

Dr Insley
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Inverness

correspondence to
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30.11.09

**BIOMASS (electric-only) PROPOSAL AT INVERGARRY: AUGUST 2009.
FCS AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

Dear Dr Insley

We would much appreciate some early feedback from yourself regarding the recent Planning Application for a Biomass Power Station (electricity only) within the village of Invergarry. The developer involved in this site is NEDL, as I expect you know, in conjunction with FCS. Scoping the site and discussions between FCS and NEDL we understand date back to at least the early part of 2008, which is more than eighteen months ago, but involvement of the public has been minimal, and in the case of FCS, reactive rather than proactive.

We are very concerned at the low level of public involvement in this sequence, both up to and beyond the time the Planning application was registered on 29th August 2009. At that point only a very small handful of local people knew anything at all about this proposal, and no-one had detailed information.

Here is a quote from FCS's own website:

FC SCOTLAND
Principles

We are committed to ensuring that our community engagement

- *makes a difference*
- *is open and transparent*
- *is suited to the circumstances*
- *treats participants with respect*
- *keeps participants informed*
- *gets better through review and evaluation*
- *engages the full diversity of the population*

I think you will agree that the sequence as described in the first two paragraphs flatly contradicts some of the aspirations expressed in this extract from the FCS website. FCS talked elsewhere about a "perceived disengagement on community issues" and one can see why. FCS were in receipt of a letter from the local Community Council in January 2008 expressing disapproval of the site chosen - near housing, adjacent to our graveyard, and hard on the tourist route to Skye. The impression local people now have of the developer (NEDL) can I think be paraphrased by saying that the sequence demonstrates the actions of a developer whose primary

interest is in making money from the publicly subsidised Biomass industry, with no direct betterment to the village, no consideration of the main local industry of tourism, contempt for the relevance of the adjacent cemetery, and considerable disregard for the concerns of the local population.

The Forestry Commission in their almost complete failure to involve the local community in this project from an early date are dangerously close to being set within the same frame. In fact, in response to a letter to FCS, they had publicly stated that they did not see the location of this enormous, 24/7 hour, noisy, heavy industrial plant within a historic village (transgressing Use Class Orders as expressed in the Local Development Plan) as being inappropriate.

We would like you to comment on the sequence as described, particularly with reference to the part played by the Forestry Commission in involving the whole community in the proposal process. There is very considerable anger here at the obvious failures of communication and involvement on this issue. We are sure that the 140 people who attended the recent public meeting to oppose the location chosen (only six in favour, and only 2 of those six were local people) would also be interested in your comments, as would the 123 objectors registering their disapproval with Lochaber Planning in September.

Chairman
Glengarry Action Group
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[footnote: Glengarry Action Group comprise 19 members of the local community and was formed to represent the community after the public meeting mentioned above.]

COPY TO

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