

Dumgal **Against** Pylons



Newsletter

March / April 2016

The campaign against Scottish Power Energy Networks' (SPEN) plans for pylons and substations continues despite Scottish Power withdrawing their plans after an assessment by National Grid.

SPEN Rethink – Our Thoughts

SPEN has gone back to the drawing-board.

National Grid has carried out an assessment of SPEN's plans and have concluded that other options are "more economic". You can read National Grid's full assessment (considering schemes across the UK) [here](#) (and follow the link to the NOA Report).

So what does this mean for us in Dumfries and Galloway? While this is great news, can DGAP pack up? Has the threat evaporated?

First of all, let's celebrate! It is a great development and more than we could realistically have hoped for at this stage.

Sadly, however, it's not all over. From the outset, we have appreciated that the existing transmission network is ageing and will to be replaced some time in the future and that some modest uprating may be required to transmit the excess power from on-shore wind farms out of the region to England and Wales where demand exists. SPEN will, therefore, be back with an alternative scheme. We need to make sure that it is appropriate and does not have the enormous detrimental consequences that would have resulted from their last attempt.

So, DGAP goes on!

We will continue to work with politicians both regional and national, speak to key influencers, publicise the campaign while, all the time, keeping a close eye on SPEN.

We expect SPEN to announce their alternative plan during the next 12 months but, before that, we intend to continue to contact, meet with, and influence some of the key organisations involved in the process. Our aim is to ensure that SPEN's next proposal includes infrastructure that is appropriate to our region, namely by utilising similar-size pylons to the existing ones, following a similar route and reusing the current substations wherever possible.

In the News

We are really sorry that our Press Officer, Deborah Galbraith, is unable to continue in this role. Deborah built up an amazing list of media contacts and has been responsible for recent press articles recently. The piece on "Out of Doors" on BBC Radio Scotland recently was her doing. We will miss her greatly!

If you could help in this role or know someone who might, please contact any member of the [committee](#).

Spread the Word!

Why not forward this newsletter to a friend? Please ask them to like our [Facebook](#) page, follow us on Twitter @Dgagainstpylons and visit www.dumgalagainstpylons.org. Encourage your friends to be added to the email list by writing to: no2pylons@gmail.com. You can still sign the Kirkmahoe [Petition](#).

Please join DGAP. Details of how to do so are on the [website](#).

More Meetings

We believe that it is critical to ensure that the key decision-makers understand our concerns and how the region's electrical transmission needs can be met without significant damage to the people and economy of the region.

Recently (but before the "rethink" announcement) we took our case to Ofgem at a meeting organised by Joan McAlpine MSP where we met the Head of Ofgem for Scotland (amongst others). We explained our alternative to SPEN's original proposal, gave a view on how Scottish Power could improve their communications, explained why Scottish Power's "Needs Case" should be made public immediately and outlined the requirement for research into the impact of the project (see below). The Ofgem representatives were very receptive and asked that we report back following a meeting that Joan McAlpine is also trying to arrange with Scottish Power.

We will also be taking our message to Westminster. We met Archie MacNeill, chair of the Energy Select Committee on Wednesday 13 April 2016. We will post notes of both meetings on the [news page](#) of the Dumgal Against Pylons website soon.

How Damaging are Pylons?

While making the case for our alternative proposal to SPEN's plans, we have been hampered by the lack of academic research dealing with likely impacts on the host environment arising from major electrical infrastructure projects. We wanted to find data on the social, economic and environmental impacts but there is surprisingly little of any substance, although the likes of National Grid have conducted commercial research. This is not just a problem for us but for all those in the industry who lack firm evidence that can help guide decision-making.

There is anecdotal evidence from the Beaully-Denny line suggesting that transmission infrastructure is inflicting significant environmental damage on local people but there is no hard evidence because there has been no research undertaken.

It is our belief that there should be robust evidence to confirm (or contradict) the perception that a large infrastructure project will have a significant detrimental effect on the environment, the economy and people living and working in Dumfries and Galloway.

We have prepared a research proposal: "An investigation into the potential impact of a high-voltage electricity transmission infrastructure project on Dumfries & Galloway" and we are currently working with academic institutions that could undertake this work. You can find a link to a copy of the draft proposal on the [news page](#) of the website.

It is our belief that this research is an essential prerequisite to guide decision making and should be completed before any significant infrastructure project is proposed.