

meeting last October set up a Short Life Working Group (SLWG). The objective being to conduct an appraisal of, and formulate a plan by which the Community can make a decision around the following suggested options:

- a) Accept the offer from Cowal Community Energy (CCE)
- b) Reject the CCE offer and commit to negotiating with Belltown directly
- c) Consider any other option the group regards as beneficial to the Community

The SLWG has now met 5 times. Membership has been expanded to include other members of the Community. We have inquired into the various proposals and have developed options and criteria which helped us differentiate between the options.

Nonetheless we feel we are not as fully informed as we need to be to make a recommendation to the Community. For example, the Community will need to see the detail of what Belltown is proposing to let people have an informed view of the level of participation the Community should take in the development. That detail will only come from Belltown's planning application. We also need to know more about how CCE would finance investment in the wind farm whilst at the same time paying us.

However, we believe there are already some key issues which the Community needs to consider and which will guide the working group as it develops its recommendations. These issues are to do with Community involvement, level of investment and Community income.

**1. Community Involvement – Practical Implications**

To benefit from the Cruach Mhor Wind Farm re-powering, the Community will need to set up various entities (e.g. a company) to manage Community Benefit and investment dividends. The Community entities will require governance structures and management, legal, accounting and statutory reporting provisions. The benefits may well need to be shared with other communities if the wind farm is found to impact them given the increased size of turbines. This impact will not be defined until Belltown have completed a "Zone of Theoretical Visibility" and a construction impact study sometime in 2027. Belltown will only negotiate with one Community entity, so we will need to be clear about what we as a Community want to do and the size of the role we want to play. The Community will require a negotiating team which will need to be mandated and have Community oversight for transparency. It will also need a structured program for managing usage of the Community benefit

though of course the new Local Place Plan, which will be submitted to the Council in July this year, should give a framework for that.

Initially, there will be a substantial amount of work to negotiate and agree terms with Belltown for the Community Benefit and, separately, for any investment. If investment greater than the free 1% is pursued then negotiations with lenders will be required. The capability and capacity of our Community to handle this work is a key limitation. Outside experts will need to be involved, along with funding to pay them. There is some Scottish Government money available for such purposes.

**2. Investing in the Wind Farm**

If ColGlen chooses to invest in the wind farm, then a loan will be needed, secured against the Community company's interest in the wind farm. The Community company (to be set up) will have very limited control over how the Belltown wind farm company is run. Financiers lending to the Community company will view this as higher risk so there may be only a limited number of specialist lenders who would consider lending to it. Of course, it is important to be clear that No Community assets, organizations or people would be put at risk by investing in the wind farm.

The deal that Belltown has offered (1% free and 4% at cost) is to enable the Community to benefit from the market value of 5% equity. In other words, the market value of 5% should be higher than the cost of the loan required for the 4% "at cost" price. This should provide a lender with comfort that the Community company can repay the loan. The other benefit would be that the Community should receive some dividend payouts from start up since only a proportion of the dividends should be required for loan repayment.

For larger investment, greater than 4%, the dividend income will be dependent on the deal that is done with the lenders. Because a larger investment will be made at market value then typically the lender will charge commercial, market rates and take the vast majority of income in loan repayments in the early years. The additional funds available to the Community in the first 10-15 years or more may be zero or very small. Ultimately though the Community will have an asset that should provide very significant income to the Community for several decades and provide a legacy for the next generation.

The Short Life Working Group has not yet had the opportunity to investigate in detail the potential for Community investment including our ability to get loans and the costs and benefits. That should be known before the Community can make an informed decision.

**3. Community Income**

The Community Benefit will provide a significant increase in Community funding available with the exact figures depending on ColGlen's share of it. There will be a period between Scottish Power ceasing generation and Belltown starting, which would mean a break in Community Benefit payments. Belltown have already indicated that they would consider bringing forward some payments to bridge the gap. The current wind farm trust is also already establishing a reserve fund to provide some continuity of grants for local organisations during that period.

The free 1% equity will provide further funds when our wind farm company starts paying a dividend.

An additional 4% investment at cost price will provide significantly higher dividends. Indeed it is possible that the amount of income could be higher than ColGlen is currently able to use, so consideration could be given to sharing costs and income more broadly with nearby communities.

An investment greater than 4% at market value will provide a very large income once loan repayments are reduced (which may take 10-15 years or longer). In the larger investment cases the income is likely to be far larger than ColGlen can reasonably use, so sharing this to the broader Cowal Community will be a key consideration

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

To ascertain residents' views on all of this, our initial questions for the Community are given right.

*Please note the following:*

- Circle your preference in answer to the first four questions and provide any detail you wish in the further feedback box.
- If you require further space please don't hesitate to include you comments on a second piece of paper.
- Submissions will be treated as being anonymous.
- A list of frequently asked questions is also included on the reverse of this handout.
- Your responses to these questions should be returned by 5.00pm on Tuesday 30th June.
- The Short Life Working Group will consider your responses to help develop its recommendations.
- Feel free to ask for further copies of this document or the questionnaire through the email below.
- The questionnaire, with any additional comments, when completed, should be returned to:

[secretary@colglencommunitycouncil.org.uk](mailto:secretary@colglencommunitycouncil.org.uk) or [info@cgdt.org.uk](mailto:info@cgdt.org.uk)  
 Or by hand or post to: SLWG, CGDT Postbox, Colintraive Village Hall, Colintraive, PA22 3AS

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Initial questions for the Community**

*Please circle your choices*

1) Is ColGlen investing in more than the free 1% something the Short Life Working Group should consider further?

<b>YES</b> WE SHOULD CONSIDER INVESTING MORE THAN THE FREE 1%	<b>NO</b> WE SHOULD NOT CONSIDER INVESTING MORE THAN THE FREE 1%
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2) If **YES**, how large an investment should ColGlen consider? *If NO go straight to (3)*

<b>SMALLER INVESTMENT</b> at cost price of up to 4% with early dividends	<b>LARGER INVESTMENT</b> up to 48% at market value with large dividends in 15+ years?
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3) Does ColGlen want to retain control of investments, Community entities and distributions or would we be content to work collectively with partners to maximise opportunities providing an agreement with any such partner or partners has been endorsed by the ColGlen Community.

<b>YES</b> WE SHOULD HAVE SOLE CONTROL	<b>NO</b> WE SHOULD EXPLORE PARTNERSHIP / COLLECTIVE OPTIONS
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4) ColGlen will receive income from Community Benefit even if sharing with other host communities and if ColGlen invests above the free 1% then there will be significantly higher income. In that case should ColGlen consider arrangements for sharing income with other Cowal communities?

<b>YES</b> WE SHOULD CONSIDER SHARING INCOME	<b>NO</b> WE SHOULD NOT CONSIDER SHARING INCOME
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5) In the box below you can give any further feedback or raise other issues which you think the Working Group should consider:

## Frequently Asked Questions

The SLWG has of course already considered a lot of issues and the selection below addresses some of the more common concerns that have been voiced in the community.

### What would be the Cost to Me?

There will be no cost to members of the Community. Current work is being done by volunteers and external funding will be sourced as the need for professional help arises.

### What is My Personal Risk?

No one in the Community will be asked to put anything at risk for this opportunity.

### What is the Risk to the Community?

No Community assets, organisations or people will be put at risk through borrowing to invest in the WF or participating with CCE. Loans for purchase of equity will be secured against the WF income. Only Community Benefit income would be put at risk if used to finance investment in the WF.

### How would we spend the income?

In all options there is potential for significantly increased income although, apart from the Community Benefit, this is not guaranteed and is dependent dependant on the profitability of the wind farm. The Local Place Plan can be used as a framework for potential Community investments. There is a long and successful track record of distributing funds from the current wind farm via the wind farm trust.

### Is the project environmentally sustainable?

Belltown will conduct a comprehensive environmental impact assessment which will be part of their planning submission. An example is the recent Cnoc Buidhe WF planning submission in Kintyre and can be found at [www.cgdt.org.uk/slwg#link-3](http://www.cgdt.org.uk/slwg#link-3)

### Is the project economically sustainable?

Belltown will only invest in the wind farm and lenders will only lend if they think it will be profitable. There are many factors that will impact the profitability of the wind farm in particular the electricity price and energy demand. Dividends from the wind farm are therefore not guaranteed.

### What skills does the Community have to undertake this?

We have individuals in the Community who have experience in running businesses, large energy projects, legal agreements, corporate and venture

negotiations, accounting, Community communications, Community sharing. We are looking for individuals with experience of financing large projects.

### Community Open Meeting

The short life working group will be holding an open meeting on **Sunday 14th June at 2.30 pm in the Glendaruel Hall** at which members of the group will answer any questions you have about these issues and offer help, should you wish, to formulate your answers to the above questions.

The members of the Short Life Working Group who have prepared this briefing and questionnaire are:

Sara Maclean, Chair, ColGlen Development Trust  
Charles Dixon-Spain, Chair, ColGlen Community Council  
Michael Russell, Chair, Cruach Mhor Wind Farm Trust  
Alistair MacLeod  
Peter Macalister Hall  
Samuel Nowell  
Ros McKenna  
Calum McKenna  
Douglas Wilson

# Cruach Mhor Wind Farm Re-Powering Community Briefing with Questionnaire

*In June 2025 Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) awarded Belltown Power UK the lease for re-powering the Cruach Mhor Wind Farm with effect from 2029 – this is the Col-Glen Short Life Working Groups' update on progress so far towards what our response should be.*

### How the Repowering has Developed

The Cruach Mhor site has been operated by Scottish Power Renewables since 2004. This is the first time that a site of an existing wind farm on publicly-owned land has been taken over by a different operator for repowering. This means taking down the existing turbines and installing fewer, but more powerful and bigger ones, in their stead.

### The Belltown Plan

Belltown's plan is to replace the thirty-five 70m high turbines providing 32MW power with eleven 210m turbines providing 72MW power. If granted planning permission this will happen no earlier than 2030/31. Given the timescale, Belltown does not plan to hold Community consultations until later in 2026 or even into 2027, and will start environmental and ecological survey work this spring.

Belltown has provided a brief description of their planned redevelopment of the Cruach Mhor available at [www.cgdt.org.uk/slwg#link-1](http://www.cgdt.org.uk/slwg#link-1).

The issue of whether or not Belltown should be given planning permission for the larger turbines will be decided by a formal statutory process which may include a referral to the Scottish Government. The local Community will be able to make representations but whatever the view of individual local residents it will be necessary for the ColGlen Community to consider how we should respond if consent is given. Preliminary work on that issue has been underway for some time with the lead being taken by Development Trust, Community Council and Wind Farm Trust as was agreed at the first Community meeting held last autumn.

Belltown have already made clear that they will offer the Community the Scottish government recommended level of Community Benefit which is presently £5000/MWh but which is likely to rise to £6000/MWh shortly. If full permission is given that would equate to over £400,000 per annum. To place that in context, the present Community Benefit payment from Scottish Power Renewables is just under £50,000 a year.

Of course some neighbouring communities will expect to receive a share of that Community Benefit under current regulations which include visual amenity. Nonetheless, even without any further actions on our part, there is likely to be – if planning permission is given – a large increase in the amount of money coming to ColGlen for Community use.

In addition to those sums, Belltown have offered the Community the option to invest in the wind farm. This comes in three parts. Firstly Belltown will give the Community 1% equity free of charge. Belltown will also make a further 4% equity available to the Community at cost price and, finally, up to 44% of the equity may be available to the Community at market value. Negotiation with Belltown will be required to finalize those arrangements and the Community will need to put in place structures to administer the Community Benefit and manage the equity investment.

### Cowal Community Energy's Offer

The Community has received an offer from Cowal Community Energy (CCE) to jointly handle negotiations with Belltown with the Community benefit, the 1% and 4% investment income to be solely for the benefit of ColGlen. Any additional investment costs and income would be for the benefit of all Cowal and ColGlen would have a non-controlling vote in how this is distributed.

CCE made a presentation to the Community on 13th November 2025 which is available at [www.cgdt.org.uk/slwg#link-2](http://www.cgdt.org.uk/slwg#link-2). More information on CCE is available at [www.cowalcommunityenergy.org](http://www.cowalcommunityenergy.org). Our Development Trust is a member of CCE and the Chair of CGDT is one of the six CCE Board Directors, so ColGlen as a community is already engaged and represented within CCE (8 out of 11 Cowal DTs are involved).

### Short Life Working Group's Progress

To better understand the implications of the development, and explore the offer from CCE the three bodies which had reported to a Community

**Open meeting on Sunday 14th June at 2.30 pm in the Glen Hall**

**ALL WELCOME!**