DUNSCORE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 12th January 2026 at 7.30pm in the Flying Pig, Dunscore

1. PRESENT: Keith Harvey - Chairperson, Joe Cook – Treasurer, Lesley Ross – Minutes, Carrie McFadzean, Peter McFadzean, Katharine Ellicott, Caroline Waugh, Kate Duffin, Laura Creaney, and Graham Walker and Lesley Ross, Minutes.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Allan Todd – Deputy Chairperson, Andi Martin – Secretary, Brian Johnston and John McIntyre.

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF MEETING OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of Previous Meeting were proposed by Carrie McFadzean and seconded by Laura Creaney.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

a. Thanks from Keith Harvey

Keith welcomed everyone to the meeting including Andrew Smith, Head of Planning and Development at Force 9 Energy who had travelled from outside Glasgow to attend.

b. Presentation Given by Andrew Smith, Force 9 Energy

Andrew provided an introduction to Force 9 Energy, a small development company that has been operating for approximately 23 years. The company works alongside experienced consultants who support its projects. Force 9 Energy has previously developed wind farms, including the Mark Hill Windfarm near Ayr and partnered with EDF Renewables in 2010. The company is now partnering with Vesta, the world's largest wind turbine manufacturer. Vesta is the owner of the current project and will provide investment as well as technical oversight and maintenance.

Project Overview: The development is at a relatively early stage and comprises a two-project design. One project is proposed to have 16 turbines, and the other 17 turbines. The developers are also considering alternatives, including a greater number of smaller turbines or fewer larger turbines. Some construction traffic may pass through Dalmacallan Forest to access the site. The forest is partly owned by Forestry and Land Scotland and partly under private ownership.

Various aspects will be looked at including environmental effects of the development. The proposed development raises notable visual impact considerations, as the turbines may be highly visible within the surrounding landscape, particularly given their siting on elevated ground. While turbines positioned further from key viewpoints would reduce visual prominence, their overall presence remains a material consideration. Photomontages prepared by qualified landscape professionals, together with site-based assessments, inform the evaluation of landscape and visual effects.

Aviation warning lighting will be installed in accordance with UK regulatory requirements. Any structure over 150 metres in height is required to be fitted with aviation lighting, with the type and specification of light prescribed by regulation. The requirement relates to the height of the structure

itself and is not dependent on ground elevation. Typically, approximately four turbines would be fitted with visible aviation lighting at ground level, although this may vary depending on the final wind farm layout. Each turbine must also be fitted with infrared lighting. Two visible lights are installed on each lit turbine: one operating light and one standby unit in the event of failure. The visible lights have a starting intensity of 2,000 candela to ensure visibility to aircraft approaching directly; the intensity reduces in clear conditions and appears significantly less bright from ground level.

Cumulative Effects: In considering site selection, it was noted that there are locations where wind turbine development would be inappropriate, particularly in areas of low-lying ground or where landscape and environmental constraints are significant. Conversely, there are areas considered more suitable in principle. At present, two developments have been scoped to the south of Dunscore. The choice of this area reflects the need for increased electricity generation capacity, together with Scotland's comparatively favourable environmental and wind resource conditions. There is limited suitable land available for this type of development in England, and wind speeds are generally lower. There is no statutory limit on the number of wind farms within a particular area; however, such developments are subject to planning policy and environmental constraints. Wind farms are not permitted in designated areas such as National Parks.

Cultural Heritage Effects: The site and its surroundings include a number of designated heritage assets, such as scheduled monuments, listed buildings and conservation areas, with several such features identified within the wider area. Archaeologists undertake site visits in advance of any wind farm construction to assess each asset and consider the proposed development within the context of its setting. It was noted that this assessment process can at times appear opaque. Historic Environment Scotland is also consulted as part of the evaluation. In addition to cultural heritage, a range of other factors are assessed, including ecology, ornithology, traffic and transport, noise, hydrology (including peat), and projected carbon savings. Survey work requires regular site visits, typically amounting to approximately 36 hours per month.

During the construction phase, there will be temporary traffic disruption; however, this is expected to be short term. The developer will liaise with the Council in relation to the road network and access arrangements. It is anticipated that there will be approximately 16 days of concrete deliveries, with concrete brought in from off-site rather than produced on site. It was suggested that Morrinton Quarry be considered as a potential supplier. A full condition survey of the roads will be undertaken prior to works commencing, and any damage attributable to the development will be repaired. A bond will be put in place with the Council to secure these arrangements. Construction traffic is expected to include forestry wagons, concrete wagons, deliveries of steel for turbine foundations, imported cabling, and the transport of cranes to site. While these activities will increase traffic levels during the build period, the project may also generate short-term employment and economic activity within the local area.

Construction-related noise will be temporary and is assessed as short term. Operational noise from the turbines will be continuous once the wind farm is active. Legally, turbine operations are permitted to produce noise levels up to 3–5 decibels above background levels. Regarding distance and noise management, a buffer of approximately 1.2 km from residential properties is applied. This distance is primarily intended to address visual impact, but it can be adjusted to account for local background noise levels and prevailing wind conditions.

Forestry and Site Clearance: The project will involve selective clearance rather than complete clear-felling across the entire site. Trees within the immediate vicinity of the turbines will be removed to accommodate the final layout and associated infrastructure, extending to the nearest edge of the wind farm plots. Following construction, replanting will take place, with the intention for new growth to eventually reach heights approaching 100 metres, consistent with the height of the turbines.

Policy Environment: The development is guided by Scottish Woodland Policy, which requires that for every tree felled, a replacement must be planted. Despite this, there will still be a net loss of forestry associated with the project. The developer is therefore required to identify suitable land for replanting, which may be within the site boundary or at an alternative location.

Wildlife Protection: Wildlife on the site is protected through a combination of surveys, monitoring, and management measures. Surveys for protected species, including pine martens, birds etc. are carried out prior to and during construction. The project is designed to enhance biodiversity where possible, contributing to habitat improvement and addressing ecological concerns. An Ecological Clerk of Works and qualified ecologists oversee operations on site to ensure that no protected species are harmed during construction or ongoing maintenance. All activities are planned and managed in line with conservation requirements, promoting a net benefit to the local environment.

Project Timeline: The development timeline is detailed on the project webpage. A Public Consultation was held in October 2025, and a further consultation is planned to take place prior to the summer holidays. If Dumfries & Galloway Council objects to the proposal, the decision will proceed to an appeal process rather than requiring a full Public Inquiry.

Application Process and Dates: Once submitted, the application is determined within one year if there are no objections. If objections are raised, the determination period can extend to two years. A second phase of Community Consultation will be undertaken as part of the process. Andrew has confirmed he is happy to return to Dunscore for this consultation.

Project Benefits: The project offers a two-part benefit package, including the potential for community shared ownership in the wind farm. Typically, eligibility is based on Community Council boundaries, meaning that each Community Council may participate within its designated area. It should be noted that community benefits are linked to the operational life of the wind farm. Once the wind farm is decommissioned, these benefits will cease. Additionally, if ownership of the development changes, the provision of community benefits could be altered or cancelled.

Community Benefits – Spending: The community is currently advised on how the benefits can be spent, and this guidance is expected to continue. Opportunities include local energy discount schemes and initiatives to support local businesses, which could provide tangible advantages to the area. A feedback form will be made available on the project website.

Transport and Community Liaison: Transport during construction may temporarily affect local traffic conditions, including potential impacts on speed limits within the village. To help manage these issues, it is recommended that local communities have a representative on the Construction Working Group. This group is intended to be flexible and responsive to emerging issues, ensuring concerns are addressed in a timely manner, although it may not resolve every issue perfectly.

Grid Connection: The project must be ready to connect to the electricity grid as part of its operation. The connection will be made to a local substation, and as the wind farm is expected to generate less than 50, the associated infrastructure at the substation will be relatively small.

Grid Connection Timing: Each wind farm will have its own dedicated grid connection. The exact location of the connection substation has not yet been finalised. One potential connection is currently proposed for 2032, which could serve as the anticipated connection date for the project.

Transmission Infrastructure: Questions were raised regarding whether pylons would pass through the village. Andrew was unable to provide an answer, as he does not have insight into the wider strategic grid planning for the area.

Community Concerns and Shared Ownership: A question was raised about the potential disruption to the community for a project that may not proceed, noting that changes in government policy and strategic energy planning could affect future developments. The project is being funded by Vesta, and a key feature is the potential for a Shared Ownership Opportunity. A significant portion of the development is on forestry land, which presents this opportunity. The developers are happy to receive expressions of interest in shared ownership should the project receive planning consent.

Post-Consent Investment: Following planning consent, the opportunity for community investment is available for up to six months after the completion of construction. Once the wind farm is operational, with turbines installed on the hill, the minimum investment amount is set at £250,000.

Turbine Height and Shadow Flicker: Turbine designs are continually evolving, so exact heights may vary. Shadow flicker—the moving shadows cast by turbine blades—only affects people indoors who are located close to a turbine. The occurrence of shadow flicker can be accurately modelled and predicted. Typically, any effect is limited to around one hour in total, often occurring in short periods of approximately half an hour during the morning or evening.

5. POLICE REPORT

Andi attended the team meeting. It was noted that there were no outstanding issues or topics to carry forward from the last two to three meetings.

6. FINANCIAL UPDATE

Joe gave a financial update as follows:

Dunscore Community Council - £1,449.65
Dunscore Community Council Gardening Group – £729.60
DCC Contingency Fund – £3499.66
Dalswinton Wind Farm - £0.00
Harestanes - £3549.00
Blackcraigs Windfarm - £300.00

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) Volunteers for Easter Egg Hunt

Volunteers needed to help with the Easter Egg Hunt. A stall will be set up, and the Pre-School has offered to assist. A volunteer is also needed to undertake the role of the Easter Bunny.

8. SAVE OUR HILLS CAMPAIGN

Heidi, Andy, and Alan Jones are leading the **Save Our Hills** campaign. An additional meeting has been proposed for February 2026.

9. ENERGY CONTOUR

Energy Contour is awaiting confirmation of a date to attend a meeting. They are scheduled to be invited to the meeting on 23rd February.

10. COMMUNITY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Keith suggested that a letter be sent to the wind farm developers to formally thank them for the financial contributions to the community.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on **Monday 23rd February 2026** at 7.30pm in the Flying Pig, Dunscore.

Keith thanked everyone for attending – the meeting closed at 21.30hrs.