

**The Mid Wales (Powys) Conjoined Public Inquiry into  
5 Windfarm Proposals and a 132kV overhead Electric  
Line Connection**

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**Session Two  
Alliance Proof of Evidence  
Stephen Wood  
Community Surveys**

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## **Community Surveys**

### **Introduction**

The Alliance fully appreciates the fact that Planning Inquiries are not decided by plebiscite. However, survey data is used by the wind industry to claim public support, and these claims have found their way into application documents. The purpose of this evidence is to demonstrate the extent of feelings amongst local residents, and their wish for those feelings to be represented at this Inquiry.

The results obtained show that the majority of local residents are opposed to the applications.

### **1 Background**

- 1.1 In the last few years wind farms and grid connections have acquired a greater profile in public awareness.
- 1.2 Local residents have responded to claims in the media by conducting their own surveys, canvassing opinion on wind farms and grid connections within their own communities. Local initiatives from Welshpool Town and Community Councils generated opinion surveys. Some Community Councils, with internal tensions resulting from Councillors' interests in applications, refused to conduct the surveys. In this case local residents have carried out their own survey.
- 1.3 The majority of the communities represented in this material are in, or closest to SSAB. All the Welsh communities are within Montgomeryshire. One border community in Shropshire has also carried out a survey.
- 1.4 There is a communality in the surveys; the central questions were identical, relating to further wind farm development and grid connections. Variation was in questions on hub location, transport issues, economy and

tourism, and property prices. In some surveys residents were encouraged to express their opinions in the form of comments. The survey results were collated and reported by members of the community. These results are included as an appendix to this evidence.

- 1.5 As can be seen in the appendix, there is variety in the way the results have been reported. This is testament to the fact that no overall authority was exerted in report production. The detail and presentation of the reports display both the commitment and the time available for the task.
- 1.6 The purpose of this evidence is to provide an overview of the community surveys. Whilst the questions may vary slightly, there is sufficient communality to combine results on the substantive issues. With over 6,000 returns there is a considerable weight to these opinions.
- 1.7 Response rates, usually akin to "turn out" in elections, are easy to determine where a Community Council has used their resources to canvass the whole electorate. Where other community groups have carried out the exercise, as they have described in their survey reports, they may not have asked an exhaustive sample of their district, and in some cases, may have included respondents in other Community Council areas not otherwise canvassed. We have therefore counted replies with respect to questionnaires delivered as response rate.
- 1.8 A non response does not necessarily imply indifference. The logistics of collecting or even of delivering proforma or completed questionnaires in rural areas are not easy; some questionnaires may well have gone astray. It goes without saying that those with strong feelings (either way) will be more inclined to participate.

## **2. Overview of Results**

### **2.1 Common Question 1**

Do you support proposals to construct large numbers of wind turbines in the Powys uplands?

Yes 11%      No 89%      Response rate 48%

Whilst the response rate may seem low, it is high in relation to many other survey results, and has to be seen in relation to the effort and logistics involved retrieving completed questionnaires, dependant on the respondent being present. Response rates varied from 16 to 70%. The average, 48% represents a reasonable and reliable participation.

A ratio of 8 to 1 against shows a clear opposition to proposals.

It should be noted that the question relates to generalised proposals rather than specifically the concerns of this Inquiry.

### **2.2 Common Question 2**

Do you approve National Grid's plan to construct a 400kV power line on 160ft pylons from a proposed substation at Cefn Coch which will run 30 miles through to West Felton in Shropshire. [NB this question contains an error, the termination is at Lower Frankton not West Felton; this does not materially change the question]

Yes 8%      No 92%      Response rate 48%

A ratio of 11 to 1 shows a clear opposition to the proposals.

### **2.3 Other concerns**

In five of the communities, transport concerns were expressed by 83% of respondents.

Effects on tourism caused concern for an average of 80% of residents in Carreghofa and Kinnerley.

### **3 Conclusions**

There is no evidence in these results for overwhelming local support for the applications or the resultant infrastructure, in fact the opposite is true.

## **CV of Stephen Wood**

Stephen Wood holds a BSc (Soc Sci) in Psychology and Statistics, a Post-Graduate Certificate of Education and an Advanced Diploma in Mathematical Education. He taught mathematics (including statistics) in the classroom to Oxbridge entrance level for about 17 years before joining Powys County Council as an Advisory Teacher for Mathematics, where he was responsible for mathematics in the county's 13 secondary schools, and several of its primary schools. He served on the Powys County Council Local Education Authority Advisory Team, dealing with in-service training, inspection, assessment and curriculum development. He was a Welsh Joint Education Council examiner, and a Team Leader for SATs.

Along with that, and since taking early retirement, he has been a volunteer for Powys Citizens Advice Bureau for many years, dealing (amongst other things) with Statistical Recording and Analysis, and the generation of Community Profiles for reporting the needs of communities when applying for funding.

He has lived in Cefn Coch (SY21) for 30 years so knows the area well, including from the many hours he has spent driving the length and breadth of Powys in his role with Powys County Council.

COMMUNITY AND PARISH COUNCIL WIND FARM AND PYLON LINE SURVEYS OF RESIDENTS

Community	County	Date of Survey	Electorate	Respondents	Response Rate
Llanbrynmair and district	Montgomery	Aug/Sept 13		160	34%
Llanerfyl	Montgomery		301	211	70%
Adfa and Cefn Coch	Montgomery	Oct 13		307	50%
Llanfair Caereinion	Montgomery	Jan 13	1,373	528	38%
Berriew	Montgomery	Jun 11	390	62	16%
Welshpool	Montgomery	Jun 11	5,207	2,119	41%
Banwy	Montgomery		493	343	70%
Meifod	Montgomery	Jan 13	1,093	632	58%
Llansanfraidd	Montgomery	Jan 13	981	546	56%
Llandysilio	Montgomery	Jan 13	910	344	38%
Carreghofa	Montgomery	Jan 13	476	232	49%
Llandrinio	Montgomery	Jan 13	1,140	503	44%
Kinnerley	Shropshire	Mar 13	227	125	55%
<b>Total</b>				<b>6,112</b>	<b>48%</b>

Other Concerns					
Carreghofa	Montgomery	Jan 13	476	232	49%
Kinnerley	Shropshire	Mar 13	227	125	55%

Other Questions					
Kinnerley	Shropshire	Mar 13	227	125	55%

Against						Concerned about	
Wind Farms		Hub		Pylons		Transport	
143	89%	146	91%	146	91%		
148	70%			175	83%		
305	99%	307	100%	307	100%		
468	89%	459	87%	472	89%	456	86%
60	97%			60	97%		
1,735	82%	1,806	85%	1,800	85%	1,753	83%
247	72%			285	83%		
618	98%	622	98%	622	98%		
539	99%			546	100%		
305	89%			312	91%	290	84%
213	92%			228	98%	222	96%
453	90%	466	93%	441	88%	324	64%
111	89%			116	93%		
	<b>89%</b>		<b>92%</b>		<b>92%</b>		<b>83%</b>

Travel Plan Changes		Tourism/Economy		Property prices	
206	89%	206	89%		
		90	72%	106	85%

Pro renewables ?	
88	70%