

The Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland

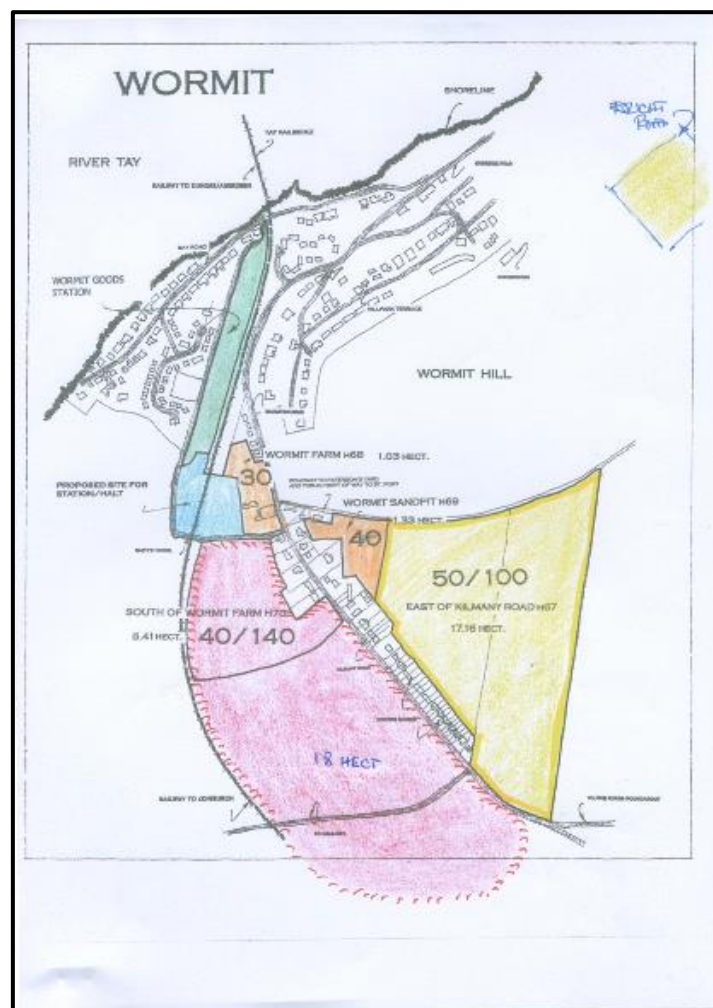
Planning Case Study 1

2009: APRS Defeats Proposed Housing Development in Fife

Background A local Fife resident who had been an APRS member for 5 years contacted APRS in July 2009 seeking support in opposing an application for planning permission in principle for a proposed development of up to 200 houses on a greenfield site on the edge of Wormit.

APRS Action APRS Director John Mayhew researched the local development plan and assessed the application against the policies and allocations in that plan. As a result, APRS submitted an objection to Fife Council in September 2009 and issued a press release publicising its reasons for doing so. The grounds of objection were that the site was not allocated for housing in the Local Plan, that it would damage the landscape of a designated Area of Great Landscape Value and that no fewer than three alternative brownfield sites were available nearby, which should be developed first if new housing was required.

Outcome Fife Council refused the application in November 2010.



Potential development sites in Wormit

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Planning Case Study 2

2010: APRS Defeats Proposed Wind Farm in Perthshire

Background Standingfauld Environmental Action Group (SEAG) contacted APRS in January 2010 to seek advice and support for their opposition to a proposed 8-turbine wind farm near Braco.

APRS Action APRS Director John Mayhew studied the developer's Environmental Statement and visited the site. In February 2010 APRS submitted an objection to Perth & Kinross Council (PKC) on the grounds of adverse landscape impact, loss of amenity, cumulative impact, lack of information on grid connection and failure to assess the likely impact on the historic gardens and designed landscapes at Drummond Castle and Gleneagles Hotel.

Outcome PKC refused the application in May 2011. The developer appealed to the Scottish Government, APRS confirmed its objection in August 2011 and the Scottish Government dismissed the appeal in December 2011. Two SEAG members joined APRS during this period and have remained members ever since.

Thursday February 11, 2010

SPLIT: Community opinion divided over the wind farm Standingfauld. And Bill Thomson leading the group against it (below)



Locals still split on turbines

by HENRY AINSLIE

CAMPAIGNERS against the proposed eight turbine Standingfauld wind farm near Muthill have hit back at claims the project has the backing of surrounding communities.

It last week emerged that Perth and Kinross council's planning department had received over 140 letters of support for the Standingfauld project – backed by Welsh firm West Coast Energy – compared with just 40 letters of objection.

West Coast Energy says the quantity of supporting comments show the result a successful community engagement campaign during which the developers have held public meetings and met community councils across Strathallan and Strathearn.

But Bill Thomson, chairman of pressure group Standingfauld Environmental Action Group has questioned the significance of claims of community backing, saying previous one line comments are diluting genuine letters – of both objection and support.

He told the Strathallan News: This was nothing more than a desperate effort by the wind farm developer to seek support for their inappropriately sited proposed wind farm at Standingfauld.

"Campaigners set up a stall outside the Co-op in Auchterarder on 18 and 19 January where they collected some 140 letters of 'support' for Standingfauld.

"These 'pro forma' 1 line letters say 'I wish to support this application because' and then a few words are added. However, some of the letters are blank, some are illegible and others have comments such as 'Wind is free', 'They look good' or 'We like them'.

"Genuine arguments are being missed as a result. We believe Standingfauld breaches planning guidelines and the applicant's environmental statement is lacking in many areas.

"Ultimately it is of course for the Council to make that decision. However if planning were granted it would be hugely detrimental to the health and well-being of local residents, have a significant impact on internationally protected wildlife as well as negatively impacting on our economy and tourism."

But supporters of the Standingfauld Wind farm argue it will benefit Strathallan and Strathearn.

Katharine Hugget of Supporters of Standingfauld Wind farm said: "We do have several highly visible wind farms in Perthshire.

"Standingfauld has been designed to fit the location and will not be visible for long distances and the Turbine heads will blend in with the background.

"This in now way effects the efficiency of the site which will feed into the national grid sufficient power for all the homes in Auchterarder, Crieff, Blackford, Greenloaning, Braco and Muthill. The amount of power from this small scale development should not be underestimated."

The extended deadline for submitting comments on the Standingfauld planning application is next Tuesday, February 16.





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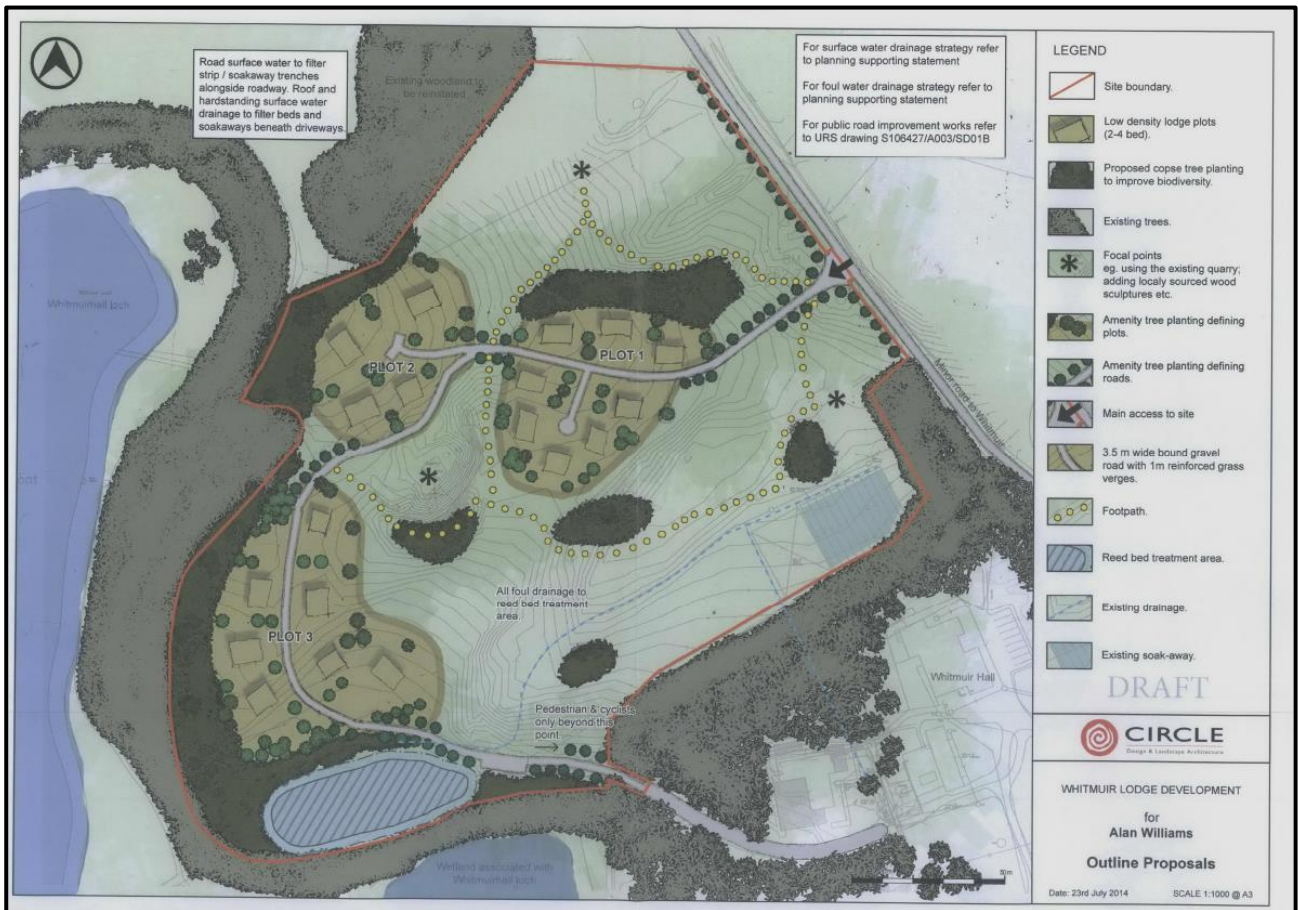
Planning Case Study 3

2011: APRS Defeats Proposed Holiday Lodge Development in the Borders

Background Two local residents contacted APRS in September 2011 seeking advice and support for their opposition to a proposed development of 28 holiday lodges in the grounds of Whitmuir Hall near Selkirk.

APRS Action APRS Director John Mayhew assessed the application and submitted an objection to Scottish Borders Council (SBC) in October 2011 on the grounds that the development would contravene Structure Plan and Local Plan policies on sustainability, quality standards, travel demand and biodiversity. As a result of this both local residents joined APRS and have remained members ever since.

Outcome SBC refused the application in December 2011. In September 2014 the developer submitted a revised application for 19 holiday lodges on the same site, to which APRS submitted a further objection on the same grounds.



Outline Proposals September 2014

The Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland

Planning Case Study 4

2012: APRS Tackles Proposed Power Station in Morayshire

Background Local action group 'Save our Speyside' (SOS) contacted APRS in February 2012, on the advice of a long-serving local member whom APRS had previously helped with advice on a wind turbine application. SOS oppose the construction of a 50MW biomass power station by energy firm Estover in a prominent location near Craigellachie in an Area of Great Landscape Value. The power station would provide steam to the nearby Macallan distillery and sell electricity to the national grid. The concerns raised by SOS included the proposed scale of lorry movements and likely adverse landscape and biodiversity impacts, particularly on red squirrels.

APRS Action APRS planning volunteer Karol Swanson assessed the proposal and advised SOS in relation to pre-application consultation procedures, relevant planning considerations and how to argue that the proposal contravened Moray Council's development plan. Karol offered to advise further once the application had been submitted; she invited SOS to join APRS and suggested other relevant organisations to contact. SOS responded to say that the advice and offer of support from APRS was very much appreciated. Karol also phoned the SOS representative to talk through some of the issues involved in more detail. APRS invited SOS to submit an article on their campaign for the *Rural Scotland* newsletter; this was published in Spring 2012. Estover submitted a planning application in September 2012 and substantial additions on December 2012.

Outcome The application was approved by Moray Council in August 2014; construction is likely to start soon.



Artist's impression of proposed biomass power station

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Planning Case Study 5

2012: APRS Defeats Proposed School Extension in Inverclyde

Background A local action group based in Kilmacolm, 'Save Milton Woods' (SMW), contacted Scottish Environment LINK in June 2012 to seek advice in opposing the construction of a private school extension, including car park and road, in Green Belt woodland which forms part of a historic garden and designed landscape and is a Site of Interest to Nature Conservation. LINK forwarded the query to APRS as the most likely LINK member body to be able to help.

APRS Action APRS planning volunteer Joan Geddes assessed the application and advised SMW to argue that this development would be inappropriate given the clear presumption in national planning policy against development in Green Belts, that it would be of excessive scale (approximately three times the size of the existing school building) and would have adverse effects on natural heritage, landscape character and visual amenity. APRS Director John Mayhew invited SMW to join APRS. When APRS was working up its *Revealing Local Landscapes* project proposal in 2012 it contacted SMW to ask if it might find this sort of approach helpful. SMW's response was: *"Looks good and as a local group we would love to be part of it as it's going right along with what we are trying to do"*.

Outcome The proposed extension was refused by Inverclyde Council in January 2013.



Save Milton Woods protest march

The Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland

Planning Case Study 6

2013: APRS Tackles Proposed Housing Development in South Ayrshire

Background A local Ayrshire resident contacted APRS via its website in June 2013, to seek advice on how to oppose a major housing development in a historic designed landscape near Symington.

APRS Action APRS Director John Mayhew first researched the lengthy planning history of the site. This dated back to 2002 when the principle of 'enabling development' of up to 40 houses was first agreed by the local Council, despite being against Local Plan policies, in order to secure the restoration of A-listed Coodham House. Since then the House had been converted into 9 apartments but only 3 of the 40 approved houses had been built. The developers had applied for variations to the planning conditions, particularly in relation to nearby trunk road improvements, and were now claiming that they needed to build 110 houses rather than 40 to offset the loss they had made converting the house. John Mayhew then phoned the local resident the next day and offered advice on how to engage in the planning process. This included identifying which arguments might be most effective, particularly those relating to the setting of a listed building and potential allies including the local Community Council and relevant statutory agencies. He invited her to phone again if she needed additional advice on any further developments. He also invited her to join APRS, which she duly did and has remained a member ever since.

Outcome The outcome of this case awaits determination by South Ayrshire Council.

The screenshot shows the website for Coodham Estate, featuring a large image of the main house and several promotional banners. The navigation menu includes: HOME | ABOUT COODHAM | THE DEVELOPMENT | THE APARTMENTS | THE HOUSES | CONTACT US. A prominent red banner on the right side of the main image reads: "PRICE REDUCTIONS! CALL FOR MORE DETAILS". Below the main image are three promotional boxes: 1. "FOR FURTHER INFORMATION & TO ARRANGE A VIEWING CONTACT SLATER HOGG & HOWISON ON" with location "NEWTON MEANS" and email "INFO@COODHAM.CO.UK". 2. "ANOTHER HOME SOLD NOW ONLY REMAINING DISCOVER YOUR NEXT HOME NOW". 3. "COODHAM ESTATE FEATURED IN INTERNATIONAL HOMES LUXURY COLLECTION". Below these is a "FOR MORE INFORMATION DOWNLOAD OUR BROCHURE" button. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column is titled "WELCOME TO COODHAM ESTATE" and describes the development as "A DEVELOPMENT OF LUXURY PROPERTIES IN AYRSHIRE" located in South Ayrshire. It mentions that the A-listed exterior of Coodham House has been restored and the interior is re-constructed into six luxury apartments and three unique designer houses. Prices (recently reduced) range from £299,000 to £599,000. The right column is titled "COODHAM AT A GLANCE:" and lists "Properties remaining": West Wing: A 4 bedroom property, Was £659,500 Now £569,000; East Penthouse: A 2 bedroom apartment, Under offer; East Duplex: 3 bedroom property, Was £540,000 Now £469,000; The Chapel: A 4 bedroom property, Was £628,000 Now £599,000.

Coodham Estate – Developers' Website

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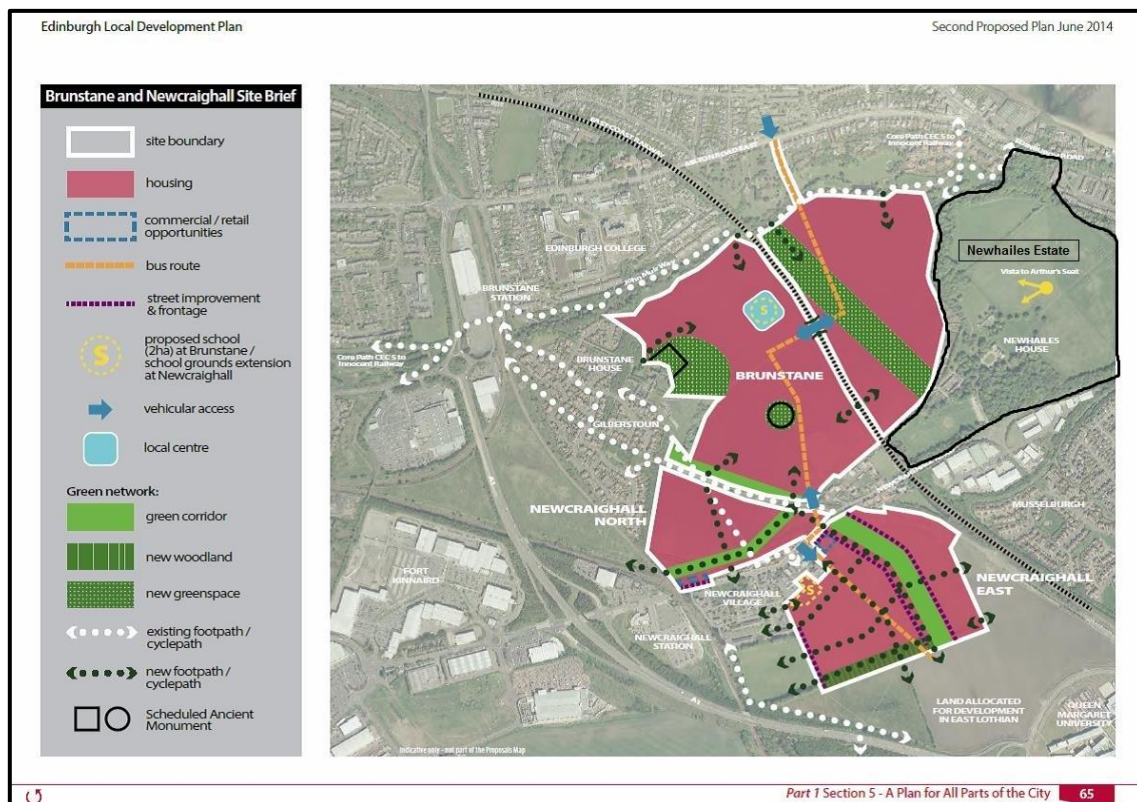
Planning Case Study 7

2014: APRS Tackles Proposed Green Belt Development in Edinburgh

Background The National Trust for Scotland (NTS) was founded by APRS in 1931 and has since grown to become Scotland's largest charity and its fourth largest landowner. NTS staff contacted APRS in September 2014, requesting advice on how to oppose the allocation of land for over 1,300 houses in the Proposed Edinburgh Local Development Plan (LDP). NTS was concerned that this would permanently damage the setting of Newhailes Estate, which a historic designed landscape of outstanding importance surrounding A-listed Newhailes House and Stables Block. The proposed development would also result in the undesirable coalescence of Edinburgh and Musselburgh, in contravention of national Scottish Planning Policy on Green Belts.

APRS Action APRS Director John Mayhew was in a good position to advise NTS, being familiar with Newhailes and the pressures on the neighbouring Green Belt due to his previous role as Head of Policy and Planning at NTS. He emailed NTS with detailed advice, both on the required content of an objection letter to the LDP and also on the wider political campaign which would inevitably be necessary to prevent the land being developed for housing. This issue has subsequently become increasingly controversial, including an article in *The Scotsman* by a former Edinburgh Councillor highlighting the potential for conflict of interest and lack of transparency given that the land concerned is owned by Edinburgh City Council.

Outcome At the time of writing (November 2014) the outcome of this issue awaits the final decision of the council regarding LDP development allocations.



Brunstane Site Brief – extract from Proposed Edinburgh Local Development Plan June 2014