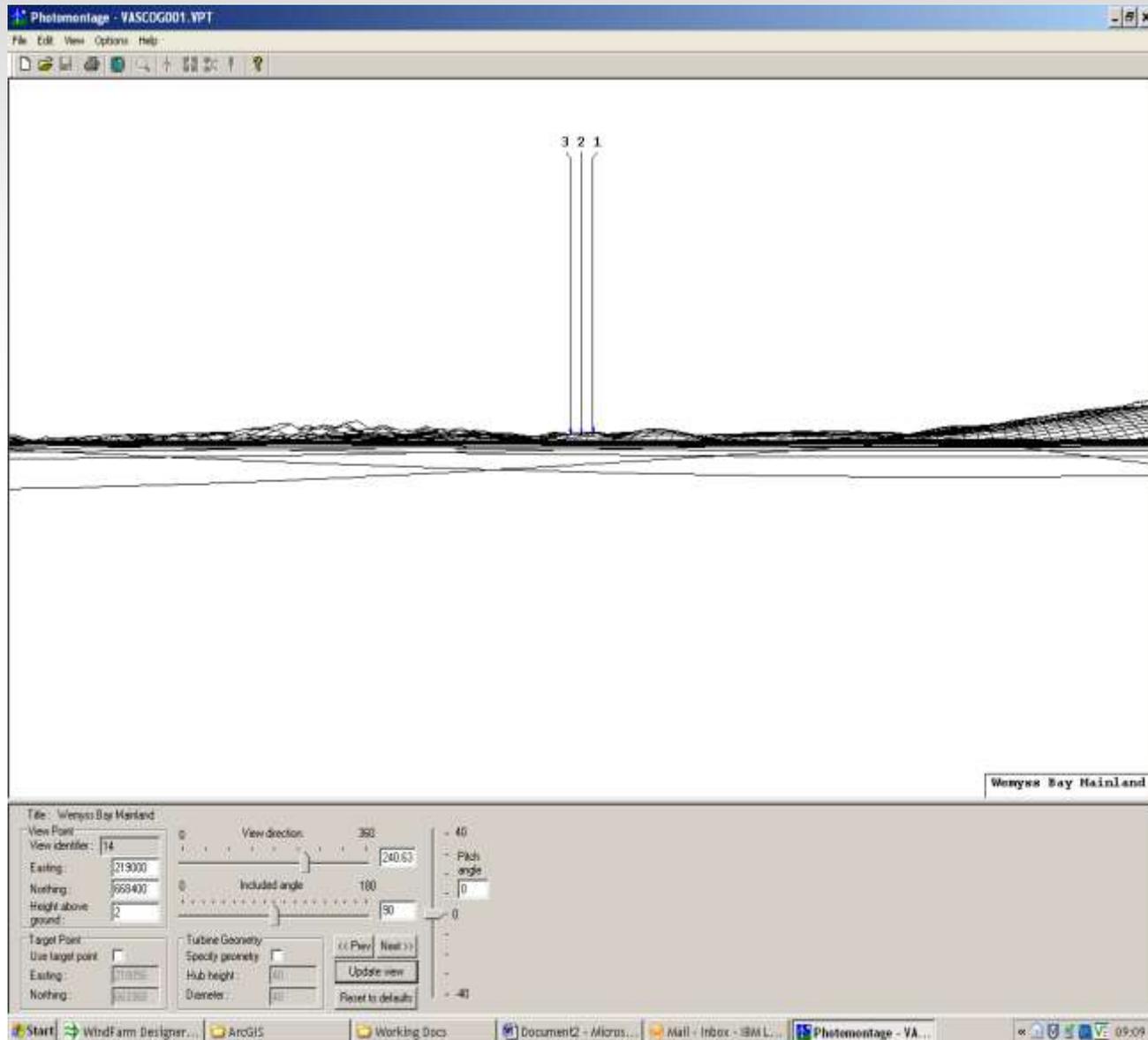


# Ascog Farm - Wind Power



# Why?

- Financial benefit
  - Feed In Tariffs (FITs) and sale of electricity will provide revenue for the farm *and* the community
- Energy policy
  - UK, Scottish and Local government all support green/renewable energy schemes
- Location
  - Ascog Farm (ca.150 acres) is privately owned and has a windy hill top site at about 300ft above sea level

# Background

- Climate change
  - Likely a real risk for future generations, low lying coastal areas (much of Bute included) may be badly affected in the future
- Changing energy mix
  - Kyoto Protocol and other inter-governmental agreements seek to lower global CO<sub>2</sub> output
  - Major push for off-shore wind, more on-shore wind and a mix of other technologies such as tidal
  - Much more renewable capacity will be installed over the coming decades throughout the UK

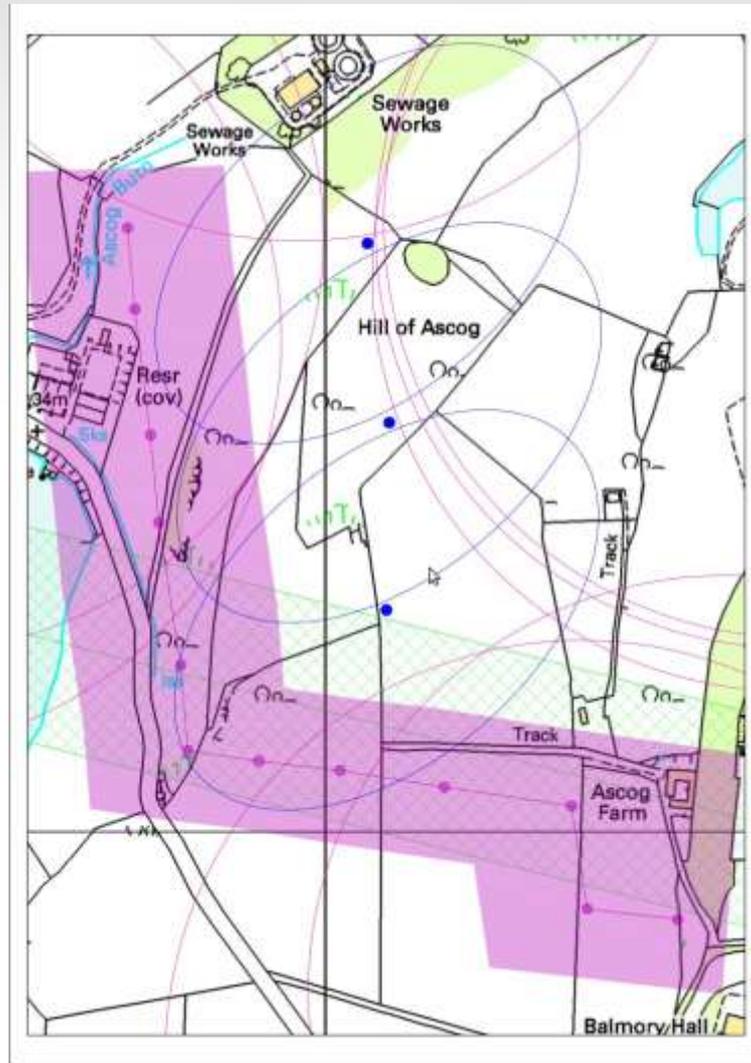
# Where in Britain?



# What does Holyrood think?

- **Discussing the recently announced Agri-Renewables Strategy**  
**Minister Richard Lochhead said**
  - Scotland is currently experiencing a renewables revolution and I want to see farmers, crofters and land managers working with local communities to ensure they grasp the benefits for their businesses and the nation.
  - Farmers and land managers have access to our nation's abundance of natural resources... The renewables revolution offers our farmers and land-based industries the opportunity to cut energy costs, generate new income and contribute to our low carbon future. The list of benefits is endless.

# Where on Bute?



# How?

- Only if an eventual planning application for turbines is made in the light of a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
- A lot has to be considered...

# Considerations

- The detailed Environmental Impact Assessment required by Argyll & Bute Council requires consideration of
  - Alternatives
  - Site selection
  - Cumulative impacts
  - Zones of visual influence
  - Design principles
  - European species
  - Ornithology
  - Ecological assessment
  - Short term impacts
  - Archaeology/heritage resources
  - Tourism/recreation interests
  - Amenity issues
  - Technical issues

# When?

- Research work for the EIA is currently ongoing and should be complete by year end
  - If there are no 'show-stoppers' an application for turbines will be made around then
- There is a *current application* for a temporary meteorological mast to measure wind speed and shear

# Where are we now?

- We have not made an application for wind turbines!
- We currently have an application for a temporary meteorological mast, which will provide
  - More accurate wind speed estimates
  - Possibility of technical fine tuning by turbine maker
- Accurate measurement of the wind resource will inform choice of turbine machinery and hence yields, output and carbon offset benefit

# Reaction!

## 'An avalanche' of concern over wind mast proposal

By Karen Keith  
news@buteman.com

"AN AVALANCHE of objections" has been received to proposals for a 50-metre wind measuring mast on land at Ascog Farm, Bute Community Council was told this week.

Notice of the application to erect the mast for a temporary period of 14 months was published in the June 24 issue of *The Buteman*.

And at its first meeting since that notice, BCC members were told the mast is likely to act as a precursor for the erection of three wind turbines on the site.

Councillor Len Scoullar told the meeting he had been assured by Argyll and Bute Council planning officials that any application for a wind farm would require a

separate environmental impact assessment.

Councillor Robert Macintyre said he had been told by local planning officer David Eagle-sham that the authority had "received an avalanche of objections" to the application.

Ascog resident Sue Dennis, attending the meeting as a member of the public, said: "A resident on the island who is in contact with those planning the mast told us that it is a precursor for potentially three wind turbines.

"It's not with any naivety that we put in our objections - it is a serious matter."

BCC member and retired meteorologist Bill McQueen said: "A standard mast has to be at least 33-metres above ground level, but that is for a permanent structure. For a temporary one, you can get away with a much smaller one of

around 15-metres."

As this issue went to press, 18 representations from members of the public objecting to the proposal had been published on Argyll and Bute Council's website.

Reasons given by the objecting parties include the fear that the mast, and the wind farm which may follow, would "scar the landscape of one of the most beautiful parts of Scotland", would affect "geese that fly directly over this area", "would be severely detrimental to the visual landscape of Bute and be a noise nuisance", "everyone knows that wind turbines produce a ludicrously small amount of energy even on a good day, and have been thrust upon us by a Government ticking the EU boxes", and that it will "have a severe adverse impact on the visual amenity of this area of high scenic value".

One objector, Norman Foster, who lives at Seal Lodge in Ascog, stated in his objection: "Visitors come to Bute for the beauty, wildlife and tranquillity.

"The island, Ascog in particular, has all of this. The 'temporary' mast will totally spoil the area. Once again, 'Newbies' trying to make a quick buck."

We contacted the applicant's agent, Gillane Mallia of Scottish Agricultural College Commercial, for a comment, and were told our request had been forwarded to the applicant for a response, but none had been received by the time this issue went to press.

*\* You can follow the document trail relating to the wind mast application by going to [www.argyll-bute.gov.uk](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk), clicking on 'View Planning Applications and searching for application code 11/00873/PP.*

# What's the worry?

- Concerns people have voiced seem to centre around
  - Wind turbines
- ...and consequently...
  - Noise
  - Birds
  - Visibility
  - Effect on tourism
  - Why we should make money from wind power
- We hope to make an application for turbines but haven't yet!

# Why the worry?

- We are taking the whole project seriously
  - The EIA research currently under way requires scientific studies regarding noise, birds, visibility and so on
  - Impartial evaluation of the work conducted thus far by Community Energy Scotland and the Energy Saving Trust suggest that the site is worth further consideration
  - As a result we have won through to Stage 2 of the CARES process which helps us with the £xxx,xxx figure EIA costs and through which we give community benefit
  - If planning is granted the CARES loan is repaid and 20% of ongoing net profit goes to a community group to be directly administered by them

# What about the benefits?

- Economic benefits have been ignored
  - Substantial capital expenditure (ca.£3.5m) is required at our risk if planning is granted
  - 20% community benefit agreed with no community financial outlay or risk
  - These on-farm and community benefits could last for twenty years!

# Returns on Bute for Bute!

- Ascog Farm
  - Potential development of green/eco-tourism facilities
    - Walk over top of hill?
    - Derelict cottage for green tourist stays?
    - Mountain bike course?
    - Year round skating/curling rink powered by green energy?
  - Land management
    - Green, low carbon ways of doing things (eg grass-seed injection rather than ploughing)
  - Others?
    - Micro brewery? Ice plant? Whin Gin?

# Returns on Bute for Bute!

- Local Community
  - Construction of wind cluster would bring revenue for local companies and contractors
  - Give employment opportunities in future agricultural or diversified developments
  - 20% of the net profit from the operation will go to a local group (TZCB, BCC, others?) to be self-administered and eg to install/give grants for better insulation, solar panels etc. This will reduce CO2 emissions from individual households and save money
- This would happen on Bute for Bute, it wouldn't be going into some central Argyll & Bute pot!

# We are not alone...

