

What are BESS units?

A BESS is a BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM. Local planning authorities in Wales will decide planning applications for BESS in line with Future Wales (the Welsh Government's spatial plan), Planning Policy Wales (which sets out national planning policies), and relevant policies set out in the local development plan for the area.

BESS are likely to be needed, because when the wind doesn't blow the turbines won't spin, and no electricity will be generated. That's one of the more serious issues with wind turbines, when energy demand is highest, if the wind isn't blowing then the energy demand has to come from other sources, unless it is stored....hence the need for BESS.

Have no doubt these will be large structures, (as was noted in our Alternative View series, the BESS at Whitelee wind farm is the size of half a football pitch)..and mostly they are needed as close to the place where the electricity demand is highest. It is universally acknowledged that power generators and supply should be as close to 'the load' (energy demand) as possible.

There are five BESS companies listed at companies house and all linked to BUTE (active and not yet trading). They are; Carmarthen BESS Ltd / Rhinos Bess Ltd / Lower Franklin Bess Ltd / Gwyddelwern Bess Ltd Cylfnydd Bess Ltd

This would mean BESS's should be springing up all over towns and cities. But surprisingly they are not wanted there...the power companies don't want to build them there as the land will be very expensive, and in densely populated areas the safety requirements will be far greater, as will the opposition.

So, placing BESS's as close to the load, along with wind turbines and solar panels along with gas back-up power stations rather than hundreds of miles away in Scotland & Wales is what we should really be aiming for. But this is unlikely to happen. Also there is a real fire risk from such units.

So it might seem placing them in remote areas is the best option but fires are better managed in urban areas. Remote fires, particularly in mountainous areas such as the Cambrians are harder to access,. The risk of moorland fires getting out of control is genuine.

LSE Study warns of significant loss to property value near power lines across Wales.

An extensive study by London School of Economics shows that properties situated up to 1500 meters from overhead pylons reduces prices by 3.9 pc. Properties up to 250 meters away will reduce on average 21pc. When applied to the UK average house price of £300,000 this will mean a loss of £63000. The research has suggested an average loss across properties sited near the lines will be @£12000.

The study, carried out by LSE professor Steve Gibbons and former PHD student Cheng Keat Tang, looked at the change in sale value of 38,000 homes in England and Wales located near pylons or power lines. They said "The results suggest the impact of these infrastructures are more widespread than previously estimated, collectively causing a loss in home values of around £19bn" Currently there are no restrictions on how close infrastructure can be built to a property or home. The researchers said up to 4 million homes are situated near power lines or pylons, with approximately 46,000 homes being within 100m of pylons, and 1.3 million homes up to 1200m away.

The researchers also warned the destruction of property values from pylons, and wind farms risks being so much that it would be cheaper to install them offshore. The Energy Networks Association which represents to UK's energy network operators said "wherever possible, infrastructure is located away from homes, but where this is unavoidable, a community benefit framework will provide support and clarity for communities hosting this vital infrastructure"

For many people in Ceredigion, and Carmarthenshire, their homes are their retirement fund, let alone their businesses. The National Grid do operate a compensation code scheme, but we understand that Bute & the Welsh Gov currently do not have plans to operate a similar scheme in Wales.

It means that anyone living within 1500 meters of a power line could expect to lose value on their homes and will not have anything other than a community benefit scheme to compensate them for their loss. Which is of course pointless for those who do manage to sell and move away from the community.

All our local Estate Agents are already suggesting that any properties in view of, or anywhere near pylons, will be much harder to sell, as people will simply look elsewhere.

Last year John Pettigrew CEO of National Grid said "we need to build seven times as much infrastructure across England and Wales in the next seven years than we have in the last 32 years"

Lampeter Town Hall meeting

On Monday 1st July, Lampeter Town Council hosted an open public meeting chaired by Councillor Gary Thoroughgood. Lorna Brazell from the Cambrian Mountain Society also gave a very in- depth and challenging presentation about how these proposals will affect the Cambrian mountains. Primarily LTC held this event so they can gauge public opinion in Lampeter & promote an open discussion of Bute & GreenGen's Turbine/Pylon proposals. The Town Council have said they will be making public their position in the very near future.

Don't PASS this by ...

In the CaruTeifi July newsletter we advised of funding from Ceredigion Nature Partnership for projects which would 'create, restore or enhance local natural assets'. Continuing on the theme of protecting the nation's natural environmental assets, this month we bring you PASS (the priority pond assessment survey conducted by the Freshwater Habitats Trust).

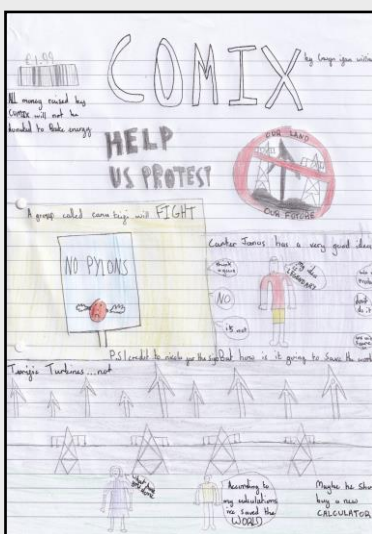
Not all ponds are equal it seems, some ponds provide such valuable and unique habitat that they are sought out and protected by planning authorities. The other very interesting thing about a priority ponds is that they are considered by planning authorities and the government in decision-making for planning applications and flood defence permits.

Obviously, we are not talking simple garden or ornamental ponds but ponds which occur in natural settings such as fields, woodland, moorland or perhaps even a large garden. A pond can be a permanent or seasonal body of water spanning from one sq meter to two hectares in size. They do not usually appear on maps used to plan the protection of freshwater habitats.

The range of plant and animal species supported, the age, or the rarity of the pond (such as ice-age ponds) can qualify a pond as priority. If you know of a pond which may qualify and are interested in having it assessed, more detail can be accessed here: [LINK](#) Surveys should be conducted by early October.

We wonder if GreenGen and Bute are engaging Pond Surveys as they continue to survey the area?

The protest is multi-generational



Our thanks to Gwyn, who handed us this brilliant poster when he came to our stand at the Llandewi Brefi Show. Gwyn is 9 years old and has a fantastic understanding of what the Towry Teifi pylon lines means for him. It will cut his farm in two! His future as a 9th generation farmer is seriously under threat!

Does Bute's generosity know no bounds?

We are all aware of their commitment to local communities, backed by their community fund (they keep telling us). We know they support everything from football to farmers mental health, and now we see they are an event partner (alongside the Welsh Government) at the Future Energy Wales 2024 Conference and Exhibition: [LINK](#)

This is an event to showcase 'the economic opportunities and strategic partnerships needed to speed up the transition to renewables across the UK'.

Perhaps Bute know a thing or two about the 'economic opportunities' presented by compulsory (cheap) purchase of land and 'earning' constraint payments: [LINK](#) for 'energy parks' even when they're not producing any energy. And as they stand alongside the Welsh Government at National Conferences, well perhaps they also know something about how to form a strategic partnership?

Indeed when it comes to funding worthwhile causes (whilst forming partnerships?) this piece in Nation Cymru: [LINK](#) shows that Bute's generosity might not be restricted to solely community funding. Still, Bute are looking to invest in local communities as it states on the Green Gen website: [LINK](#) There in black and green

'Bute Energy could invest approximately £800 million into the fund throughout the lifetime of the projects, with an estimated £20 million a year to communities, all funded by Bute's energy parks if consent is granted. This assumes £20 million per year for 40 years to reach £800 million. Read it again, could, approximately, 'estimated' ... 'if consent is granted. So, nothing definite and not a bribe or a threat?

But could might also meant could not. There are no guarantees or contractual obligations on Bute to pay any future investment to communities, not if they; sell the company, go bust, wind the company up, or if they decide; that the offer is impractical, not cost effective or they just don't want to do it anymore. But this is on Green Gens web page, they wouldn't put something misleading there would they?

Perhaps this might be of interest: [LINK](#)

The 40 years promise was dropped 3 months ago, the time period has been reduced to probably the life of the turbines (typically 20-25 years). The liability for the payments is the responsibility of separate limited liability companies (running each windfarm).

There are no underwriting arrangements if any company defaults. Just to add further uncertainty, all windfarms pool the funds which are then allocated like a National Lottery, there is no link between the funds generated by a windfarm and its use in the area of the windfarm.

And to quote '...the commitment simply remains an aspiration without any legal significance ... In the meantime communities weighing the benefits of the offer against the negative aspects of the developments should be aware of the flaws.'

The moral? If you are comfortable with pylons and turbines invading our countryside, but you do want to get some money out of Bute, get it now, while they still need your support because there is no guarantee you will see any money once they have got what they want.

Cellan Millenium Hall Drop-in

We thank the ladies from the Cellan community for organising and providing refreshments for a walk-in-session in the Millennium Hall on 3rd August. This attracted a large number of people to visit and learn more about the potential destruction of local rural areas by the proposed wind farm developments. The event proved a resounding success with many people relishing the opportunity to learn more and share their concerns with others in an informal setting.

Waun Maenllwyd Wind Energy Hub delayed

Belltown Power recently sent residents notice that the proposed wind farm above Llandewi Brefi has been delayed. They said:

The project has encountered some unexpected delays this year and as a result, we now anticipate submitting our planning application in Autumn 2025, with our Pre-Application Consultation period and public exhibitions in Spring/Summer 2025; approximately nine months later than previously planned. We will be in touch again prior to the launch of the next phase of consultation to provide details of our events and where to find out more information."