

Comment

The election in perspective

THE RELATIVE STRENGTH of the parties in the new Westminster parliament is unlikely to be influenced by Scotland's voters but a number of factors make the election interesting for environmental campaigners.

For example, although renewables policy is devolved to Holyrood, Scottish MPs have input into energy matters at Westminster. The Select Committee on Scottish Affairs' March 2005 report, *Meeting Scotland's Future Energy Needs*, sharply criticised Scotland's general energy policy and Holyrood's renewable policies.

Why is this election different from previous ones?

First, because of Holyrood, Scotland's Westminster seats were cut from 72 in 2001 to 59 in 2005 and boundaries redrawn. This led to an unusually high number of retirements – see box. 'Safe seats' are not always as safe for new candidates.

Second, the Scottish Socialist Party is standing in every constituency and the Green Party is standing in a third, mostly in urban areas. Between them they won ten per cent of Holyrood's seats in 2003. 'First past the post' limits their chances but they will take votes from other parties and give a focus for the protest vote.

Third, it is sometimes forgotten how much influence is exerted on Scottish politics by Labour's Holyrood coalition with the Liberal Democrats – out of all proportion to the latter's 17 seats. It impinges on policy generally and on renewables in particular. Some Scots

Who's quitting now?

Irene Adams (Paisley North), Dr Lynda Clark QC (Edinburgh Pentlands) perhaps to make way for Alistair Darling, Sir Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow), George Foulkes (Airdrie & Shotts), George Galloway (Glasgow Kelvin) constituency abolished, now standing in East London, Sir Archie Kirkwood (Roxburgh & Berwickshire) constituency abolished, expected to sit in the Lords, Helen Liddell (Aberdeen North) tipped to become High Commissioner to Australia, Ernie Ross (Dundee West), Dr Lewis Moonie (Kirkcaldy), Martin O'Neill (Ochil), Malcolm Savidge (Aberdeen North), Bill Tynan (Hamilton South), Brian Wilson (Cunninghame North), Tony Worthington (Clydebank & Milngavie), James Wray (Glasgow Ballieston).

**ACE
diamonds
show heart
in spades –
story,
pictures
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may vote on May 5 in the light of how they perceive the LibDems have performed in power.

Renewables are the responsibility of the Enterprise Department and Labour's deputy minister Lewis Macdonald generally dealt with them in parliament and the wider world. But the Rural Affairs Minister, Liberal Democrat Ross Finnie, popped into the energy portfolio in 2002/3, gave Scotland its 40 per cent renewables target and popped out again (see page six).

Macdonald was replaced as deputy enterprise minister last October but the new man's hegemony was short-lived. His LibDem boss, deputy first minister Jim Wallace, quickly took over as the voice of Scottish renewables.

Liberal Democrat policy on wind power is far more hard-line 'pro' than Labour's and much more 'anti' on nuclear power. It will be interesting to see how the coalition pans out once Labour begins announcing its nuclear-build plans after the election.

Eight new constituencies now correspond with local authority boundaries. This could make it harder for candidates to ignore a local proliferation of wind power applications as an election issue.

Meanwhile, in the run-up to May 5 there is scope for intense lobbying – though not much for tactical voting.

VIEWS OF SCOTLAND'S OFFICE hours are Monday to Thursday afternoons. We ask that you try to phone 01357 440462 during these times.

The cuckoo in the renewables nest – see page four

Who stands where on energy

VoSNews e-mailed the Scottish offices of the main political parties as follows:

'VIEWS OF SCOTLAND represents individuals and groups in Scotland who campaign against the proliferation of wind turbines.

'We are preparing a six-sentence précis of the renewable energy policies of all the major parties to distribute to members and those who feel the issue might have a bearing on how they vote on 5 May.

'Could you help by forwarding something as soon as possible?'

We reproduce here the replies.

Oviously, not everyone's idea of six lines is the same but we have, except for one case, reproduced the replies just as we received them.

The Scottish Socialist Party sent 1200 words. It was already past our deadline and we were able only to squeeze in its comment on wind power.

Except for the Greens, all the parties featured are contesting every Scottish seat bar Springburn where the Speaker is, by tradition, returned unopposed.

Our thanks to the busy party activists who took the time to answer our request.

**The
Scottish
Labour
Party**

**new Labour
new Scotland**

THE LABOUR PARTY'S renewable energy policy is:

- Renewable energy will play an important part in reducing carbon emissions, while also strengthening energy security and improving our industrial competitiveness. In Scotland, Labour is working towards a target for forty per cent of electricity to be supplied by renewables by 2020.
- By 2010 the renewables industry will be provided with support worth around £1 billion a year across the UK to help deliver this expansion. We believe that wind power has a role to play in delivering renewable energy, whilst alternatives are researched. But this policy needs to be handled responsibly, with communities being fully consulted on plans in their area, so that each community will receive the maximum benefit. Other options that we are looking into are offshore wind farms, wave and tidal power.
- Energy efficiency is the cheapest way of cutting carbon emissions, for households and business. We will cut UK carbon emissions by more than 12 million tonnes by 2010 through energy efficiency, including at least 4.2 million tonnes from households, saving businesses and households more than 3 billion each year in energy bills.



**The
Scottish
Green
Party**

THE SCOTTISH GREEN PARTY believes that we need a Strategic Plan of Resources which will:

- Map out where all of our various renewable resources are, including those not usually considered as significant, such as solar and geothermal energy;
- Direct the upgrading of Scotland's electricity network in the short term to maximise input from diverse and dispersed renewable resources to the National Grid, particularly in the Highlands and Islands, and towards a decentralised infrastructure in the longer term;
- Assess the endowment of oil and gas in the UK/Scotland sector, requiring oil companies to make public all discovery records and production forecasts. This will allow the government and the people to accurately assess the impact of declining North Sea production and plan accordingly.

The imperative for change must be made clear.

- Assess constraints on the development of various renewable resources (e.g. military or industrial use, geographical or social factors) and determine how accessible these resources are in the short term, based on current land/marine use;

- Highlight potential changes in land/marine use which will make more renewable resources available in the longer term;
- Address the efficient use of non-electrical energy by domestic, agricultural and industrial users.

We would make changes to the planning system so that, based on the Strategic Plan of Resources (described above), communities in locations likely to be suitable for wind farms have a fair say in their development.

Many areas will have a choice of resources available, for example if forestry is a major local land user, energy from biomass may be more appropriate for some energy generating schemes. Windfarms and other land-based renewable projects will be directed towards 'brownfield' sites wherever practicable.

Peat bogs are increasingly rare habitats and are a major store of carbon. Therefore, we do not support the destruction of peat bogs for fuel, for garden products or to build on-shore windfarms.

I hope this helps you. I appreciate you are just producing a short piece but I feel there is more to renewables than on-shore wind power and wanted to give you a wider feel of our renewable energy policies.

The short answer is that we are for windfarms (and all renewables) but only as part of a strategic Scottish energy policy and only in appropriate places. The most important aspect of energy policy for the SGP is energy efficiency.



**The
Scottish
National
Party**

THE SNP WILL INVEST in a green jobs strategy focused on the development of Scotland's huge renewable energy potential. Scotland has 25 per cent of Europe's wind capacity, 25 per cent of Europe's tidal resource and 10 per cent of its wave power. There are huge, untapped opportunities for offshore energy production.

Indeed, the opportunities offshore for these technologies dwarf the potential for onshore wind development. In many parts of Scotland, large-scale onshore projects encounter understandable public concern and so the overwhelming bulk of wind developments should be offshore like the thousand Megawatt development in the Beatrice oil field. Onshore developments should be community based and have clear community benefits.

We will increase research and development investment in renewable energy technologies to harness this immense

potential and turn it into a profitable and environmentally sustainable industry.

We want Scotland to become the renewable energy centre of Europe. But Westminster doesn't. Instead, the UK government wants to charge electricity generators in the north of Scotland for connecting to the national grid-while they subsidise generators in the south of England for doing the same thing.

That means that if you wanted to build an offshore windfarm in the Moray Firth the government would charge you. But if you wanted to build it on top of Big Ben, they would pay you instead.

Because we are committed to producing energy in a cleaner way, the SNP will oppose any new nuclear power station in Scotland. Although the continued use of nuclear power to produce energy is not sustainable, acceptable or economically viable, Labour seems intent on commissioning new nuclear power stations in Scotland.

With independence, an SNP government will not only ensure that no new nuclear power stations are built in Scotland but that existing facilities are decommissioned at the end of their economic or technical life.



**The
Scottish
Conservative
Party**

SCOTLAND'S STUNNING SCENERY is our number one asset. It is therefore a scandal that we have a Labour and Liberal Democrat-controlled Scottish Executive who are obsessed with destroying our landscape merely to meet entirely arbitrary renewable energy targets.

Though Scottish Conservatives are committed to tackling climate change, we do not believe this should be done at the expense of our countryside.

Scotland is a land rich in potential renewable energy sources, such as wave, solar and tidal power. It is therefore entirely unacceptable that Labour and the Liberal Democrats have chosen the easy option of on-shore wind, which merely plays into the hands of the energy companies.

The Scottish Conservatives are the only party calling for an immediate moratorium on all locally-opposed wind turbines until such time as a comprehensive renewable energy strategy has been developed, encompassing solar, tidal, wave and nuclear power sources as well as limited and appropriate on- and off-shore wind sites.

Only the Conservatives can be trusted to take the action required to save the Scottish landscape from being irreversibly damaged.



**The
Scottish
Liberal
Democrats**

THE SCOTTISH LIBERAL DEMOCRATS believe renewable energy offers a fantastic opportunity for Scotland to cut carbon emissions and create thousands of jobs in manufacturing and other associated industries.

We believe Scotland should make the most of its renewable energy resources, particularly marine energy, which are the best in Europe. In government, the Liberal Democrats introduced the 40 per cent target for generating electricity from renewable sources by 2020 and the Scottish Community Renewables Initiative to ensure more communities benefit from renewable energy developments in their area.

We believe more energy can and should be generated in our urban areas through use of domestic wind turbines, solar panels and biomass. Scotland has the best renewable energy resources in Europe, the first onshore wave energy device, the world's only marine energy testing centre and being developed, the world's first offshore wave and deepwater wind farms.

We are determined to deliver on that potential.



**The
Scottish
Socialist
Party**

WE GENERALLY SUPPORT the expansion of windfarm development whilst recognising that transnational corporations like ScottishPower will always act to maximise profit and can never be accountable to local communities.

A cuckoo in the renewables nest

IN 2000, THE ROYAL COMMISSION on Environmental Pollution published *Energy – the Changing Climate*, a report calling for a 60 per cent cut in UK emissions by 2050.

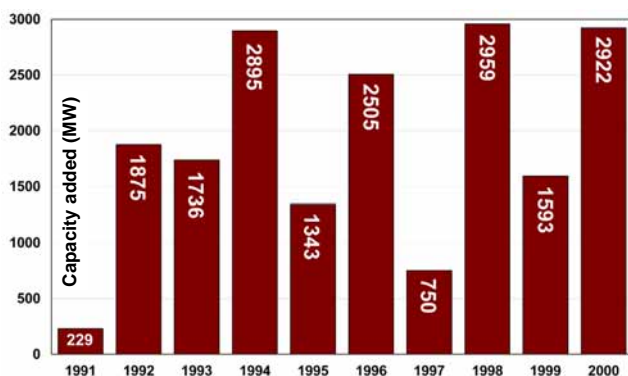
The government formalised its commitment to the Kyoto Protocol through the Utilities Act (2000).¹ It set a notional 10 per cent renewables generation target and began the Renewables Obligation consultation.

Within months, the Scottish Executive revised its Environmental Impact Assessment guidelines to make 'more positive provision' for renewable energy.²

However, March 2001 saw the introduction of the New Electricity Trading Arrangements (NETA) which aimed to curb generators abusing the then-current system to hike prices. The scheme achieved its aim but it also tended to undermine any structured renewables policy.

In June 2001, Ayrshire MP Brian Wilson was appointed UK Energy Minister. Within weeks, he organised a now-infamous meeting at an exclusive Hebridean venue where: 'a high-powered group of people assembled . . . to focus

NETA and the 'Dash-for-Gas'



THE 1990S 'DASH-FOR-GAS' added 19,000 MW of CCGT (modern, gas-fired) capacity to the UK portfolio. Though the lowest emitter of any thermal source, CCGT does not ramp up or down quickly and so cannot back up wind – that needs (dirtier) conventional gas or coal plant. The 'dash' built the equivalent of eight Longannets in ten years.

NETA's harsh discipline trashed prices during 2002 as over-capacity hit. Several stations were mothballed in the slump though some were revived later after winter shortage fears. As NETA also penalises failure to supply, generators raised backup levels using cheap-to-run but dirty coal-fired plant.

Just as a cash-starved industry was losing scope for investment, government forced it to install 'renewable' capacity on a timescale precluding R&D into firm technologies. Though heavy subsidies sweeten the pill, the resultant low-grade generation makes sustainable emissions cuts unlikely.

Coal closures and the gas frenzy did cut UK emissions pre-2000 but the causes were political – lacking roots in social change or innovative renewables technology, they were never going to be sustained.

VoS News has frequently been asked for an outline of the political background to the wind energy crisis. The picture is certainly complex. There are policy statements on climate change, White Papers on energy, reports from OFGEM, and consultations from the DTI on this or that.

There are Scottish equivalents, sometimes identical bar the tartan cover, sometimes not.

Beneath-the-surface spats between Whitehall departments make some issues hard to interpret.

An immature Holyrood polity coloured by a coalition can make the local picture truly Byzantine.

And there is nothing like a failing policy to make paperwork obscure. Here is our first attempt to make sense of the last half-decade in renewables.

If you think we have missed or misinterpreted an important event, please write and say so.

on how renewable energy could be taken forward in the Western Isles and adjacent areas. My own recently-acquired position as energy minister had helped to get some of these people to Lewis ...'³

To link the projects, Wilson proposed the 'Celtic Ring', an interconnector from Lewis down the west coast joining the grid either at British Energy's Ayrshire site or BNFL's plant in Wales.

The idea, shelved on cost grounds, now seems hubristic fantasy but powering London's Underground with windmills on Lewis and Sheffield's trams with more on Shetland was seriously envisaged. Social, environmental or commercial costs were secondary. Nuclear giant British Energy announced the first of the quasi-colonial proposals and equally massive proposals for Lewis, Shetland and elsewhere quickly followed.

British Energy fell victim to the 2002 slump – the claim that it was due to inherent nuclear costs is specious. Sidestepping public debate, Greenpeace legally challenged government loans, seeking to force BE's bankruptcy. The strategy failed – Greenpeace lost the case although BE lost plum assets, staff lost jobs and shareholders lost their money.

Re-nationalised in all but name, BE has since repaid the loans. The recent board-room coup was aimed at stiffening management ranks at nuclear's Lazarus in time for the technology's imminent 'top-down' rehab.

April 2005 saw Greenpeace Brent Spar eco-veteran Simon Reddy speaking as a damp-squib wind apologist in Stornoway. But the group did object to BE/AMEC's proposal – leaving AMEC's man on Lewis 'upset'.

In December 2001, the Scottish Executive published *Scotland's Renewable Resource 2001* (a no-holds-barred renewables prospectus written by wind-power consultants from Bristol) and a ScottishPower/SSE report on

transmission issues. Soon after, it increased its 18%/2010 target to 30%/2020.

Canny observers noticed that UK and Scottish targets and ‘aspirations’ were diverging and that, at least in part, Westminster’s policy was at odds with Holyrood’s. The DTI wanted to implement New Labour orthodoxy with minimum political controversy. Attracted by Scotland’s compliant regime and lax planning system, it looked for grid upgrades to allow gigawatts of Scottish renewable capacity to power the south – while discreetly commissioning research into new nuclear reactors.⁴

The Scottish Executive, on the other hand, saw a possible renewable energy boom and kudos for ‘green’ leadership. Constrained by a Westminster timetable that forced reliance on suspect technologies, it spurned anything other than token research and development. It was convinced that public money was better spent subsidising enterprises to make Scotland competitive in an already crowded, mid-tech market – tower manufacture and component assembly. What had failed in the marine sector would, it seems, work for wind power.

In February 2002, the Westminster Cabinet Office’s Performance and Innovation Unit published its purportedly seminal *Energy Review*. Engineering academe was appalled at the low technical level of a paper which sought primarily to reassure (though not provide meaningful answers to) a Global Warming lobby already elevating climatology into a new Creationism.

Westminster launched its Renewables Obligations and Holyrood enacted an all-but identical Renewables Obligations (Scotland) in April 2002. Possibly to acknowledge hydro’s existing contribution (the reason was never made completely clear), the Scottish Executive quickly raised local targets from ten to 18 per cent.

The Obligations were supply-side schemes which obliged the electricity industry to satisfy a growing

Sunday Times – 16 November 2002

Scottish windmills to power London

THE government plans to turn Scotland into the renewable energy powerhouse of Britain, with dozens of new wind farms and hydroelectric dams supplying London and other English cities with electricity.

Jonathan Leake
Environment Editor

particularly in the Highlands and Islands to help the development of renewable energy” he said

than 3% of power generated. Britain has 75 land-based wind farms, supplying enough power for 349,000 homes and saving an estimated 1.4m tons in carbon dioxide emissions every year. A raft of plans

proportion of demand from authorised ‘renewable’ sources. They created a market through regulatory intervention rather than natural demand and ignored demand-side initiatives such as energy efficiency.

The schemes, which are funded by levying users, offer lucrative prizes to those who achieve escalating targets, impose penalties on those who don’t and seek to protect prices for generators. Suppliers can, and in some cases must, levy their consumers to the tune of what the DTI forecasts will be £1 billion a year by 2010 – *whether or not targets are met*. Complex supervisory and trading mechanisms determine how the levies are distributed amongst suppliers.⁵

That May saw First Minister Jack McConnell open a nacelle assembly and tower manufacturing plant in a former naval yard at Campbeltown on the Mull of Kintyre. It was funded by £9.4 million of taxpayers’ money and £3 million from Danish turbine maker Vestas.

Mr Millais changes trains

In June, Corin Millais quit as Greenpeace director to head the European Wind Energy Association. Within months, Greenpeace stiffened hitherto equivocal support for on-shore wind with aggressive if ill-informed promotions and selected interventions in planning applications. It was

Following its post-Millais Road-to-Damascus wind rethink and the cosy nPower Innogy deal, Greenpeace was caught short by European nuclear giant RWE’s 2003 Innogy takeover. European colleagues had protested RWE’s role in nuclear and lignite-coal generation with gusto: Greenpeace UK avoided awkward questions with traditional air-brushing and now sells RWE product. VoSNews suggests that if there were ever a symbol of wind-power’s commercial unviability, it’s the notion that you should be passing the hat round for nuclear-sector multi-nationals.

You can now buy clean, green electricity through a unique offering from npower and Greenpeace - JUICE. We are working together in partnership to ensure that a new way of generating truly climate friendly electricity really does happen. The project will pioneer wind power at sea in the UK and gives you the opportunity to buy your electricity generated from the natural power of the wind. This new product will help the development of a specific wind farm off the coast of North Wales.

You can now become involved in a real solution to the greatest environmental threat we currently face. It will also to send a clear message to government that there is mass support for clean and non-polluting offshore wind power so that they give this brilliant solution the support and finance it needs.

Holyrood environment minister and LibDem Ross Finnie blinked briefly in the renewables limelight before disappearing into a netfull of angry fishermen. Ineffective enterprise minister Lewis Macdonald was replaced in October 2004 by Brian Wilson associate Allan Wilson. Robust January 2005 press interest brought LibDem Deputy First Minister Jim Wallace (overall Enterprise boss, hitherto quiet on renewables) to the fore. The musical chairs may be down to policy spats given flat-earth LibDem claims that wind will replace nuclear – while London is reviving it.

already marketing nPower Innogy's up-coming off-shore site.

In August, days before the Johannesburg Earth Summit, Ross Finnie published *Scotland's Renewable Energy Potential – Beyond 2010*. It outlined proposals to increase Scotland's renewables target to 40 per cent by 2020.

As Christmas 2002 approached, AMEC's Lewis project manager and BWEA chair David Still was seconded to the DTI as 'renewables advisor' for two-years. He is still there, advising his third Energy Minister.

The DTI and DEFRA published a long-awaited energy White Paper, *Our energy future - creating a low carbon economy* in February 2003. Seen by most as a fudge, it repeated stock renewables and hydrogen homilies, dodged the dangers of imported gas and 'kept the nuclear option open'.⁶

By March, Ross Finnie's *Securing A Renewable Future* confirmed Scotland's renewables targets at (an 'aspirational') 40 per cent although it was never clear what was forty per cent of what. Whether sloppy or sleight-of-hand, it has bedevilled colleagues ever since.⁷

In August, Jim Wallace opened Cambrian Engineering's tower manufacturing plant in another former naval yard, Arnish by Stornoway, amidst wide publicity. The project enjoyed £8 million of public backing.

Early 2003 thus saw Energy Minister Brian Wilson at his zenith with the Scottish Executive dancing to his tune, wind power's top man setting policy at the DTI, Greenpeace and chums 'on message' and the press generally supportive. Things looked good.

Wilson quit as minister in June.

David Still chaired the British Wind Energy Association from 1998 to 2003. His DTI ministers include Brian Wilson (June 2001- June 2003), Stephen Timms (quit Sept 2004) and Mike O'Brien (still in post). Wilson later became Blair's sidekick touting Iraq and Afghanistan contracts for AMEC and others. (VoSNews Vol 2 No 1)

Spring 2003 to summer 2004 were certainly heady days for wind, a hurly-burly of papers and conferences, speeches and proposals. Turbine makers promising jobs by the bucket-load rubbed shoulders with landscape architects, hard-nosed businessmen found they had been 'green' all along as Green MSPs dropped yesterday's campaigns and rushed to flatter; rookie graduates became

Environmental Assessors overnight while parvenu landlords phoned north asking if there were pylons on the estate; conservationists sang hymns of praises to a technology they knew nothing about, eco-bureaucrats pressed the flesh with nuclear's nobs, by then on the turbine trail, and usually sober scientists, forgetting data, opted for belief.

Developers for one 70 sq mile site hired consultants for its EIA only to find that SNH had hired the same company to evaluate it. The company kept both contracts. Some artist highlighted the absurdity of it all when he proposed that turbine blades play tunes.⁸

Anyone who raised doubts was a party-pooing Nimby who could safely be ignored. Everyone pushed the fad, a new orthodoxy was born. The very name wind-power became synonymous in the public eye with the 'clean' energy spectrum: the cuckoo in the renewables nest had turfed out the fledglings.

In reality, things were already strained. Edinburgh's free market fetish was even stronger than London's although both confused free market discipline with a subsidised free-for-all. The 'targets', Scotland's in particular, mixed grandstanding and ideology but lacked technical or commercial judgement. In engineering terms, they were absurd and, in ecological terms, almost certainly ineffective.

Brian Wilson acknowledged Scotland's limited ability to absorb wind power when he (correctly) ridiculed greener-than-thou SNP posturing. On the stump for Holyrood colleagues in 2003, he wrote: 'No country can carry such a high proportion of renewables because of their inherent unpredictability – as Denmark has found with wind ... A high Scottish output has to be dispersed throughout the far larger markets of the south'. His warning was ignored.

Many would-be investors lacked sector knowledge but, enticed by quick returns, rushed into an already hyperactive market. A forty-per cent target without strategic guidance or any key performance indication was open-ended and could only lead to 'irrational exuberance'.⁹

The first public reverse hit in February 2004: Cambrian Engineering, despite the public backing, collapsed after only seven months trading.¹⁰

April saw prominent economist Professor David Simpson report on his investigation into the economics of wind power to the David Hume Institute. His verdict was robust: the sums didn't add up, the RO schemes were a stealth tax underwriting a questionable technology.¹¹

In June, following a year-long inquiry, Holyrood's Enterprise and Culture Committee unanimously agreed *Renewable Energy in Scotland*, the first official Holyrood criticism of Executive energy policy. The report didn't satisfy trenchant critics but, in context, the indictment was damning particularly on the obsession with on-shore wind power. The Executive was dismissive.¹²

On July 6, Tony Blair, addressing a House of Commons

committee, announced out of the blue that nuclear technology was back on the agenda, following 'lobbying from the US'. *The Scotsman* even named mooted sites.¹³

July also saw *Renewable Energy: Practicalities*, a House of Lords Select Committee report arguing that the Renewables Obligation scheme *guaranteed* that targets would not be met and deploring 'the minimal amounts that the Government have committed to renewable energy related R&D . . . If resources other than wind are to be exploited in the United Kingdom this has to change'.¹⁴

At the same time, technically-competent papers began to circulate reporting assimilation issues with wind power in Denmark, Germany and Ireland. Seemingly, not all was well in the wider wind scene – were the engineering Jeremiahs right after all?¹⁵

Cat quits bag

January 2005 saw publication of two separate papers reporting proposals for over 14,000MW of wind-power capacity already in Scotland's planning system – nearly double the capacity of its conventional power stations.¹⁶

Public concern was already mounting about wind-power's ability either to secure energy supply or cut CO₂ emissions. The Klondike was clearly out of control and the press, whose affair with the industry was waning, reported the story widely.

In public, trade group Scottish Renewables pushed a line that the 40%/2020 target could be met by a quarter hydro, a half wind and a quarter from yet-to-be-developed technologies. Talk of 250 sites was, they said, alarmism – planners will sort out good applications from bad.

In private, it was lobbying the Executive to 'cool current development aspirations' by imposing a ceiling on wind power, perhaps by introducing 'guidance' on cumulative impact to give grounds for refusal.

If Scottish Renewables claims have even a semblance of truth, where is the jobs bonanza?

The industry now concedes that grid security would be a 'significant issue' if wind were to meet more than a fifth of Scotland's demand. Many engineers fear the figure is much lower but even a fifth needs less than 4,000MW. Scotland could be covered in surplus turbines.

Despite local authority unrest, the Executive continues in denial. Jim Wallace issued a statement (oddly, from a lightweight trade liaison committee) saying that there is no problem – wind power will be developed only where 'stringent' planning procedures allow.

However, provided proposals meet fairly basic environmental criteria, there are few planning grounds for stopping them. In any case, the eighty-odd large applications that make up three quarters of the proposals went direct to the Executive. Not one has been rejected.

Although local authorities do nominally decide smaller applications, regulations exclude consideration of technical or commercial viability. In practice, except for private schemes, every rejection has been appealed and, to date, all but two over-turned.¹⁷ Local authorities and communities are being excluded from the process.

Despite the manifest failure of the planning system and

mounting pressure from industry, local authorities, communities, environmentalists and now Westminster MPs, the Scottish Executive refuses to discuss a strategy for renewable energy. In despair, some local authorities are trying to evolve their own.

Early in February, the National Audit Office published a report calling for the Renewables Obligation scheme to be overhauled, saying it was 'over-subsidising' wind power.

In March, Westminster's Scottish Affairs Select Committee published *Meeting Scotland's Future Energy Needs*. Its members were as scathing as 'other place' colleagues. Unusually, they tried to examine jobs at risk from current energy policy rather than make pie-in-the-sky jobs claims. They even looked for lessons from overseas.

Three major Select Committees, two from Westminster and one from Holyrood, have submitted powerful criticisms of New Labour's energy policy.

Meanwhile, nuclear's rehabilitation has been justified using climate-change arguments advanced by ardent opponents. Smart money is on new build by diktat after the party conference season.

The eco-bureaucracy's capitulation to the wind/nuclear industry has helped to achieve the one thing it did not want – nuclear's rehabilitation. The grim prospect is the imposition of new base-load nuclear build on an unwilling public, hundreds of useless turbines escalating energy costs but no new rapid-response thermal plant – without which wind-power does not even work. The credibility of viable renewables could be put at risk.

It's a mess.



Anemometry mast monitoring for a proposed North British Windpower site just by Fort William. Originally rejected by Highland Council, the Scottish Executive overturned its decision.

Notes. (Where a topic has been discussed in *VoS News* or other VoS publication, the reference is given.)

- 1 The 1997 Kyoto Protocol called for greenhouse gas (GHG) cuts to 5.2% below 1990 levels. It needed ratifying by the nations which produced at least 55% of the world's emissions, many of which were sceptical of what they saw as arbitrary targets and suspect science. After only 40% voted 'Yes', it had to be renegotiated. The new Kyoto Protocol (NKP) of July 2001 cut the target to 1.8% with most signatories, including the fastest-growing polluters such as China, India and Brazil, with no reductions commitments. NKP came into force on April 1 2005 with GHG emissions currently 15% above 1990 levels. (After Gurdgiev.)
- 2 Planning Advice Note *PAN45* was revised in January 2002.
- 3 Brian Wilson, *West Highland Free Press*, 25 July 2003. *VoS News* Vol 2 No 2, p10.
- 4 The National Grid's response to the *Energy Review* reported that the DTI commissioned studies 'on the potential developments and investment requirements on the transmission system to meet an additional 2,000MW, 4,000MW and 6,000MW of wind-generation located in Scotland'. National Grid Group plc, *Submission on Energy Policy – Key Issues for Consultation*, See *Scotland's Landscape – England's Windfarm*, S4.
- 5 Privatisation divided the industry into generators, who generate electricity and sell it to suppliers, and suppliers who sell to end users. *VoS Brief* No 2, *The ROC Scam*, (new edition in preparation).
- 6 Hydrogen is not an energy source but an energy carrier. Even optimists place the technology at prototype stage.
- 7 *VoS News* Vol 2 No 2, p2.
- 8 Despite publicity from ScottishPower, the proposal faded when a German rival claimed the idea. We may never get to see an eagle cut in half to the sound of *A Lark Ascending*.
- 9 The phrase is Alan Greenspan's. There are no proposals to measure whether Renewables Obligation levies do cut emissions. The evidence suggests they might well not..
- 10 The yard re-opened in February 2005 as CamCal Ltd with a dozen employees but we have no reports of orders. Vestas' Campbeltown plant recently laid off staff, other wind startups either collapsed or never materialised. *VoS News* Vol 2 No 3.
- 11 David Simpson, *Tilting at Windmills, the economics of wind power*, David Hume Institute, April 2004.
- 12 Enterprise & Culture Committee, Scottish Parliament, *Renewable Energy in Scotland*, June 2004. One committee member labelled the Executive's response 'anodyne and self-congratulatory'. *VoS News* Vol 2 No 1.
- 13 Blair reportedly changed the line within 45 minutes.
- 14 House of Lords Science and Technology Committee, *Renewable Energy: Practicalities*, July 2004. Lengthy but mandatory reading.
- 15 ESB National Grid, *The Impact of Wind Power Generation in Ireland on the Operation of Conventional Plant and the Economic Implications*, 2004; E.On Netz, *Wind Report 2004*, D White, *Reduction in Carbon Dioxide emissions*, Renewable Energy Foundation, 2004.
- 16 Scottish Natural Heritage, *Renewables Trends in Scotland: Statistics and Analysis*, December 2004; Scottish Wind Assessment Project, *A Gazetteer of wind power in Scotland*, January 2005.
- 17 The Executive recently turned down a three-turbine scheme on designated land on Orkney. It's a start.

200 say No! to environmental Philistines



ABINGTON, Crawford and Elvanfoot group ACE, campaigning against wind developer Airtricity's gross 170 x 3.6 MW turbine proposal for South Lanarkshire's moors, attracted nearly 200 people to their protest walk on Sunday April 10.

The tireless David Bellamy was joined by Scottish outdoor veteran Cameron McNeish who spoke movingly of the precious nature of different kinds of landscape. *VoS News* met local residents, walkers from Glasgow, bird lovers from nearby towns and more dogs than enough. The pictures show the walkers heading into Crawford and ACE secretary Bernadette handling the media with aplomb.