

~~Gene~~ Blessed with the Wind

A role-play, in which the Community Benefits Charity asks the offshore wind farm developer to contribute to community benefit, for the district.

Dramatis Personae:

Mr/Ms. Offshore Developer: The CEO of the 3GW offshore windfarm development company. [OD]

Mr/Ms Chief Negotiator: The Chief Negotiator of the Final Entity Charity [CN]

[CN]

Good morning Mr/Ms Offshore Developer, thank you for your time to meet me

[OD]

That's OK, what can I do for you?

[CN]

We are an organisation, formed from nine community councils in Aberdeenshire, set up to collect annual community benefits and to distribute them wisely amongst the people of that area.

[OD]

I've heard of this, what sort of money are you looking for?

[CN]

Well, onshore windfarms are currently contributing £7,500 per Megawatt installed capacity per year. We are hoping you would match that from your development, once it is up and running.

[OD]

Let me see. At 3GW you would be looking for [*pause*] twenty two million five hundred thousand pounds a year?

[CN]

Yes, that is what we are hoping from you.

[OD]

That is a lot of money! I don't see why we should feel obliged to pay that. We are 75km out to sea from Aberdeenshire with just one cable coming ashore. It is not as if we were planning to install the 200 of our 20MW turbines on your green hills amongst you. Our job is to deliver 3000 megawatts of power onto the shore. What is done with it is someone else's problem and we are sorry the resulting infrastructure upsets some people, but it's not our fault.

[OD]

And anyway, your North East Scotland Convention of Community Councils has issued a public statement calling for a pause in our operations, whilst some newly-appointed committee or other decides whether we should continue or not in the way we are currently.

[CN]

I'm afraid you are correct. But some local people feel that they are being railroaded into significant industrialisation of their countryside, for no perceivable benefit to them, other than helping to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. They are just not happy.

[OD]

Have you any idea of the consequences of the government mandating a pause to the development, mid project? Dozens of contracting companies affected, all interlinked and choreographed, with supply contracts including penalty clauses for late delivery. Equipment half built, then mothballed for some indeterminate time. Several billion invested into the

construction, with financial returns then delayed. The international investors would have no recourse but to sue the government for damages, along with the other developers of similar projects that are feeding into the NE of Scotland. This is now going on in USA where Trump's attempt to stop them has been thwarted by the courts.

[OD]
What sort of a message would this put out? "Don't invest in Britain, they are not a safe and reliable partner".
"Concentrate instead in the EU with their approved three artificial North Sea islands surrounded by thousands of wind turbines, set to power the whole of Western Europe".

[CN]
I agree with you, it would be a disaster of the first magnitude. But here is where I think we could help.

[CN]
Your contribution, together with a proportionate amount from the other developers, would make available about annually, a one hundred and eighty million pound injection into the NE communities once the wind farms are fully generating. Not government money, but directly into the communities who know best where to spend it.

[CN]
In return for this, the community councils would promote what you are developing, emphasising the benefits like part-funded childcare, more doctors, more hospice beds, food-banks, apprenticeships and so much more!

[CN]
With this sort of annual income, many community councils might band together with part of the money, to influence the restoration of the NE Scotland rail link, propelling our sleepy fishing towns and declining oil and gas industry towards something akin to the Edinburgh-Glasgow central belt, with its industries and wealth generation for Scotland.

[CN]
We are offering you a partnership, with a seat in our organisation, to help this come about. Think of the good publicity this would bring! Think of the help this would give you with your other proposals in the world, when you can turn around and say, "Look what we have done for the people of NE Scotland!"

[CN]
At your strike price of £140 per Megawatt-hour and 3000 megawatts, your gross revenue is four hundred and twenty thousand pounds an hour, over ten million pounds a day. If I may presume you will have three hundred days a year of usable wind, this is a gross revenue of just over three billion pounds. All we are asking for is 0.74 percent of this, to partner with us to help transform the lives of the communities you are indirectly affecting.

[CN] What do you think?

The End