

# Petitioner submission of 16 July 2023

## PE1864/VVVVV: Increase the ability of communities to influence planning decisions for onshore windfarms

Our Petition requests that ***an independent advocate is appointed to ensure that local participants are not bullied and intimidated during public inquiries.***

We have recently received further evidence of disgraceful behaviour from an Applicant's legal team directed at a community group and their expert witness and legal adviser. The community group's statement is copied below.

*I have been asked by Scotland Against Spin (SAS) to post a short report on Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN) Kendoon to Tongland 132kV Reinforcement Project following the completion of the Public Inquiry.*

*Galloway Without Pylons (GWP) have been campaigning for the past 7 years to persuade SPEN to underground or re-route the section between Glenlee and Tongland that goes straight through the Galloway Forest Park which is the most popular "natural" tourist destination in Dumfries & Galloway.*

*GWP submitted their 20 page final submission on the 10th May which is published on the DPEA website ([TRL-170-1](#)). SPEN's 315 page final submission was submitted on the 20th June, 4 weeks late, however when you click the link to their submission on the DPEA webpage the following message appears:*

*"DPEA will not publish comments which in their view may be liable to cause offence.*

*The applicants closing submissions will still be taken into account by the reporters in their consideration of the proposal and sent to Energy Consent Unit with their completed report."*

*Their submission was written by SPEN's KC, with contributions from Shepherd Wedderburn LLP on behalf of the Applicant.*

*GWP goes further than the Scottish Government (DPEA) and believes that SPEN's submission has caused great offence. Their submission is arrogant, dismissive of the local community, contains false information and is an attempted character assassination of the two "experts" that were employed to represent GWP. The local community raised £24,000 to pay for our KC and technical expert so you can imagine how angry GWP members are when they read this unpleasant submission from SPEN.*

*Our technical expert's qualifications include an MSc. in Renewable Energy, and a PHD in Civil & Environmental Engineering. He was absolutely superb at the Public Inquiry, and it was obvious from the first time I met him that he is indeed an expert on the "spatial dimension of energy systems". I am currently working on a report that will highlight those sections of SPEN's submission that attempts to denigrate the evidence of our technical expert and others. There are many!*

*I have written to both the DPEA and SPEN for their comments on this extraordinary situation.*

***Paul Swift on behalf of Galloway Without Pylons.***

Galloway Without Pylons was fortunate enough, due to their incredible fundraising efforts, to be able to pay for professional support at the Inquiry; most community groups are not so lucky.

We refer the Committee to Petitioner's submission of 9 July 2023, which gives details of proposals that would ensure professional support is provided for all local participants taking part in Public Inquiries. We hope the Committee has also assimilated the evidence submitted from other supporters to this petition who have experienced similar "character assassination" at the hands of developer's legal teams during wind farm public inquiries.

We ask the Committee to help us make sure professional support becomes a reality so that all communities can receive the basic help and support they require to take part in the planning process. We can never compete on equal terms with the teams of lawyers and experts produced by the applicant to present their applications in their most favourable light but providing support and ensuring "fair play" not in a court of law but in a supposed fact-finding public inquiry, would be a small step in the right direction.

Aileen Jackson

On behalf of Scotland Against Spin