

Kirkby Ireleth Parish Council

CHAIRMAN: Mr. M. A. McPherson, 1, Combe Crescent, Kirkby-in-Furness. Cumbria.

North West Coast Connections

Kirkby Ireleth Parish Councillors Response to NWCC Section 42 Consultation Procedure.

This is the written response from Kirkby Ireleth Parish Council to the Consultation Process undertaken by National Grid for the North West Coast Connection project. Due to the limited time frame given to adequately digest information, receive technical advice and schedule suitable parish meetings, the statement is made by Parish Councillor's opinions on each matter. These are not Decisions or Resolutions and so we reserve the right to make further statements as Interested Parties to this process in the future.

Strength of Local knowledge

It is in our interests to speak on behalf of our community to identify real improvements, so that we can best allow it to maintain its sense of purpose and belonging, protect very sensitive local business (small farming or tourism reliant companies for example), and maintain the community strength and character that makes Kirkby Ireleth special to the UK. The Council strongly believes and asserts that this knowledge is critical to National Grid's decision making for options on the NWCC project as this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to get matters 'right'. The decisions taken will affect the lives of the people of Kirkby Ireleth for many generations thus affecting the vitality of the community that which the Kirkby Ireleth Parish Council represents.

For National Grid to achieve "the right overall balance" in the NWCC project, the benefit of these opinions must be clearly included as recognised influences on decisions before scheme option selections, not merely collated for consultation effort's own sake. A developer that listens knows that it has better support for decisions it may take and has the benefit of getting design decisions right; it would be a shame if National Grid did not take advantage of this significant local resource to achieve a better scheme.

Kirkby Ireleth Parish Council whilst welcoming the development at Moorside is **completely opposed to any form of pylons being erected by National Grid around the Duddon Estuary.**

It would strongly support one of the following as being more convenient for local people and the immediate environment.

a) **Off shore fully from Moorside to Heysham**

It is understood that there are difficulties with this scheme but it is technically possible. It is noted that power is being brought under the English Channel from the continent, across the Solway Estuary and from Scandinavia by National Grid and their partners.

b) Undergrounding to Silecroft then offshore to Roosecote and then under Morecambe Bay to Heysham (HDAC).

This is certainly possible and would address any problems associated with loss of development from the scheme in the Barrow area.

c) Undergrounding to Millom and then under the Duddon Estuary to link with the Morecambe Bay tunnel.

This is certainly possible and would be invisible to all in the area.

The Council is unable to support the construction of the pylons for the following reasons:

- 1) The natural undeveloped coastline around the Duddon Estuary is recognised as an area of outstanding beauty. New pylon construction would have a significant adverse impact on the seascape, landscape, vast array of wildlife and cultural heritage. It is pertinent to note that the area has recently revealed items (including bronze age and mediaeval artefacts) of archaeological interest which will need further investigation. (See 8) below.) It is within the setting of the Lake District National Park and an area that is recognised as one to be preserved.
- 2) Many visitors when visiting the National Park choose to travel through this beautiful western fringe of the Park and stay in it. There are two caravan parks in Kirkby and several well used holiday cottages. There are also two garages, a post office, a shop and three public houses all dependent upon the tourist industry. Local community halls also depend upon an income from tourists for their fund raising. Blots on the landscape will deter visitors and certainly affect the local economy.
- 3) It is agreed that the cables are going underground through the National Park so as not to impact on visitors' enjoyment and appreciation of the natural landscape. However, those same visitors will have their views spoilt from many high points in the Lake District when they gaze outwards to the Duddon Estuary and Furness Fells.
- 4) The proximity of the proposed pylons to dwellings, The Burlington Primary School, Community Centre, playing fields and future housing development raises "real" concerns regarding residents', particularly children's, health and well being and noise pollution.
- 5) The A595 road is recognised as being substandard for the 5 miles from Askam-in-Furness to Grizebeck due to its alignment vertically, horizontally and especially with respect to width. From Askam to Grizebeck there are two primary schools, three public houses, one

old peoples' home, numerous farms and approximately 150 dwellings most with vehicle access on to the highway. It is a very twisting road with some bends at the end of inclines which have to be specially signposted.

The width causes extreme concern to all users. There are six places that are so narrow it is only wide enough for safe single file traffic:

- a) The bend at the top of the hill leaving Paradise where the wall has been knocked down by passing heavy goods lorries.
- b) The junction with the minor road at 'Mere Beck Farm'.
- c) The bends at 'Muirlands' just before the minor improvements carried out in 2001.
- d) The 50 yard stretch from north of 'Gargrave Farm' to 'Long Lane Head Bridge'
- e) The 100 yard stretch from 'Long Lane Head Bridge' to Soutergate.
- f) The ½ mile stretch of very substandard road passing between farm buildings at Dove Ford and through Grizebeck village.

As a consequence of large vehicle use, damage has occurred to the road structure and to verges and hedges and walls on the narrow stretches from Askam to Grizebeck. 'Long Lane Head Bridge' is humped backed and low loaders have been grounded on it. The road is already chaotic without the construction traffic and is at saturation point during busy periods.

For all of these reasons the A595 will not be able to cope with the additional construction traffic of the magnitude proposed.

- 6) The detrimental effects of construction will impact negatively on the work of landowners, farmers and emergency services. As stated in 5a to 5f above, the road is extremely narrow as also are the lanes leading from it. Moving construction vehicles along these routes will further inconvenience the local inhabitants. Buildings may suffer structural damage. Farm animals, of which there are a great number, will suffer because of noise. This particularly applies to the movement of helicopters which may be used to transport materials to and from the proposed sites.
- 7) The introduction of the 13 metre pole line to carry power for Electricity Northwest is a completely new project and should not be part of this scheme. Further more this line follows almost exactly the line of the ones in situ at the moment. There is a certain amount of undergrounding with the use of cable sealing end platforms one of which is in the field designated for future housing. The pole line also traverses this area.
- 8) The area has recently revealed items (including bronze age and mediaeval artefacts) of archaeological interest which will need further investigation. Work surveying land, particularly around Grizebeck and Kirkby-in-Furness, has unearthed some significant, historically important finds which are out of context with the current archaeological and historical thinking. Numerous Roman artefacts, which is unusual locally, as there are no documented Roman Settlements in the area, have been found. Additionally, artefacts dating as far back as the Neolithic period, and most recently an artefact from the late Anglo Saxon period have been unearthed. This artefact has attracted great interest from local historians and archaeologists, as it plugs a gap in the historical records. The local

museum has expressed a desire to acquire the artefact for their collection. There will clearly be more artefacts to unearth, which would support the hypothesis that there were in fact Anglo Saxon settlers occupying this area. This is only the tip of the iceberg regarding what may yet to be unearthed within the boundaries of the Parish.

The introduction of the new pylons would disturb the archaeology during excavations and installation, thereby destroying the historical context and removing the opportunity for us to continue to learn more about the ancient history of this geographic area. In addition, the electromagnetic interference from high voltage cables, reduces the effectiveness of ground penetrating electronic detecting and measuring equipment, so the quality of any future surveys would be extremely limited.

- 9) Problems with access by rail have not been highlighted within the report. High tides have in the past washed away the line adjacent to the railway station. There is no room for storage of construction materials adjacent to the line at Sandside.

The Council would be reluctant to accept any form of undergrounding within the Parish. There are too many roads and streams to cross. The 50 metre wide trench needed would lead to impoverishment and a long term devaluation of land and property. Farmers would be put out of business.

Adequacy of consultation statement

The time allotted was far too short for Councillors to read and understand the vast amount of information included in the consultation documents. The addition of the cables being carried by the wooden poles is a new project of which Councillors only received information at the start of the consultation period.

Although Kirkby Ireleth is one of the most populated areas to be affected by the proposals the consultation events for the public were close to the end of the consultation period. With Christmas festivities intervening it has made it very difficult for the Council to consult with the public before the January 6th deadline.

The Council specifically asked for the public consultation event to take place at the Community Centre which is at the heart of the community. It is within easy reach of the majority of the population by foot and has good parking facilities. Grizebeck Community Hall was chosen together with Burlington School but not the Community Centre. No reply was received from a Council letter dated 8th November requesting an extension to the consultation period. Reasons for the choice of Burlington School over the Community Centre had to be sought from National Grid via telephone and e-mail.

The consultation day on Saturday 3rd December was staffed mainly with Community Relations Officers who were there to show National Grid's proposal. They were not experts in the fields of modern technology. Many questions were left unanswered with a "Put it in your response" statement to any technical queries or suggestions. It was stated that no report of the consultation days would be given to National Grid.

Miscellaneous observations

- 1) The 132kv single circuit wooden poles are not shown on any of the photo montage.
- 2) Many of the areas showing the positions of the pylons are screened by foliage that will take many years to grow to the height shown e.g. Thwaites Village Hall.
- 3) The timescale for responding has been far from ideal. All of the Councils around the Duddon and other responsible bodies asked for an extension. This was refused.
- 4) Not all of the options have been explored. e.g. offshore from Silecroft to Roosecote.
- 5) A major development in or adjacent to a National Park should not take place even in exceptional circumstances.
- 6) Suggestions made at previous meetings have not been investigated. e.g. the possibility of a barrage across the Duddon.
- 7) The Lake District National Park is hoping to become a World Heritage Site.
- 8) It appears that the cost of the proposals are having an adverse effect upon decisions being made.
- 9) Many of the pylons will break the skyline through the Parish even where the low level ones are being suggested.
- 10) St. Cuthbert's Church, Beckside, a grade II* listed building, dating from 1190 will be adversely affected by both the poles and pylons. These would seriously affect the experience of church users as they enter and emerge from worship, funerals, weddings and other communal events by being confronted with pylons to the west and east of the church. This would diminish their spiritual and aesthetic experience of the building as a simple place of worship.
- 11) Kirkby Hall a grade I listed building, dating from the C15th, contains a chapel and wall paintings. It has a high aesthetic value within the area and further afield. Both the wooden poles and pylons would intrude upon the views both from and to the building.
- 12) Angerton Hall, a grade II C17th building, although now derelict, will have the larger pylons positioned closer than the present ones while the new wooden poles would be quite close. These would have a particularly strong intrusive and visually damaging presence, when viewing both to and from, the building.
- 13) A transformer at Kirkstanton could supply electricity to Millom and take power from the Haverigg windfarm.
- 14) A transformer at Roosecote could supply additional power to Barrow-in-Furness and District.

Summary

The above points summarise our current representation and opinions of the adequacy of consultation process undertaken by National Grid and include comment on why Kirkby Ireleth Parish Councillors views with their detailed local and often long term, in depth understanding of the Parish area's geography, environmental and socio-economic characteristics, are so important. Based on this deep seated knowledge, the commentary has

also advised National Grid of specific issues, impacts and concerns about the quality and content of information they have based their NWCC project assessment and decision on. Following on from this we wish to remain involved in all steps of the DSCO process and in particular because of the reasons above, continue to be considered as an Interested Party for the purposes of the ongoing NWCC process.

Kirkby Ireleth Parish Council supports all of the other Councils within the area whilst recognising there will be differing responses to the consultation.

Kirkby Ireleth Parish Council supports POWER WITHOUT PYLONS and its campaign.

M. A. McPherson
Chairman
Kirkby Ireleth Parish Council.