

## **BLACK ISLE COMMUNITY ENERGY (BICE)**

### Roadshow feedback

We have now held two of our three road-show events in the run-up to the ballot. The first, in North Kessock, was severely handicapped by a power cut, but nevertheless a dozen or so hardy souls turned out to see extracts from our feasibility study by torch and candlelight! Fortunately the lights stayed on in Cromarty last week.

There were a few recurring themes, which are addressed below.

### Ecology and wildlife

We've added a [new page about wildlife](#) to our website - based on contributions from three prominent local ecologists who walked across the preferred site of the turbines. Their conclusion was essentially that the general impact on the ecology will be minimal, although further studies are needed to see whether some birds (primarily osprey and red kite) may be at risk, and if so identify ways of avoiding or minimising the danger. On a more constructive note, one suggestion from Cromarty was that some of the money from the scheme should be earmarked for habitat improvement, so we actually see a benefit to Black Isle wildlife.

### Could three turbines lead to more?

In order to lease the land from the Forestry Commission, under the National Forest Land Scheme, a new community trust will need to be formed to take the project forward. This trust will be a membership organisation, open to the whole Black Isle, so residents will, through the new trust, be able to control developments. We think it is extremely unlikely the trust would want to extend the scheme, and in any case, to do so, it would need to lease additional land from the Forestry Commission, so a new ballot would be needed.

### Funding

Most of the funding for the project will be come from loans, but we would also like to offer residents an opportunity to invest - in line with our aim to keep as much of the benefit from the scheme in the local area. More detailed information is available on the [FAQ page of our website](#).

### Rumours

There were also reports of some disturbing rumours that the BICE volunteers are doing this because they'll get fees as directors of the new trust - so, to be clear, any directors of the new trust will receive no remuneration, and BICE volunteers are exactly that, volunteers.

### The ballot

And finally on feedback from these events, a reminder that the ballot is about whether or not the community follows up this unique opportunity to provide a significant income stream and take control of its development. At the North Kessock roadshow, Erik Trefler from Soirbheas Community Trust (Glen Urquhart and Strath Glass) gave his view of the best thing to come from their wind-energy scheme – "the way having an income has inspired local folk to come up with ideas to improve their community. Suddenly it's a more vibrant, go-ahead place!"

### More events

We still have a few opportunities for folk to learn more about the BICE proposals in advance of the ballot. There's a bike ride around the proposed site next Saturday, a visit to

Corrimony wind farm to see and hear the model of turbine proposed in our feasibility study, and one more roadshow event, in Culbokie. Transition Black Isle also has an event coming up which may be of interest - talks and question-time on the subject of our future electricity generation, with experts and politicians in attendance. Check [our events page](#) for details of all these. And if you can't make any of them but have questions, get in touch by e-mail or phone (01349 877822).

#### Facebook

And, for Facebook users, a reminder that we have a page "Yes Black Isle Wind" which also has details of coming events.