

Batsworthy Cross Wind Farm Community Fund Consultation

May 2016

Introduction

Batsworthy Cross Wind Farm is currently under construction by RWE Innogy UK Ltd (RWE). For more than 15 years RWE has provided a variety of Community Investment Packages in association with our wind farms, primarily supporting the communities neighbouring our sites. In the case of Batsworthy Cross Wind Farm, a community fund of **£90,000 per annum** will be made available once the wind farm is fully operational, and for each year of its operational lifetime (up to 25 years). This flexible funding has the potential to significantly benefit local communities. To help plan your fund we conducted a community consultation in January 2016. We had a fantastic response to the consultation with **535** individuals and **8** community groups taking part. The consultation highlights are shared below along with more information about the next steps we will be taking in developing the fund.

Consultation Responses

The consultation was undertaken by independent charity **Devon Communities Together** who developed a questionnaire and compiled a full report of their findings which can be downloaded from RWE's website: www.rweinnogy.com/batsworthycrosscommunity. Although technically open to anyone to take part online, responses came predominantly from residents of the parishes of **Knowstone, Rackenford & Creacombe, Rose Ash, Bishops Nympton and Oakford**, as these households received a hard copy of the questionnaire through their door. The consultation was planned by RWE and representatives from those five Parish Councils, which were identified because of their proximity to the wind farm. However, the community fund will also benefit the neighbouring parishes of **Molland, East & West Anstey, Meshaw and East Worlington**.

Consultation Highlights

The **top types of projects** respondents felt they would benefit from were:

1. Improving local broadband connection speed.
2. Support for older people eg activities to reduce isolation
3. Improving mobile phone signal
4. Improvements to rural transport
5. Supporting capital or running costs of community buildings
6. Projects that bring the community together

Whilst **younger respondents** (under 40) had broadband as their main priority, the remainder of their top five priorities differ from the overall picture:

- Activities/venues for younger children;
- Support for leisure/sport activities and facilities;
- Support for local schools;
- Projects to engage young adults and teenagers

For **older respondents** who were 80+ their priorities were not broadband, but:

- Improvements to rural transport;
- Improving mobile phone signal

A range of **potential new projects** were identified that could be established by the community fund, the most popular suggestions were:

- A new project to improve broadband across the area;
- A village hall/community building for Rackenford;
- If possible, purchasing Stag Hall for community use;
- Maintaining, improving & developing new footpaths and/or bridleways between communities and facilities;
- Improving local/community transport.

Who should benefit and how?

Regarding whether projects closest to the wind farm should be given extra priority, 69% of all respondents agreed they should. Regarding fund management, 77% agreed with RWE's proposal for the fund to be administered by an independent body, with a panel of local people making decisions on the allocation of funds. Furthermore, 96 people expressed an interest in being on the Fund panel.

Next steps

Having carefully considered the consultation responses, and consulted with representatives of all ten Parish Councils which will benefit from the fund, RWE can now announce the following next steps:

Fund Administration – experienced, independent grant making charity, **Devon Community Foundation (DCF)**, will administer the fund. DCF, supported by RWE, will also be responsible for recruiting and supporting the local grants panel who will make all decisions on the allocation of funding. The 96 people who expressed an interest in joining the panel will be receiving application forms shortly.

Furthermore, in consultation with Parish representatives, RWE agreed to extend the deadline for panel nominations in the five parishes that didn't receive individual household hard copy surveys. Therefore **residents living in the Parishes of Molland, East & West Anstey, Meshaw and East Worlington have until Friday 10th June 2016 to nominate themselves to join the panel.** If you live, work or volunteer in these five parishes and would like to be considered to join the grants panel, please contact Devon Community Foundation to receive an application form, email: info@devoncf.com or Tel: 01884 235887.

Area of benefit

As previously suggested the parishes that will benefit from the fund are Knowstone, Rackenford & Creacombe, Rose Ash, Bishops Nympton and Oakford, Molland, East & West Anstey, Meshaw and East Worlington. The area of benefit for the fund will be reviewed after 3 years by DCF, the grants panel and Batsworthy Wind Farm Ltd.

Fund priorities

The fund will have broad criteria to ensure the funding can be used flexibly. The specific application criteria will be decided by the grants panel (once appointed) taking into account all of the feedback from the community consultation. In recognition of the consultation responses, it has been agreed that applications from the three parishes closest to the wind farm (i.e Knowstone, Rackenford & Creacombe, Rose Ash) will be considered by the grants panel first. This will ensure that in the event of the fund being oversubscribed these parishes will receive extra priority.

Timescales

The local grants panel will be recruited and inducted over the summer and Batsworthy Cross Wind Farm Community Fund will be launched locally in autumn 2016. At this point the fund will be open for business with DCF available to advise local groups on how to make an application. It is anticipated that the closing date for applications will be December 2016 with the panel meeting to agree awards in January 2017.

Contact us

If you have any further questions about the Batsworthy Wind Farm Community Fund you can contact RWE's Community Investment Officer by email Kathryn.Harries@rwe.com or by phone: 07760 190477 or write to: Kathryn Harries, Community Investment Officer, RWE Innogy UK Limited, Baglan Bay Innovation Centre, Central Avenue, Baglan Energy Park, Port Talbot, SA12 7AX.

Introducing Devon Community Foundation

Established in 1996, we support local communities, the voluntary sector, donors and partners across Devon. Helping them to tackle disadvantage and deprivation in our communities, helping them to create thriving communities.

We do this through three main routes. As a funder providing grants and social investment to local groups, charities and individuals. We have distributed over £10m across Devon since our inception.

As a Philanthropic Advisor, helping individual donors and corporate partners shape their philanthropy we create and manage funds that can support those groups, charities and individuals.

And as a community leader, realising that together we can achieve more, we work in partnership with a diverse range of local and national organisations to deliver projects across Devon addressing the need in our local communities.

