



Crathes – Your thoughts and ideas are required on a number of matters.

Plans for the A93 (North Deeside Road) as it passes through Crathes.

Over the years there have been council discussions with the community council and the Crathes Hall Trustees about a Mini Park & Ride facility at the Crathes Hall car park. This has raised awareness about the safety of the pavement between the Hall and the bus stops and the lack of a road crossing. As a result, there is a budgeted plan to widen the pavement, to install a crossing island and to upgrade the lighting along the length of the A93 through Crathes. The upgrade in the lighting is necessary to meet lighting/visibility standards for road crossings. This work is scheduled for autumn 2023, this year. But please read on.....

Pavement widening

It is planned to widen the very narrow pavement on the south side of the A93 between the bus stop and the Crathes Hall. Most agree this is necessary and so the widening will go ahead independent from any decision about a Mini Park & Ride facility in the hall car park, the crossing or the lighting.

Crossing Point with Island near the bus stops.

The community has broadly supported the idea of a crossing, mainly for school children travelling to and from school as it is a busy and relatively complicated junction with multiple lanes at the point that many cross. I.e: at the bus stops. The council believe the crossing is needed for safety reasons (safety issue was also raised by the community) and has thus budgeted for and scheduled the work. The planned crossing point and island, similar in design to the ones on the A957 through the village and used for the Deeside way crossing, is located to the west of the bus stops, where the road reduces to just two lanes and at the point where there are existing drop curbs. This is considered the safest location although it does add some 75m to the distance walked for those returning to the village from a bus from say Banchory.

The council believes that the placing of the island will improve safety, enhanced by the upgraded lighting. The council cannot move the island closer to the bus stops, as has been suggested, as they consider crossing at a point with multiple lanes, including the bus acceleration/deacceleration lanes too dangerous. There is no budget for moving either one or more of the bus stops which is an expensive option. The council are scheduling this work for autumn this year.

[Please let us know if you have any thoughts and we can bring these up with the council at our next meeting with them. Our contact details below.](#)

Enhanced Lighting

Enhanced street lighting is linked to the crossing. When the streetlights were installed in Crathes some 30 years ago, the community chose the heritage style lights that we see today. Indeed, these were extended south more recently when the new houses were built. More recently, when these changes were mooted, a poll confirmed that residents would prefer to retain the heritage style for consistency and 'sense of place'.

However, to meet the current standards for the crossing on the A93 the current lighting needs to be upgraded. Given the extreme budget constraints, the council is not prepared to upgrade the A93



lighting using the more expensive heritage lighting style that we have at present. Instead, they plan to go ahead with the standard aluminium poles.

Again, please let us know what you think. (not that there is another option on the table)

Transport Mini-hub

The Transport Mini-Hub, previously discussed as 'Park & Ride', is a concept that is evolving taking into account the wider and longer term transport strategy. The proposed location for this is the Crathes Hall car park. The car park is owned by the Crathes Hall and administered by the Trustees on behalf of the community. The council will shortly resume talks with the Hall Trustees to see what can be agreed that works best for the local community and the transport strategy without prejudice to the hall's function.

The changes to A93 mentioned above are decisions that have now been separated from any decisions about the Transport Mini-Hub. Nevertheless, the A93 changes clearly benefit pedestrians moving between the bus stops and the hall car park.

Ideas for the Mini-Hub include parking, EV charging points and lockable bike containers.

We would like to hear your thoughts about the potential Mini-Hub.

Crathes Tree Shelter Belt

Most will have noticed that the tree shelter belt to the west and south west of the village has been pretty much clear-felled. The trees were storm damaged and some had also damaged some of the adjacent properties. The land belongs to Dunecht Estate and it is the estate that is felling the trees, clearing the site and re-planting the shelter belt. This belt of trees, along with other 'green' space in the village is protected in the Local Plan 2022 *"To protect the woodland tree belt, landscaping and open space as an amenity and contribution to the character of the settlement."*

Dunecht Estate plans to replant the 'shelter belt' in the autumn. The proposal is to replant with a mix of species (overall an equal percentage of each) – rowan, wild cherry (gean), silver birch and sycamore.

If anyone has any thoughts or suggestions regarding this replanting, please let the community council know via the contact details below and we will include these in our discussions with the Estate.

Hill of Fare Wind Farm Proposal

We imagine that most are by now fully aware of this proposal. Following the windfarm exhibition in the Crathes Hall last November (by RES, the developer), local residents responded via the Community Council questionnaire. Despite the majority supporting renewable energy, approximately 75% in our community were nevertheless against this development, most citing unacceptable visual and environmental impact in this prominent location.

We all know that humanity is facing the twin crises of climate change and catastrophic biodiversity loss which means that we must reduce our carbon emissions whilst minimising the impact on local flora and fauna.



To do this we need more renewable energy and that wind power, both onshore and offshore is a key strand, in both the UK and Scottish Governments' energy strategies.

But how much is energy is required?

- Scottish Government target for onshore wind generation is a 20 GW by 2030
- There is already 9 GW installed and 14 gigawatts either in the planning/consenting process, awaiting construction or under construction, a total of 21GW

Is the Hill of Fare the right place?

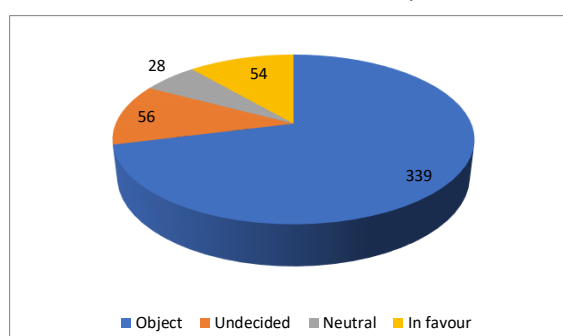
Aberdeenshire Council and Scottish Natural Heritage commissioned a study in 2014 to evaluate appropriate sites for onshore wind generation on the Grampian Outliers, of which the Hill of Fare is one. The study concluded the Hill of Fare has *“a high value, high visual sensitivity and high wilderness qualities, forming islands of wild land within the surrounding farmland. These areas would be unsuitable for wind turbine development beyond a domestic scale, less than 15m associated with farm buildings or tourist facilities and turbines should be sited at the base of slopes.”*

So, if we need renewable energy to help replace fossil fuels, why are so many of our community against this huge development?

- Offshore wind is becoming more cost effective – so perhaps we don't need to develop sensitive onshore sites.
- The Hill of Fare windfarm was proposed to have 17 turbines, each 250m tall; this would be the largest onshore windfarm in UK, although RES are now proposing 16 ca. 200m turbines which are still extremely tall.
- The development requires wide roads, battery storage and pylons.
- There would be a significant loss of wild landscape, habitats and amenities on the Hill, including peatland.
- The Hill of Fare stands 250m-300m above surrounding land, and these turbines would come close to doubling the height of the hill.
- All turbines will be visible 360 degrees around the hill and for up to 25km away, affecting many homes in over 20 community council areas, as well as road users, cyclists, walkers.
- Visual flicker, noise and vibration effects will be noticeable.
- Any suggested compensatory payments will be spread thinly over many communities and indeed how communities can benefit in a meaningful way is still unclear.

Meetings are taking place between the other community councils affected by this potential development where questionnaire results are similar to those of our own community. Overall results:

Other	Percent	Subtotal
Object	71%	339
Undecided	12%	56
Neutral	6%	28
In favour	11%	54
Total	100%	477



RES have recently issued their Spring 2023 Newsletter, which gives a very different picture of the feedback in that it doesn't deal at all with the support vs object perspective.



RES are saying that there will be another round of consultation, presumably exhibitions, before a planning application is submitted.

More information is available from the HoFWIG group at www.Hilloffare.org (This group is objecting to the development). The community council knows of no groups supporting the development at this time.

The Crathes, Drumoak & Durriss Community Council will again attend and collect views at the RES exhibitions and will be led by these and questionnaire data when responding to any planning application.

Again, if you haven't already, please let us know what you think.

Crathes, Drumoak & Durriss Community Council

Scottish Government planning changes are providing more opportunities for communities to influence what happens in their villages. Later this year we will be doing 'Place Planning' for Crathes and surrounds and will need community input. **We have 2 of the 4 Crathes Community Council positions empty at present and would very much like to fill these.**

Contacting the community council with your thoughts:

This can be anonymous if you wish but an idea of where you live adds useful context to your thoughts and perspectives. A postcode would be good.

- The community council can be contacted on crathesdrumoakdurrisscc@gmail.com
- Or just write on this document and post it through the letterbox at Pinewood, Crathes, one house south of the old Crathes Garage.
- Or write a letter and post it to Pinewood, Crathes, Banchory AB31 5JD
- Or Call, WhatsApp or text David on 07843439666

We very much do want to hear from you on all or any of these matters.

Many thanks,

David Morrish (Crathes Community Councillor)

for

Crathes, Drumoak & Durriss Community Council

A93 Pedestrian Crossing & Pavement details:

