 2007, two men, reportedly Claxton and MacDonald, set up a stall outside Tesco's in Wick (Caithness) seeking support for RDC's Dunbeath application. They were seen again the next day in Thurso.

. . . the great silent majority of my fellow Americans – I ask for your support ²⁷

Newcastle-upon-Tyne's *The Journal* reported that "Seasoned Greenpeace campaigner Richard Claxton, an area networker from its Hull and East Yorkshire branch, was present as a member of the audience [at a public debate on wind power in Berwick on 8 July 2007] along with environmental activist Jeff MacDonald. Mr Claxton claims there is a 'silent majority' in favour of the proposed wind farms."²⁸



Green Campaigns' first (below) and second (above) letters to the Green Rigg Public Inquiry (see page 14).

Does petitioning work?

Given that they neither reflect local opinion nor concern planning issues, do generic letters of support for [or opposition to] a scheme solicited from far and wide affect planning decisions?

Short of interviewing individual planning officers, it is impossible to say. A straw poll of several councils confirms that, while every letter is included in the "for" or "against" tally given to planning committee members, only those discussing material planning issues are seriously considered by planning officers.

However, many planners admit they are struggling under the weight of wind-power applications and, knowingly or not, elected officials are not immune to large numbers.

Claxton seems to have shown foresight in keeping copies of the letters he collected at Newcastle and Hexham in support of the Green Rigg application and submitting them to the Public Inquiry.

Dear [Sir]

Green Rigg Wind Farm: Tynedale Council Appeal Number 20060040

Green Campaigns Limited (est. 2005, Company No. 5441005) offers professional campaigning and public relations services in the fields of environmental protection, environmental sustainability and action to tackle climate change. The company specialises in promoting clean, renewable energy technologies. Clients include E.ON, Wind Prospect, Your Energy, Novera Energy, West Coast Energy and Citizens Advice Bureau. I, Richard Claxton, am the sole employee, although Green Campaigns Ltd frequently works alongside other campaign and public relations professionals (including local representatives) on specific projects.

Working under commission for Wind Prospect and working alongside a fellow environmental campaigner (John Everett), Green Campaigns recently spent two days collecting support letters for the Green Rigg project at information points in Newcastle (14 Sept) and Hexham (15 Sept). For simplicity of reference, the letters have been categorised as 'gold', 'silver' and 'bronze': Gold letters have been totally hand-written at the stall; silver letters are those in which individuals have inserted their own reasons for support on partially pre-printed letters; bronze letters are wholly pre-printed letters which have been endorsed with names, addresses and signatures (a selection of different pre-printed letters were available at the stall and supporters chose according to preference of wording).

In the case of the silver and gold letters, a distinction has been made between 'locals' and visitors.

In order to ensure that people genuinely understood what they were supporting, a range of photomontages and maps were displayed at the stall, together with supplies of Wind Prospect literature. The nature of the proposal was explained clearly to members of the public and considerable time was spent answering questions about the Green Rigg proposal specifically, and wind power generally.

In both locations, the overwhelming majority of those expressing a view were supportive of the proposal and many were very grateful to have found an opportunity to express that support. Many people in Hexham expressed disappointment and concern that the local council does not seem to be representing the views of the electorate.

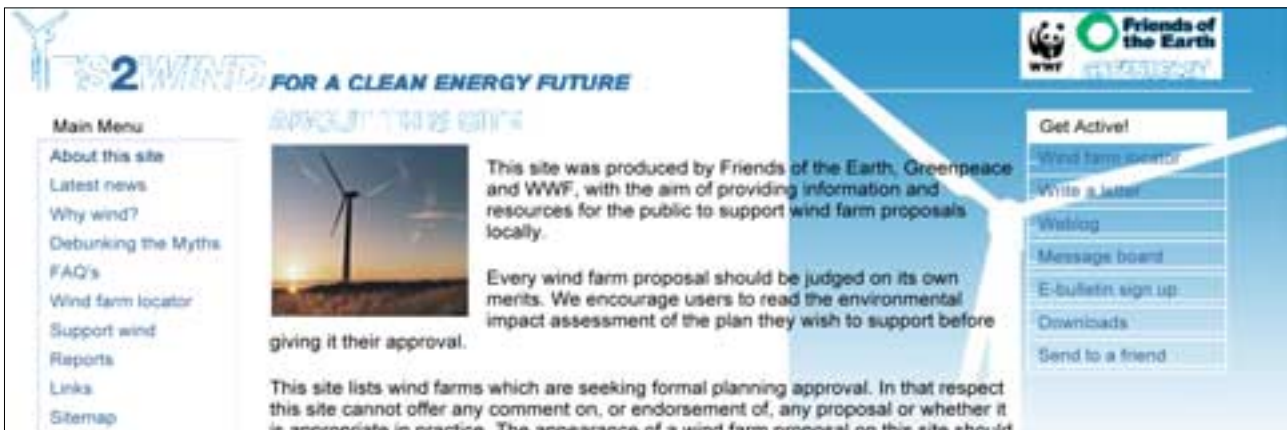
Finally, it is interesting to note the significant number of people who commented on how aesthetically pleasing they find wind turbines (even in the proposed surroundings) and the number of visitors who said that they wouldn't in any way be deterred from visiting the area should the wind farm be built.

If you need any further information, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely, Richard Claxton

Enc: 134 letters collected at Newcastle (original); 134 letters collected at Newcastle (photocopies); 131 letters collected at Hexham (original) 131 letters collected at Hexham (photocopies).

Yes2wind – the cyber-activists



YES2WIND IS NOMINALLY not an organisation but a web site – a cyber-entity produced by Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and WWF to provide ‘information and resources for the public to support wind farm proposals locally’. The contact points are group head offices.

The diligent researcher will find a note that the site is ‘currently managed by Greenpeace’ and that signing up for e-bulletins means receiving Greenpeace reports.

Yes2wind highlights projects it considers in need of support but ‘About this site’ notes that ‘The appearance of a wind farm proposal on the site should not be interpreted as Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace or WWF as [*sic*] having given their support to that individual application’.

Readers are advised to read the environmental impact assessment of any plan before giving it their approval (which is hard if one is approached while shopping and has left it at home) and that pro-wind campaigns using its material do not necessarily have the backing of FoE, WWF or Greenpeace.

The applications, if any, that it does not support are not named.

At the same time, it implies that it is small

opposition groups which are alone preventing the building of wind-power developments for no good reason and that it is vital for those who support ‘clean energy’ to speak out locally in their favour.

In practice, Yes2wind is a movable feast. It is not clear if the project is funded by all three sponsors or only by site manager Greenpeace.

Unusually for the eco-lobby, there are no appeals for funds. Even so, Yes2wind produces placards used by landowners involved in wind-power developments and other publicity material which seems to be used by just about anybody.

The note below, based on a report in the *Berwickshire News*, suggests that it either has an unpublicised organisational structure or, more likely, functions as a campaign vehicle for organisations that do not wish to be openly associated with its activities. (Its role in the Stacain application is examined on pages 5 to 7.)

- Friends of the Earth’s web site features pro-wind campaigns linked to Yes2wind and support calls for specific sites from local FoE groups. The Greenpeace site supports renewable energy in general but does not report on individual sites.

PM RENEWABLES (PMR), the project vehicle for a joint development between PI Renewables and Mistral Invest (owners of Claxton client Your Energy Ltd), is the would-be developer of a site at Coldingham Moor near Berwick,

In September 2007, the company paid expenses for Yes2wind supporters to travel to Eyemouth and run a stall.²⁹ Passers-by were asked to sign letters described as being “in favour of renewable energy”.

These were forwarded as letters of support to Scottish Borders Council. The activists involved told a local resident that they had no particular interest in the Coldingham Moor project as such but that they travelled all over the UK being paid “expenses” by various developers to lobby on their behalf.

The *Berwickshire News* quoted PMR director Simon Morton as saying “. . . it is human nature to be more motivated to take action about something we don't want rather than what we do want. Therefore we decided to do something to demonstrate to the council the vast support of the silent majority”.

Sustainable Energy Alliance - the eco-squaddies



THE SOLE AIM OF the Sustainable Energy Alliance (SEA), formed in May 2005 and based in North Wales, seems to be to secure public support for wind power developments. Its campaigning, which features the belittling of objectors and a low level of debate, has targeted sites in Scotland and England as well as locally.

- After Mansfield District Council opposed the application, the SEA claims on its web site to have secured 3,000 letters of support for npower's Lindhurst development by campaigning in Newark and at the Nottingham Green Festival. SEA supporters attended the Newark and Sherwood planning authority meeting where the application was consented.
- It targeted Infinergy's Lochluichart scheme near Dingwall in the Highlands.

In December 2006, the *Ross-shire Journal* ran a two-week online poll to gauge public reaction to the proposal. In its second week, a 'commanding lead' by opponents was reduced to minus four by a surge of 'pro' votes. The eventual 'pro' majority was 44. The SEA claims credit for this.

Four activists spent five days in Inverness in December and five in Edinburgh in January 2007 collecting over 4,000 signatures on letters supporting the application. Edinburgh is about a five-hour drive from the site.

A local resident reports that as many as 100 supporters of the project were bussed in to attend a public hearing in Garve, outnumbering local objectors by over 16 to one.

The environmentally-controversial application was approved by Highland Council in April 2007 but currently rests with Scottish Ministers.



Did npower sign the chitty for this banner, snapped on the shore opposite the proposed site?



Pictures on this page from www.se-alliance.org.uk/pictures.shtml

An SEA supporter pictured on its web site. The SEA is among those who peddle the illusion that wind power can replace nuclear power. This is a dangerous myth.

Nuclear-powered generators cannot be ramped up and down in line with changes in demand – they supply only what engineers call "base load", meaning that their output levels do not vary.

On the other hand, wind-powered turbines cannot provide base load because their output fluctuates randomly. It is not, with current technology, possible for them to displace nuclear-generated power and it is disingenuous to claim that they can.

Wind power can only participate in generating base load in conjunction with fossil-fuelled (usually coal-fired) plant. The result is a dramatic increase in CO₂ emissions, as happened during recent outages at Scottish nuclear plants.

Npower's engineers could explain all this to SEA activists as its parent, RWE, has several nuclear plants.

- In summer 2007, the group submitted over 800 signatures on letters of support from people in Inverness for private developments near Spittal and Baillie. The sites are in Caithness which is about 100 miles away.³⁰

As reported below, SEA activities are part funded by npower. It is reasonable to ask whether any of the developers of the above schemes also help the group to meet 'expenses'.

If so, is the packing of planning hearings by outsiders on a mission and funded by applicants set to become a feature of the planning process?

SEA's web site features a page called "Support the Alliance". This reports only that the group currently endorses four proposals: the Gwynt-Y-Mor and Rhyl Flats schemes off the Welsh coast and others in Lindhurst, Notts [which is now consented] and Langham in Lincolnshire. All are npower Renewables applications. A possible reason for this partiality recently became clear.

AN OCTOBER 2005 WWF report naming German giant RWE as owner of four of Europe's dirtiest power stations was an embarrassment for Greenpeace, at the time RWE's partner in an electricity selling scheme called 'Juice' (see page 19).

Juice had been launched in a blaze of publicity just as npower applied to build the North Hoyle off-shore project in 2001. However, there was no sign of Greenpeace repeating the hype in late 2005 when npower applied to erect 250 turbines on the coast at Gwynt-Y-Mor by Llandudno. The two organisations had drifted apart.

As the area relies heavily on tourism, the developer was never going to get an easy ride but, if it felt the loss of support, help was at least not too far away.

The company had taken members of the recently-founded Sustainable Energy Alliance on a tour of North Hoyle in August. They must have been impressed – they began to campaign for npower's new proposal almost the moment it was submitted.

They demonstrated outside Conwy Council in February 2006 when the council debated the scheme.

They complained to the Advertising Standards Authority about an advertisement placed by objectors group SOS predicting the project's visual impact.

The complaint was upheld on the advice of an anonymous expert and the SEA vigorously publicised the result. At the time, many wondered why npower did not complain on its own account.

They demonstrated again at Conwy Council's planning committee in December 2007 when it debated npower's offer to fund a "Town Centre Champion" to drum up tourism business.

Their loyalty seemed to warm the heart of npower's Offshore Development Manager, Mark Legerton. He referred to the SEA as 'our good friends'.

How good became clearer at a later meeting when a councillor asked Legerton if npower was paying the SEA. She had to ask a couple of times but the mumbled answer was, 'Yes, we pay expenses'. It seems it's official: RWE funds the SEA.



The SEA's web site (se-alliance.org.uk) notes:

12 December 2007: SEA activists and supporters of the Gwynt-Y-Mor wind farm application were out in numbers at the Conwy County Planning Meeting urging the authority to give the offshore project the green light. One supporter was dressed as King Canute, representing those that are actively opposing the wind farm and think that they can stop the rising sea levels that global warming will bring. Pairs of Wellington boots were also being offered to the nimby's with the message "if you continue to campaign against projects such as Gwynt-Y-Mor, you may find these useful!"

- **Sadly, our photographer could neither spot which demonstrator was (missing the point about) Cnut nor get herself any wellies at npower's expense.**

"Supporters of the proposed Gwynt-Y-Mor wind farm application and SEA activists together made their presence felt at Conwy Council's planning meeting for the offshore wind farm project.

"A six foot hours glass with the words 'Time is running out to stop climate change' and six large placards with supportive comments collected from local people in Llandudno were displayed at the entrance, along with banners and other placards saying 'Bring it on'.

"The meeting lasted almost three hours and, though opinion was divided, a proposal for the application to go to a public enquiry was approved.

"While the outcome is disappointing (it will mean further delays) SEA are committed to fighting for the project until consent is finally given . . ."

Reporting the January 4 meeting on se-alliance.org.uk, SEA was not only (understandably) coy about the funding rumpus but also left its readers unaware that the council had voted narrowly to maintain opposition to the scheme despite npower sweeteners and had called for an investigation of the risk to the Constable Bank, a large marine sand bank by the site.

Appendix 1 – the political background

Those are my principles and, if you don't like them . . . well, I have others

Groucho Marx

Commentators often refer to the relationship between Greenpeace management, the corporate world and the political establishment (especially, in the UK, the Labour Party) as a “revolving door”.³¹ The issue has been examined from a variety of perspectives over the years but the rapport between Greenpeace and the power supply industry is less widely discussed. Many who question “green” lobby links with big business are more reticent where the wind-power sector is concerned. This note seeks to address the weakness and put the group's recent conduct into context.

BRIAN WILSON BECAME New Labour's third energy minister in June 2001. By August, at a now notorious meeting on Lewis, he had handed the island over to wind-power developers with a panache that would have made Cecil Rhodes' eyes water.

Also that August, Greenpeace and UK electricity major Innogy (whose retail wing was npower) jointly announced a marketing scheme called 'Juice' which invited the public to sign up for electricity generated with renewable technology.³² Matthew Spencer of the Greenpeace climate campaign enthused that:

When we hear about ice caps melting and floods increasing, it's easy to think global warming is too big a problem to tackle. Juice offers hope by giving individuals a simple and effective way of doing their bit to fight climate change through their electricity bill.

The group said it wanted to 'kick start' the off-shore wind-power industry and launched the ploy in a flurry of publicity. By August, even Polly Toynbee was plundering press releases to praise it to the skies.

However, its main result was only to entice well-wishers away from other suppliers. Bar finishing touches, the Renewables Obligations schemes, launched in April 2002, were already in place – electricity suppliers would have to meet a growing proportion of demand from renewable sources.

Government, not Greenpeace, had guaranteed (kick-started even) the market for wind power.

Ironically, despite windmills offering hope, many at Greenpeace were still equivocal about on-shore wind. This was to change.

In June 2002, Greenpeace International renewables director Corin Millais quit to head up the European Wind Energy Association. It is not known if he networked with old pals but Greenpeace UK's stance on on-shore wind soon became militantly gung-ho.

Also in June, Brian Wilson consented Innogy's North Hoyle off-shore project. Greenpeace whooped:

Juice is the UK's first non-premium truly green electricity product available to domestic customers . . .

Brent Spar – a precedent?



“The division between us on the Brent Spar depends on how deeply we value our environment and what damage and precedents we find unacceptable.”

Greenpeace director Lord Melchett apologising to Shell for using bad data in its campaign over the rig.³³

In the mid 1990s, disposal of the obsolete Brent Spar oil rig took centre stage in an international controversy over dumping at sea. Greenpeace was prominent in the campaign to stop the practice and, in 1995, its activists occupied the rig to prevent it being scrapped in the Atlantic.

In what became a *cause célèbre*, Greenpeace used Shell's data to describe levels of pollutant on the rig but claimed it held 5,500 tonnes of oil where Shell had estimated 50 tonnes. As it turned out, the oil giant's data were right: the activists had measured key parameters wrongly.

Greenpeace director Lord Peter Melchett had hurriedly to apologise but neither he nor scientists for the group accepted any wider criticism, including suggestions by marine biologists that parts of the rig would have been better left *in situ*.

There was, they stressed, a wider principle at stake to which other issues took second place. The notion was widely debated in scientific circles.

juice[™]
The power of nature

FACT SHEET

Juice - what is it?

Juice is a pioneering green electricity product, set up to support wind power at sea and specifically to back the construction of the UK's first major wind farm at sea - North Hoyle. It was developed by npower in partnership with Greenpeace in 2001, to enable thousands of electricity customers to show their support and demand for clean energy at no extra cost.



Juice, the renewable clean electricity product from npower and Greenpeace, is uniquely available for the same low price as ordinary npower electricity. In some areas of the country Juice is cheaper than the host energy supplier. From Autumn 2003, Juice will be generated entirely from the North Hoyle Offshore Wind Farm off the North Wales coast - the first major offshore wind farm to be built in UK waters. Until North Hoyle becomes operational, Juice is being generated partially by onshore wind and

It's a small world . . .

SPEAKING TO the BBC in May 2007, prominent Greenpeace anti-nuclear activist Jean McSorley noted that "Labour has often castigated the old boy network, the public school tie and so on but they have a similar network. It depends who you know in the unions or ex-Labour ministers".

Englefield adviser Lord Robertson, an MP from 1978 to 1999, was New Labour's Secretary of State for Defence (1997-99) before becoming Secretary General of NATO (1999-2003). He is now a non-exec director of the Weir Group and the Smiths Group, a "strategic advisor" to the Royal Bank of Canada and senior counsellor with the Cohen Group (USA). He was appointed deputy chairman of Cable & Wireless in 2004. He is still with Englefield.

Political colleague Brian Wilson, who consented the North Hoyle project, quit as energy minister in 2003. Appointed Tony Blair's middle east representative, he won a \$300 million Iraq reconstruction contract from Washington for AMEC, co-developer with British Energy of the largest part of the Lewis project, instigated when he was energy minister.³⁴

His interests now include non-exec posts with AMEC's nuclear division, Airtricity (just bought by Scottish & Southern, for whom he arranged lucrative hydro-power subsidies) and the Parkmead Group, a merchant bank "focused in providing advisory services to and investing in the oil, gas and energy sectors".³⁵

Greenpeace appeals to punters to promote off-shore wind power were knocking at an open door through which bankers, despite some initial hesitation, were striding as soon as government guaranteed a market.

members of the public are able to demonstrate their support for cleaner energy in the UK and for North Hoyle in particular.

The public could demonstrate as it saw fit. The backer who undertook to fund Innogy's projects was not *vox pop* in sandals but a prestigious merchant bank, Englefield Capital. Its advisory board included Lord (George) Robertson of Port Ellen.

To complicate things, German nuclear and coal giant RWE had taken over Innogy just before the North Hoyle consent. Answering the inevitable criticism, Greenpeace retorted:

It was disheartening to see the way in which developments between Innogy and RWE were presented as impacting on Juice . . . Greenpeace is not endorsing the company, just the product Juice.³⁶

Not everyone grasped the difference. Some even suggested that, as Greenpeace rank and file in Germany were protesting RWE's notorious lignite-powered generation with commendable gusto, a little support might not go amiss. They were to be disappointed - reports of the German campaign seemed to fade from Greenpeace UK's web site.

In August 2003, an aggressive web-based campaign, Yes2wind, was set up by Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and the World Wildlife Fund. It began to campaign for on-shore wind-power projects like there was no tomorrow - and argued that, if they were not built, there might not be.

North Hoyle was opened in November 2003. In a

broadcast to ceremonies in London and north Wales, prime minister Tony Blair noted that he was:

. . . pleased to celebrate what even a few years ago would have been the most unlikely of partnerships – npower and Greenpeace – and their inauguration of the North Hoyle Offshore Wind Farm.

A blushing Greenpeace chipped in, adding that:

npower and Greenpeace today also announced the creation of the ‘npower Juice Fund’, designed to assist the development of projects in other renewable energy fields such as wave and tidal energy. npower will make an annual contribution of £10 for every customer that stays with npower Juice – up to a maximum of £500,000 per year.

In four years to date, npower reports the scheme as funding two small wave-power research projects.

From 2003 to 2004, Greenpeace UK campaigned for the Scarweather Sands project, discussed above.

In 2004, Greenpeace International published *Sea Wind Europe*, a report from wind-power consultants Garrad Hassan. (The firm had written *Scotland’s Renewable Resource* for the Scottish Executive in 2001.)

It claimed that the growth of off-shore wind could provide up to three million jobs Europe-wide in a market worth hundreds of millions of Euros to the benefit of declining industries and deprived regions (with manufacturing, steel and offshore engineering heading the list), that the electricity would be cheaper than nuclear or coal-fired product.³⁷ And so on.

RWE’s Corporate Responsibility report for 2005 noted that ‘Working in partnership with Greenpeace, RWE npower offers its green electricity tariff, Juice’.

As a Yes2wind co-sponsor, WWF was presumably ruffling feathers when it ‘named and shamed’ RWE in October 2005 as owner of four of the ten worst polluters in all of Europe’s power plants.³⁸

In January 2006, David Cameron signed up to Juice early in his green makeover. (The *Times* wittily described new eco-chum Zak Goldsmith as ‘arm candy’ while the *Telegraph* noted that ‘Not since Mrs Thatcher handbagged her cabinet into attending a seminar on climate change at Number 10 had so many senior Tories been seen doing something green in one place’.)

In the event, not even anti-nuclear stalwart Zak could stop RWE going for new nuclear build or pressing the EU to increase its emissions allowances.

Juice was now a political liability for Greenpeace. Late in 2006, almost five years after the RWE take over, it dropped the scheme and discreetly severed that ‘most unlikely of partnerships’.

There was none of the mutual praisefest of the launch – Greenpeace succour for the generation sector was changing form.

Nice work – if you can get it

A private equity house backed by Paul Myners, the Guardian Media Group chairman, and Sir David Frost, the broadcaster, is about to turn wind into money.

Englefield Capital is set to sell its stake in Zephyr Investments, Britain’s biggest wind energy provider, for more than three times what it paid for the business just three years ago.

In February 2004 Englefield, RWE Innogy and the First Islamic Investment Bank paid around £33m each to buy into Zephyr, the green energy investment fund, which then bought out RWE’s existing wind energy sites and its development portfolio.

It is understood that Englefield has now instructed Lexicon, the corporate finance boutique, to find a buyer for its one-third stake in Zephyr. The company has £330m of debt and is thought to be worth around £650m: Englefield could net more than £100m from a sale.

Sunday Telegraph, 22 April 2004

RWE npower, the UK’s leading wind farm developer and operator, has successfully closed a transaction valued in excess of £165m for the transfer of a further four wind energy projects to Beaufort Wind Limited (BWL) of which it is a part owner. The deal marks the completion of the second phase of the £400m pioneering Zephyr investment fund set up in 2004 . . .

The four wind energy projects sold to BWL have a total capacity of 140 megawatts (MW) and include the UK’s first major offshore wind farm, North Hoyle (60 MW), completed in April 2004.

RWE npower’s retail subsidiary, npower, will maintain its buy-back of the power, [Climate Change] Levy Exemption Certificates and Renewable Obligation Certificates from North Hoyle and Causeymire under long term purchase contracts . . . the green power from North Hoyle will continue to be sold by npower to its Juice customers.

RWE press release, January 2006



“Matthew Thomas, npower’s Juice project leader said: “We believe Juice will help kick-start the renewable energy revolution in the UK.” (August 2001)

Appendix 2 – a letter to to the director of Greenpeace UK

VIEWS OF SCOTLAND wrote to Greenpeace Director John Sauven on 17 December 2007 asking him to explain the group's role in the Stacain approval. The substantive text of the letter is reproduced below. It has not, as yet, received an answer.

AN APPLICATION BY Wind Prospect Ltd to build 14 wind-power turbines at Stacain was considered by the Lorn, Oban & Isles Area Committee of Argyll & Bute Council in Oban on 20 November.

During the meeting, Wind Prospect's Damien Aubrey, questioned about the source of about 800 *pro forma* letters of support, reported that the company had 'involved' Greenpeace in visiting Inveraray and Oban to solicit people to sign the letters.

As Wind Prospect is a regular client of Green Campaigns Ltd, the company set up by Greenpeace activist Richard Claxton that organises street-level PR campaigns for wind-power developers, it is possible that Mr Aubrey simply confused Greenpeace with Green Campaigns Ltd.

However, campaigns in support of wind-power applications are always presented as Greenpeace/Yes2wind ventures and make prominent use of Yes2wind publicity material whether they are funded by developers or run by volunteers. In the public eye, the two are indistinguishable.

This is particularly true in the case of Stacain not just because of Mr Aubrey's comment but because Yes2wind prominently called for support for the application, advertised the time and place of the Oban hearing and, unusually, encouraged its supporters to attend.

In short, Greenpeace explicitly endorsed this controversial proposal and it is to Greenpeace that one turns for answers to the questions that its action raises.

Other environmental issues aside, there are five known golden eagle nests in the vicinity of the site – it is one of the UK's top breeding areas for the species. Ornithological studies predict a kill rate for the site of one eagle every year. Scottish Natural Heritage and the RSPB both objected strongly as a result, suggesting that the application breached the [EU's] Birds Directive. The planning officer recommended that the application be refused.

In the event, the Area Committee voted six to two that the Development Committee should grant it. That was the result for which Greenpeace had lobbied and it is arguable that its agitation might have influenced the decision.

We note that the Yes2wind web site advises visitors

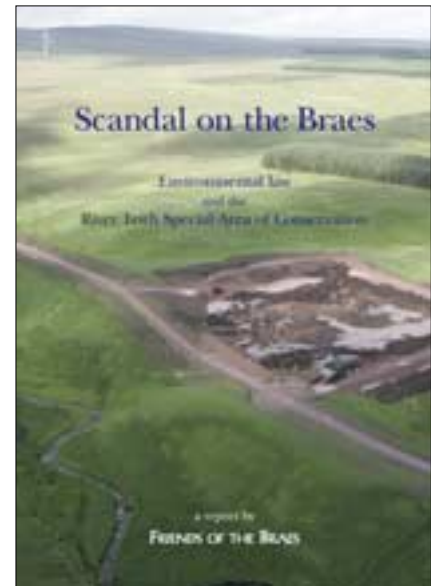
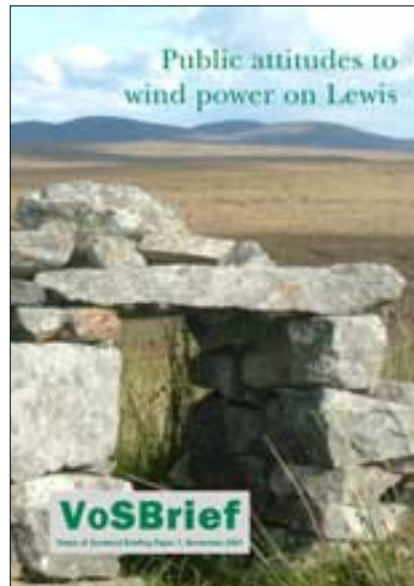
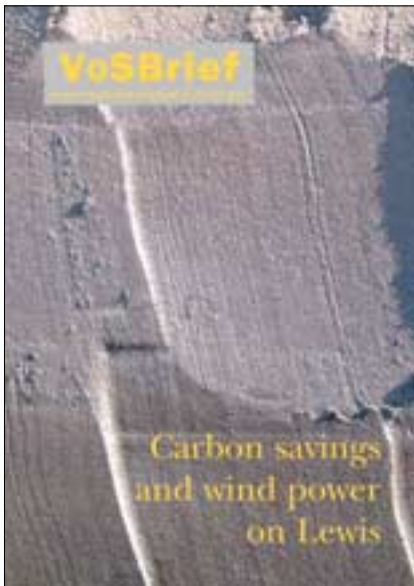
that 'Every wind farm proposal should be judged on its own merits. We encourage users to read the environmental impact assessment of the plan they wish to support before giving it their approval'.

- Did Greenpeace endorse the application in full knowledge of the EIA and of SNH's and RSPB's substantive objections?
 - If so, what led it to decide that the concerns of these bodies could safely be overlooked?
 - If not, did it take any independent expert advice on the environmental merits or possible risks of the proposal?
 - What, other than a late request from the developer to get 'involved', led Greenpeace to concentrate its resources on this application?
 - On what evidence do you base the claim prominently made on the Yes2wind web site that the development would 'prevent approximately 103,000 tonnes of harmful carbon dioxide into the atmosphere every year . . .'
- That suggests a displacement rate of 0.93 tonnes of CO₂ per MWh of power generated (tCO₂/MWh). The value the Carbon Trust, DEFRA, BERR, Ofgem and the Sustainable Development Commission accept as valid for electricity generation mix emissions from now until 2010 is 0.43 tCO₂/MWh.
- This will fall to perhaps as low as 0.3 tCO₂/MWh by 2015 if emissions cutting policies are successful. The Advertising Standards Authority has more than once condemned the use by developers of the coal-firing only figure of 0.86 tCO₂/MWh. It is not clear why different standards should apply to Greenpeace.
- Does Greenpeace (either in this case or generally) pay heed to issues such as landscape value or the possible effects of a wind-power development on tourism employment?
 - If not, does it make this clear to the public when campaigning in favour of an application?
 - Does your opposition to the Planning Bill currently going through its Parliamentary Stages embrace the 'fast-tracking' of wind-power developments as well as the 'fast-tracking' of nuclear-generation plant and large road-building schemes?

Notes

- 1 Dimmock v. Secretary of State for Education, 2007.
 - 2 As the scheme is below the 50 MW capacity threshold, it was determined by the local authority. The Scottish Government was not involved. It is now. The quoted objections can be viewed at Council offices.
 - 3 For quite proper reasons, the process is not widely publicised. The criteria are laid down in EU Directive: a member state cannot benefit materially from any failure to designate qualifying habitat.
 - 4 Of 707 letters submitted, 45 had no proper address. Of the other 662, the signatory's name was unreadable on about 90, 254 were from Argyll and Bute, 144 from the rest of Scotland, 183 from the rest of the UK and 81 from overseas.
 - 5 *Glamorgan Gazette*, Wind farm plans pose big threat to harbour porpoise, 27 Dec 2007.
 - 6 Scarweather Sands was the first UK offshore proposal to go to inquiry. As the scheme could interfere with navigation rights, the application was made under the Transport and Works Act 1992.
 - 7 The author of *Green Tax Reform* (1996) and *In Trust for Tomorrow* (the basis for Labour's 2010/20% CO₂ cuts policy), Tindale was a Labour environment policy adviser (1992-94) and a special adviser to environment minister Michael Meacher (1997-2000). He was also chief policy advisor to Greenpeace (2000-01) before becoming director (2001-07), replacing Lord Melchett (1989-2001), who had been a minister in the Callaghan government.
 - 8 Nothing in the record supports the Porthcawl urban myth that the Rainbow Warrior cut its engines in Cardiff Bay and made only the most public part of its journey under (distinctive blue) sail.
 - 9 *Wild*, Inquiry into proposed offshore windfarm at Scarweather Sands off Port Talbot and Porthcawl, 2004, page 3.
 - 10 Activist Andy Parnel perhaps reflected a general feeling that Greenpeace had played a decisive role when he reported on 4 November 2004 to a members 'blog': 'Well, we've done it! Scarweather Sand Offshore Windfarm is going ahead! Yay! The vote was 2 to 1 in favour in the National Assembly. A particular political party before the vote gave me their assurance that they would vote in favour. How's that for successful lobbying? . . . Recently, I got to do a presentation to councillors and planning officers on the effects of Global Warming. These key people will be deciding whether or not windfarms in the West Midlands area get the go ahead or not for the near future'.
 - 11 Harbour porpoises do not stay permanently in one area but return to regular haunts, especially for breeding. The species is protected under EU and other legislation.
 - 12 *Wild*, op cit, page 11.
 - 13 Countryside Council for Wales, letter to the Porthcawl Environmental Trust, 7 July 2005.
 - 14 See National Environmental Research Institute, Effects of the Nysted Offshore Wind Farm on harbour porpoises, 2005.
 - 15 Watkins & Colley (Gower Marine Mammals Project), Harbour Porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) Occurrence, Carmarthen Bay, Gower Peninsula & Swansea Bay, December 2002-February 2004, pub. August 2004.
 - 16 See www.wdcs.org/dan/publishing.nsf/allweb/C7DC9012005165AA80256C4E003143F9. See also Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, The Conservation of British Cetaceans, 2007.
 - 17 *Greenpeace*, Greenpeace response to government rejection of Whinash windfarm plans, 2 March 2006.
 - 18 www.greenpeaceactive.org.uk/evdetail.php?id=2113
 - 19 www.revelator.co.uk/story.asp?itemid=166&cid=47
 - 20 *The Journal*, Windfarm company calls in eco-warrior, 18 December 2006. See also page 4.
 - 21 *Montrose Review*, Novera/West Coast Energy proposed development at Rossie Moor, 28 November 2007. See also www.persona.com/tyndale/written_support.htm. (It is presumed that Persona's Roger Claxton is unrelated.)
 - 22 A large majority was clearly opposed at a community council meeting in Ferryden in October 2005; Novera held its 2006 exhibition at Inverkeilor, several miles from the site but an informal exit poll noted a majority undecided or opposed; an April 2007 *Montrose Review* poll recorded 66 per cent opposed to local wind-power applications.
 - 23 www.greenpeaceactive.org.uk/detail.php?id=153 (Selby's silent majority says yes to wind).
 - 24 *Goole Courier*, Furry antics support wind farm, 1 March 2005.
 - 25 www.moorsydeactiongroup.org.uk, Claxton watch.
 - 26 *Scunthorpe Telegraph*, Letters supporting windfarm from other regions, 18 March 2006.
 - 27 The phrase was coined by then aspiring US President, Richard Nixon, in 1969. The concept of a 'silent majority' (used to justify imposing unpopular policies without mandate) remains in vogue with the Republican right as well as with Greenpeace activists. The pejorative term nimby was coined by publicists for the US nuclear industry.
 - 28 *The Journal*, Wind farm opponents face new battle front, 9 July 2007.
 - 29 *Berwickshire News*, Wind farm activists paid by developer, 26 September 2007. See also page 4.
 - 30 *John O'Groat Journal*, Local opposition is best against wind farms, 2 November 2007.
 - 31 See e.g. S Beder, 'Through the Revolving Door: From Greenpeace to Big Business'.
 - 32 Innogy was formed in 2001 when National Power was split into International Power and Innogy. (National Wind Power Ltd was an Innogy subsidiary.) German giant RWE bought the group early in 2002.
 - 33 <http://archive.greenpeace.org/comms/brent/sep04.html> (go to www.greenpeace.org.uk before entering the URL).
 - 34 *The Guardian*, Iraq: Amec deal saves UK from embarrassment, 25 March 2004.
 - 35 *Scottish Wind Assessment Project*, Subsidies and Subterfuge, June 2005.
 - 36 www.ethicalconsumer.org/magazine/news/newsarchive.htm#78, August 2002. Thankfully, Greenpeace does not campaign for trains to run on time.
 - 37 Though not, given the subsidy regime, 'too cheap to meter'.
 - 38 WWF listed the 'Dirty Thirty' power plants in October 2005 – see www.wwf.org.uk/news/n_0000001897.asp.
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Other reports on renewable energy issues



Left: two recent VoSBriefs published by VIEWS OF SCOTLAND (www.viewsofscotland.org). The first outlines a carbon audit of the Lewis wind power project and shows how, due to the damage it would inflict on the peat soils on which the various parts of the project would lie, it could be negative. Similar points apply to every peat-based wind 'farm'.

Right: *Scandal on the Braes*, an analysis of the effect of the Braes of Doune wind-power project on the River Teith Special Area for Conservation and an overview of pertinent European legislation (www.friendsofthebraes.org).



On Brian Wilson's watch as energy minister, hydro-power generators were allowed to cut plant capacity to qualify to receive subsidies of about £60 million a year in return for plant 'refurbishment'. Claims of improved productivity are examined in *Subsidies and Subterfuge*, published by the Scottish Wind Assessment Project (www.swap.org.uk).

Who surveys the surveyors? discusses the use and abuse of public opinion surveys in forming UK energy policy. *The politics of peat* describes the October 2003 peat slide at a wind-power scheme in Derrybrien, Co Galway.