GLARE was launched in November 2004 by a group of concerned Galloway residents in reaction to the proliferation of proposals & planning applications to build wind farms (or, more correctly, wind power stations) in Dumfries and Galloway and all over Scotland.

Not politically motivated, GLARE is a non-profit making local unincorporated association. Having gathered growing support from local residents, businesses and distinguished persons, GLARE now has a large register of supporters and is committed to providing well-researched and factual information about the appropriateness of any given wind power station proposal, whilst also promoting other sources of renewable energy and calling for the creation of a balanced National Energy Policy.

Targets

- Onshore industrial wind power station construction appears to be the only ‘quick fix’ means of achieving the apparent ‘capacity’ targeted. However, there is no guarantee, given recent weather trends, that finding ways to erect that capacity would actually result in the required amounts of electricity actually being delivered at wind turbine sites, still less efficiently or economically ‘sold’ to those at the point of need or use which are likely to be many miles away. Carrying out such a policy of massive onshore construction, even if there were no huge public outcry, would entail very high land use with consequent impacts on wildlife, ecology, amenity value and Scotland’s tourist economy, in addition to the very high social costs implied by increased electricity charges, given the extent of Scotland’s population currently enduring fuel poverty in adverse weather conditions over the last two winters.
- It is self evident that reducing even all of Scotland’s carbon dioxide emissions would make no more than a microscopic impact on the global position. The number of businesses relocating and jobs lost with resulting devastating social and economic costs is a very high price to pay for what can only be interpreted as ‘gesture politics’ based on ‘uncertain science.’
- More must be done urgently with regard to making our homes and living and working spaces more energy efficient by combined heat and power systems, insulation etc and by the exploitation of ground source heat in our urban communities for example.
- There is little evidence publicly available that overall costs of previously existing and new targets have been estimated. The reality for most people is the bill they have to pay and the noise and intrusion into their lives that wind turbines cause.

Challenges

- The technology to meet the targets is, with regard to wind turbines, available at a cost but neither efficient nor affordable in any sense, not just money.
- Wind turbines undermine security of supply. In addition it would cause public outcry if during a power cut (frequent in SW Scotland) wind turbines were to be seen either generating electricity for export or, on a typically cold windless day, not turning at all, or on a very cold very windy day, the wind turbines...
having to be closed down and still being paid for the electricity they might have produced and the ROCs as well.

- It seems unlikely that England would wish to ‘buy’ expensive intermittent supplies of electricity from Scotland especially when Scotland would probably need to ‘buy’ secure nuclear generated supplies of electricity from England or the Continent. English consumers would certainly be unlikely to want to share the transmission costs added to their bills.

Planning & Consents
- The planning system is supposed to allow local people to make local decisions. In the case of wind power stations no questioning of any underlying principles, such as ‘Do wind turbines deliver what they offer’ is allowable. The regular overturning of locally arrived at democratic decision-making over the siting of wind power stations and transmission routes is leading to a crisis of confidence in the democratic process itself.
- Whether wind power stations are a ‘national priority’ could only be decided by referendum.

Access to finance
- Existing investment from foreign companies seems to be more a means of making money from consumers out of the so-called ‘green taxes’ than any altruistic intervention.
- Recent hikes in energy bills are a matter of public record (and increasingly voiced concern).

Skills and workforce development
- Current policies should be redirected to fostering those renewable technologies which are currently in development. Too many ‘bright ideas’ have to go abroad to be developed.

Energy market reform and the subsidy regime
It is the considered view of the many residents who contribute to GLARE’s responses that subsidy to wind should be redirected to other developing technologies. Only in a subsidy-free market would wind energy electricity generation technology find its proper niche in meeting specific need.

Galloway Landscape and Renewable Energy
28 February 2012