



Objection to the application for consent to carry out restricted works on Land on Eisteddfa Gurig Common (the installation of a temporary 80-metre high, steel meteorological monitoring mast), by Lluest y Gwynt Wind Farm Limited.

This objection from the Trustees of the Cambrian Mountains Society (CMS)

Date: 11th June 2021.

The Trustees of the Cambrian Mountains Society object to consent being given for these works on Eisteddfa Gurig Common on the grounds below.

1. The works would be contrary to Welsh Government policy

Section 3.3 ('Protecting Commons - our policy objectives') of Welsh Government's Guidance for Common Land Consents¹ states as objectives:

- *Safeguard commons for current and future generations to use and enjoy;*
- *Ensure that the special qualities of common land, including its open and unenclosed nature, are properly protected.*

The Eisteddfa Gurig Common forms a part of the Pumlumon massif, one of the most significant Upland Landscapes of Wales. Natural Resources Wales' (NRW) Geographical Information System (GIS) 'Landmap' gives the highest possible evaluations for the area;

| NRW LANDMAP ASSESSMENT OF PUMLUMON MASSIF | | | |
|---|-------------|------------------------------|-------------|
| Geological: | Outstanding | Habitats: | Outstanding |
| Historic: | Outstanding | Visual & Sensory: | Outstanding |

Just one example, taken from the Visual and Sensory evaluation, illustrates how important this landscape is:

“Highly dramatic and distinctive upland landscape with interest provided by variations of grass/moorland vegetation and rock exposures. Area is also popular as a tourism / informal recreation resource and gives the consensus on value.”

¹ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-01/common-land-consents-guidance.pdf>

Clearly, if WG's policy objectives are to be adhered to, then NRW's GIS evaluations preclude consent being given for these works.

2. The installation would both impede the legal right to roam and interfere with the Cambrian Way long-distance path

Section 3.9.3 of the Guidance ('The public interest') also weighs heavily against the granting of consent, for two reasons.

First, the public have a right to roam unimpeded across the Common, which is 'Access Land' under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Consent would remove at least 32m² from such access.

Secondly, the public footpath (18/52/A) passes very close to the proposed site. This is a well used Public Right of Way, as evidenced by the well-used car park at Eisteddfa Gurig. Not only is it one of only two rights of way giving walkers access to the summit of Pumlumon Fawr, the highest mountain in Mid Wales, but also forms part of the route 'The Cambrian Way', the classic cross-Wales mountain trek linking Cardiff to Conwy. The imposition of a tall mast alongside the footpath would have a very big impact on those wishing to use the Common for recreation and access, whether locals, tourists visiting the local area, or walkers taking advantage of the Cambrian Way to experience the great wildernesses of Wales. It is vital for the economy of Mid Wales that tourism is promoted and not discouraged by inappropriate development.

Section 3.9.3 moots the idea of exchange. But in this instance, designation of replacement land is not an option: you cannot replace the recreational and access amenity of this iconic big landscape by substituting distant and out of context land.

3. The existing telecoms mast

Almost in the same location as the proposed anemometer mast, another Developer has erected a telecommunications mast. This mast was erected despite Ceredigion CC refusing planning permission; we believe that refusal is under appeal with the PI (Appeal No.-327441). CMS' position is that the refusal should be upheld. But if that were not to be the outcome, the presence of two masts very close to each other² would in addition to their individual intrusiveness create clutter, intensifying the degradation of this Outstanding Landscape.

We attach as Annex 2 two photographs of the existing telecoms mast to illustrate the harmful effect it already has on the sense of remoteness and openness of the landscape.

4. Further considerations

CMS Trustees further object to this development, and the despoilation of Common land, for the reasons set out in its previous objection to this installation Planning Application No. – A210079 with Ceredigion County Council (current status "In progress"). We attach a copy of that objection for ease of reference as Annex 1. In summary:

² Proposed anemometer mast Grid Ref SN789.844.
Telecoms mast (already in place) Grid Ref SN787.850

- The Common is within Ceredigion CC's 'Special Landscape Area 12';
- The proximity to the Pumlumon SSSI;
- The Common is within 'The Upland Ceredigion Registered Historic Landscape';
- The Common is within a 'Tactical Training Area';
- The proposed mast is very precocious to the proposed DNS application for Llest y Gwynt wind farm.

Yours faithfully



Mr. P. Foulkes (Acting Chair)
on behalf of the Trustees of the Cambrian Mountains Society.

Annex 1

Objection to Planning Application:- A210079 – "Installation and operation of a temporary meteorological testing mast for a period of 3 years..... No change of use required." To be installed on land identified as Yr Ochrydd by the Applicant.

Objection from the Trustees of the Cambrian Mountains Society.

Objection submitted 24th February 2021.

The Trustees of the Cambrian Mountains Society object to the construction of the meteorological testing mast on the following grounds:- A, B, C, D, E and F.

A. That the proposed mast is to be sited within registered Common Land. Sections 38/39 of the Commons Act 2006 state that any build such as this must have regard to public interest, in particular;

- "Conservation of landscape" – the Pumlumon massif is widely recognised as an iconic landscape of Wales, (see B. below)

- "Nature conservation" – here we have a delicate upland habitat/ecosystem, (see C. below)

- "Conservation of public rights of access" – the area is, under the CRoW Act 2000, 'Access Land' and therefore the public have a right to roam unimpeded everywhere within the area. Fencing around the mast's photovoltaic panels also help to prevent such a public right. In addition, the proposed mast is within 200 metres of a Public Footpath – one of only two Public Rights of Way that ascend this, the highest mountain in the Cambrian Mountains.

CMS Trustees contend that the proposed anemometer mast will damage all three of the above facets of the public interest.

B. That the proposed mast is to be sited within SLA12 " Northern Uplands" part of Ceredigion CC's SPG – 'Special Landscape Areas' supplement to the LDP. To quote from that document "...concerned with the protection and enhancement of landscape character" (Section 1.1.1)

CMS Trustees contend that the construction of this mast will be contra to the above guidance. Although the

Applicant has relocated, downslope, the mast from its earlier planning application (A200333) the newly proposed mast is still close to the Pumlumon SSSI - "One of the most important upland areas for Nature Conservation in Wales, being of special interest for its vegetation types and bird fauna."* (*CCW/NRW citation for Pumlumon SSSI)

Here can we also reacquaint you with that the Authority, on the 13th October 2020, turned down permission for a telecommunications mast (A200624) not too distant from this application on the grounds that,

"1. The proposal is contrary to Policies DM06, DM17 and DM18 of the LDP as the development fails to be sensitively and sympathetically sited within the landscape, and would negatively impact its qualities.

2. The proposal is contrary to Policy DM14 of the LDP. NRW have significant concerns with the potential impact the proposed development would have on the nearby SSSI."

D. That the proposed mast would be erected within the 'Upland Ceredigion Registered Historic Landscape'. The mast would be in plain view of the summit of Pumlumon Fawr which as the CPAT Report, completed on behalf of the Applicant, states is an "eponymous mountain with its collection of Bronze Age funerary monuments."

E. That the proposed mast would be erected inside a Tactical Training Area (TTA-7T), part of the UK Government's Military Low Flying System. Both RAF trainers and combat aircraft are regularly seen flying low over this area.

F. That the proposed mast is a preliminary to the proposed Lluest y Gwynt Wind Farm. This proposed development is in the very early planning stages, at the moment it is in 'pre-application' with DNS Wales Planning Inspectorate. Following Lluest y Gwynt Wind Farm Ltd's own timetable (and this date put in place at the early stages of the Covid pandemic) they do not expect to even submit their application before summer 2021. CMS Trustees therefore see this mast planning application as 'jumping the gun.'

Further to this, the application for the above windfarm lies in an area outside the WG's TAN 8 Strategic Search Area D (Nanty Moch) and should be refused on this basis.

In addition, to bring matters up to date, WG on the 24th February 2021 put in place its new high level planning document - "Future Wales - The National Plan 2040." This document, on page 94, maps "Pre-assessed areas for wind energy" none of which are remotely close to the Pumlumon / Nant y Moch area. Policy 17 (page 95) of the document includes the statement: -

"In Pre Assessed Areas for Wind Energy the Welsh Government has already modelled the likely impact on the landscape and has found them to be capable of accommodating development in an acceptable way. There is a presumption in favour of large scale wind energy development (including repowering) in these areas, subject to the criteria in policy 18."

In relation to the Document's Policy 18, and item E (above) please see Policy 18/8 of the policy as regards to TTA-7T.

As the introduction to the Document states: - "Planning decisions at every level of the planning system in Wales must be taken in accordance with the development plan as a whole. Future Wales replaces the Wales Spatial Plan." Therefore, with what should be little prospect of permission being granted for the Lluest y Gwynt Wind Farm, CMS Trustees reassert, why the need for a meteorological monitoring mast.

Mr. Peter Foulkes, Acting Chairperson on behalf of CMS Trustees.

ANNEX 2

Two views of telecommunications Mast on Eisteddfa Gurig Common.

