

Hareshaw Village Association – Village meeting – 21 April 2026

Jim Wilson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

He gave thanks to Fiona in attendance to take the minutes and Agnes, Valery and Gillian for their help on the registration desk this evening.

Jim mentioned that he assumed everyone had been able to read the leaflet that the Committee members posted through doors in the village – he explained that the leaflet has all the details we were able to gather from the internet with respect to the proposed Data Centre and Battery Storage facility listed on the Planning site and covering the land of North and South Lanridge Farms. He stated that we are very fortunate that we managed to get this information in a timely manner and that it was down to it being spotted on the planning website by Fiona M who picked up on it and made Jim aware.

Jim addressed everyone in the hall from the village and asked firstly who amongst them were against the proposal. By the show of hands it was evident that those in attendance from the village were against the proposal. Jim then asked if anyone was for the proposal and no hands were raised.

Jim then pointed out that Councillor John Joe Leckie was in attendance. He asked that Councillor Leckie noted that the whole village in attendance at the meeting were against the development.

Jim then pointed out that Councillor Margaret Hughes was also in attendance.

Jim addressed Councillors Leckie and Hughes. He said that one of the things that many of the villages have said to him is that there was no notification for the villagers of Hareshaw to be consulted on the development.

Councillor Hughes clarified that she is on the planning committee but cannot comment on the development this evening – she stated that she was attending in her capacity as a councillor only to listen to the views of the village.

She commented that she is unaware of why we, as a village, were not notified when other villages in surrounding areas were.

Jim asked that the earlier vote is taken on board and shared with her colleagues.

Jim also said he was disappointed to note that Neil Gray (MSP) wasn't in attendance at the meeting tonight, to which Councillor Hughes said she would message him and ask him to come along.

Jim then said that we now have permission from the people in the hall this evening to look into this development and the implications for the village on their behalf. He stated that we have maps but we have not had any explanation on what is going to happen with the development. There has been no information we have been provide with or been able to find that clarifies how the development will obtain supplies of water, electricity etc. He mentioned that there are a lot of issues associated with developments of this type that need to be considered. Jim stated that there are supposed to be two consultations according to the information on the planning website, in April and June. He said that he has asked on several occasions and so far he is not aware of their being any consultations in the hall so far in April. The information that was obtained and on display on the notice board at the meeting was handed out in the hall to a previous meeting in Salsburgh, however, we as a village were not notified of the meeting.

Jim said that we really want to enforce the matter of democracy and expect our elected representatives to be here to listen to what we say. He went on to introduce Julie Harkins to the meeting - a lady who, prior to retirement, worked with the Scottish Fire Service in a senior managerial position.

Julie went on to present the following:-

When I heard about the data centre, having spent 30 years working in health and safety, it did concern me. I agreed to do some research into the proposed data centre and battery storage facility.

The key hazard stemming from data centres is fire. What makes fires in a data centre more challenging is the nature of the fire because of the chemicals present. This can create a thermal runaway which makes it incredibly difficult to extinguish and there is also a chance of emissions of extremely toxic gasses. This can be disastrous.

There are risks associated with:-

Explosion as expected with lithium ion batteries and also diesel fumes from back-up generators required to ensure against any dips in power or complete loss of energy on the site.

Off gassing and Toxicity - leakage of toxic gases such as hydrogen fluoride, electrolytes.

Noise from generators is a constant humming noise which we may hear within the village.

The higher the megawatts the higher the risks associated – we are so far unable to clarify the proposed megawatt input required for the facility.

The UK Gov Government recognises the safety risks associated with data centres and battery storge units and have listed British standards that they expect developers to adhere to in order to mitigate the many risks. There are 7 to 8 pages of requirements.

There is a need for a detailed bi-directional risk assessment for the proposal, including but not limited to the risks associated with fire, weather, flooding, land, subsidence and also considerations such as flora and fauna and the surrounding countryside.

Before granting any permission to this development – the council should have full impact statements of the environmental impacts. There are 1834 environmental constraints listed by the council on their site which should be assessed. These include:-

Mine gas risk zones, surface water, flood risk, presence of a coal strata mining and quarry, air shafts, river flood risk (SEPA), mineral railway, previous chemical manufacture, previous cement, ceramics and asphalt manufacture, ancient woodland, tree preservation orders, site of interest and greenbelt considerations. The development information doesn't include the presence of a village in the adjacent grounds, it doesn't make reference to main gas pipe which cuts through the village, livestock on site or agriculture.

Within or next to the proposed development we also have:

- Hareshaw village
- Water courses
- High pressure gas pipe
- Agricultural land
- Livestock
- Significant electrical energy supply for the data centre. The village already has challenges with its electricity.
- The need for vast amounts of water (average of 355million gallons)
- Poor infrastructure within the village
- Use of greenbelt particularly with the growing food shortages due to armed conflicts
- Presence of a petrol station next to the proposed site
- In the flight path of international and local airports
- Proximity to M8, a part of the Scottish Government Critical National Infrastructure – vital connectivity between Glasgow and Edinburgh

The information doesn't make reference to the pull on our energy system that these developments require. Most data centres are around 400 megawatts. This is the same amount of energy that the entirety of Scotland requires during the winter months.

There is no clarification of where this power will come from.

Data centres also need substantial amounts of water to keep the systems cool. For a 400 megawatt centre, 355million gallons of water would be required.

If a robust risk assessment was undertaken, I cannot see how this planning site fulfils the requirements needed to house a data centre.

City of Edinburgh undertook a full risk assessment with developers for similar proposals in Edinburgh. They were asked to submit 26 separate reports detailing how they thought it was a green data centre. The proposal was rejected by Edinburgh City Council.

The UK Government also states former industrial or brownfield sites should be considered for such developments due to reduced impact to those sites.

Lastly I became aware of a number of charities that have written to ministers – asking to make full impact assessment, and environmental impact assessments mandatory for such proposals – the Scottish Government has rejected this with the exception of a publication laying out guidance only.

The Green party are still maintaining support for the mandatory impact assessments.

Most of us acknowledge that AI is a growing part of our environment. This isn't a case of NIMBY – not in my back yard. This proposal is on green belt in our village. When you look at the amount of environmental impacts identified, it doesn't make any sense to me why they are proposing on building in this area.

A round of applause followed.

Jim thanked Julie and stated that we are blessed in the village with people who have lots of knowledge and are happy to help. He then asked John Ross share some points with the room.

John Ross

What was obvious to me is that there was no risk assessment done at all for this development, no thought. Some of the stuff listed was American, generators could be disastrous. There are already kids with respiratory conditions. The government are stopping diesel cars going into our cities but they are going to bring diesel generators and pollutants out to our rural areas. There are proposals for a solar farm in Newarthill. There is no information on where they are going to get water for the proposed site.

I did find that there was a website called Scot AI growth zone. The main site proposed that there would be a 500 megawatt data centre at South Lanridge and a 400 megawatt data centre proposed at Newhouse with a 40 megawatt development at Chapelhall. That is an enormous amount of capacity.

The information I have seen is that the development is north of Hareshaw. It isn't north of Hareshaw – it's within our village.

The border is 1000 yds from a children's playground and that hasn't been considered.

Jim once again took over the meeting to once again thank Councillors Leckie and Hughes for coming. He addressed them directly to ask that the information they have been shared in the initial consultations that we were not party to be shared with our committee quickly. We would appreciate any information that they have to bring us up to speed.

Jim then addressed the earlier point around making our village aware of the development and consultation events. He said that putting a note in the community centre in Chapelhall was of no use to us, it's miles away. He then pointed out that the Motherwell Times or Wishaw Press may crop up as a legitimate way to let us know about planning considerations.

Jim then asked for a show of hands of anyone who buys these newspapers. Not one resident raised their hands in response.

He pointed out that no one reads these newspapers, they rely on the internet to get information.

John Ross pointed out that we need to know what the proposal is. Once we know what it is we can read and raise the relevant questions. Everyone else has been consulted in surrounding areas except us. We are the people who are going to be affected more than anyone and our village is closest of all of them to the proposal.

Jim then explained that he along with Philip Patterson and George Macdonald visited a battery storage facility in Douglas. Photographs were passed round of the facility.

Jim mentioned that this is a good representation of one of these facilities to let people understand what is being proposed in our village.

He explained that they didn't get into the site that is currently being developed so they drove to another site on the adjacent side of the M74 where they were able to get in to the facility to look around and see what the batteries looked like. The manager of the site took them round and answered questions. During their conversation, George asked how many people will work on the site when this is finished to which the manager answered, 4 people. When further questioned he explained this is on a shift rotation of 8 hour shifts with cover for holidays. The facility itself is managed across in Ireland. The point is that the development brings next to no jobs to the local community once built.

On the tv and in some newspapers it's muted that there will be thousands of jobs related to these facilities. There will be jobs in construction of the sites but when completed there will be very few.

Jim is also going to report to the relevant authorities that there is a risk associated with malicious activity such as terrorist attacks in association with these sites. As they would be significantly important infrastructure, any issues could cause widespread disruption to services that they support in our national infrastructure. The physical security on the site

visited was lacking and if this is representative of the facilities being planned in our local areas this is a major consideration. It would be easy for a malicious individual to get access to cause harm, explosion or otherwise. There is a petrol station close by and a major gas pipe which does through the village within the perimeter of the land being considered for the development. There is no mention of physical security in the planning details we have.

These sites run down the middle of the UK. Doncaster has a site 4 times the size being implemented. If these sites were taken out that could cause major issues.

A resident mentioned that where other battery farms are built there is generally no housing in close proximity so questioned why do they want to build one near us.

At that point in the meeting Neil Gray arrived

Jim recapped for Neil's benefit that an earlier vote showed that no-one was in support of the development. Jim stated that the information we have was found on the internet and passed to the Hareshaw Village Association for action.

He said that we are deeply concerned that we were not notified of this other than to pick it up from the council website.

That's our first complaint. We have elected representatives and we didn't get notified by any of them.

Jim pointed out that he had emailed Neil twice with no response to date.

He said that Neil had been pivotal in helping resolve our electricity and broadband issues of which we were grateful so we were keen to get his help in this matter.

Neil Gray mentioned that the local authority have the responsibility to notify local people on planning matters. The officers in the local authority hold this responsibility. He stated that he isn't sure what stage the planning application is at.

Jim pointed out that Cleland, Newarthill, Chapelhall, Salsburgh were all notified of the development by email but we were not contacted at all.

Neil repeated that he didn't know what stage the planning application is at. He said he had come to listen to what people have to say on the matter as have the two represented councillors.

He said that they need to be careful of what they say – and as he is up for re-election he also has to be careful of what he says on the matter right now.

Neil stated that the first thing we need to establish from the local authority is why Hareshaw community was not informed.

Jim pointed out that we also invited Pamela Humphries (planning officer) to the meeting as we had questions of relevance to her specifically around her role in Fusion Assets and her role on the council.

Neil explained that when Boots factory in Airdrie closed, they left £5m in trust in a company to be administered in North Lanarkshire by the Council. Pamela Humphries is the director of that company. There are various opinions on where the Fusion assets should be spent. Airdrie feel it should be in that area as this was impacted most by the closure of Boots factory. The view in North Lanarkshire is that it is much wider than that. Fusion assets is about community growth and bringing about community growth.

Jim then asked Neil, surely these people are answerable – why have they not turned up to answer the questions we have.

Neil said he couldn't answer that and speak for them and to be fair to the Councillors, neither could they.

Jim said that correspondence from Pamela Humphries said that she and the planning officers can't come and speak with us at this stage in the planning process. They advised the councillors to be careful if they came and reminded them that they can't express a view on the proposal. They are here to listen only.

Neil then said that should he be returned, he is happy to have a conversation – one around why Hareshaw residents were not informed of the proposal. Secondly he said that he would have a meeting with a group representing the Hareshaw residents so there can be questions and answers on the plans. He doesn't currently know the status of the application and can't do anything until after the upcoming election if he is successful.

If not successful he said that for whoever succeeds him, he would expect them to do the same.

Councillor Leckie then spoke up to suggest that the committee write to Rachael Blair – Head of Legal services and ask why we were not lettered about the proposed development and copy in Des Murray - CEO North Lanarkshire Council. Jim pointed out that he had corresponded with Des Murray in the past who ignored the communications.

Philip Paterson then asked if there were any questions

Paul Brennan asked Neil Gray - Would the Scot Govt call the proposal in –

Neil Gray said that he can't comment on any proposal under consideration at a local authority level. There are processes that need to happen before it can be called in.

Paul then asked if this an example of a planning application that would be called in.

Neil said he can speak generally but not specifically about this particular case. Normally an application is called in if it is an application of national significant or of the size and scale that merits it being considered at national level. Examples being a new town etc.

This proposal has a number of assets – battery storage, energy requirement, the data centre.

There is criteria listed online for a normal process for an application to be called in but it is rare that this happens.

Normally the local planning vote on it, or the full council. If the applicant is unsuccessful they can appeal. It then goes to reporters for the government that make recommendations to ministers. 99% of the time those recommendations from planning reporters are accepted. It is rare that they would go against it due to legal ramifications.

Philip then pointed out that the planning documentation available on the internet is the only information we have – it states that we should contact the developer for more information. The contact details provided are a dead end and we have not been able to make contact with anyone who can provide any information.

Philip pointed out that he doesn't see the point of publishing contact information that is completely useless and asked are there not standards that need to be met for such matters.

Councillor Hughes questioned if there was contact information on the planning site.

Neil mentioned in response that if he was sitting on a committee considering a proposal and it was difficult for members of the public to get in touch and get information – he personally would take a dim view to that.

If people are minded to oppose and can't get hold of the developer – that wouldn't be good.

Councillor Harkins asked for the reference for the planning application.

On seeing the reference number he pointed out that it is not a planning application – it's just a planning notification.

They have identified that site as a possible site for the planned data centre and battery storage and they asked if they could consult with the local area.

Jim stated that they came to the community council here in Salsburgh to ask if they are for it or against it. That's as far as it went. There has been nothing further after that.

Salsburgh felt it didn't really affect them as it isn't close but they were aghast that the Hareshaw Village Association were not contacted and knew nothing about it.

Councillor Leckie said it's not a live planning application – they are only consulting to see if it is viable.

Jim pointed out that live consultation is supposed to be this month. Nothing has been booked and no contact made. A further consultation is supposed to take place in June.

Jim mentioned that the company have premises in Bothwell road in Hamilton – he suggested that he is going to chap their door and speak to them to ask for full and honest proposals to ask them what they are going to do.

Neil pointed out that this is a pre application consultation and asked the Councillors if there is an associated timescale with this process. It was suggested that there must be a time limit then it would lapse and would have to be started again. He said there may still be time for what Jim is asking for and that they need to notify the community.

Jim said that they have had 2 meetings here but they haven't involved us.

He said he believes they also spoke to local farmers from our area and there have been business negotiations – but that he can't confirm that.

He said that this is on our doorstep – we are a rural community – it could affect our water supply, electricity supply, main gas goes through the field on this farm and yet they wouldn't even give us a link for the gas in our village so we could have a gas supply.

He also said he doesn't think it's a Scottish problem, he thinks it's a national problem.

George Macdonald then commented – when Fiona and I found this in the first place it was a pre application – but there was dates for consultation stated as April and June and there has been nothing.

Karen Lockhart asked to speak.

She said - when you look at the PAN on the North Lanarkshire site and track through the 5 processes – each process has a green tick and is complete – it states - decided on 29th Jan 2026.

She asked if that timeframe is now concluded and it's moving on to the next stage. Has that happened without the village of Hareshaw being involved?

Neil commented that if the company were in the room now and heard what was being said, would they change what they are putting in? Possibly.

Julie outlined a number of risk factors that haven't been identified

One important one not called out was the flight path

If any aircraft below 10,000 meters – that is classified as high risk. The windmills were blocked by civil aviation.

She said we haven't had the opportunity to ask these questions.

If we hadn't spotted it this would be a done deal.

Jim said, now that we have permission to act for the village – we will act in the same way we did with the windmills and solar panels.

Karen mentioned the point re: civil aviation - that if you have certain infrastructure on flight path and below 10,000 that's a given.

Neil said the two airports Glasgow and Edinburgh – they would be statutory consultees.

The issue is around radar interference.

This is something clearly to flag but already part of the planning process consideration.

Normally it is a negotiation to get a derogation from which ever airport has a concern for its radar. They need to have derogations put in place.

A resident also pointed out that there are considerations for Prestwick also. It has additional considerations due to military aircrafts.

Civil contingencies – given that site and the 1300 or so risk constraints put on that site – the close proximity with Glasgow and Edinburgh – the safety factors in place - you have to plan for major impact and I'm wondering if that has been considered.

John Ross asked about the proximity of the batteries to the road and questioned how many road accidents and fatalities we have had on local roads.

Brian McKendrik said that there are two plans not just one. We need to ensure we are following up on both plans. One is the data centre and one the battery site which is closest to the village.

Jim commented, the difficulty is we have different plans and different drawings. The proposals coming from the people designing them are different to the ones on the council site. I came up here and got a totally different plan

Brian responded - We need the details of both

Philip pointed out that the plans on the notice board on display are both.

Karen asked a question of Jim – you referenced doorstepping the applicant.

We aren't getting the information from the council so we need to get it from them.

Some of the plans covers the whole of the farm and beyond.

Jim responded - I met with one of the farmers who was very vague. They stand to make a lot of money from this. With the price of food – removing greenbelt is a major worry – we need to know how much land they are taking and what they are going to do.

Karen asked if we are we going to invite them here – Newarthill community council had a meeting with them.

There was then a discussion on Newarthill community council who receive funding from the council. In contrast we don't and we are independent.

Karen asked - is that a condition that is still held that we don't get funding from the committee?

This wasn't answered.

Jim said that he agreed to carry on as Chair until the end of this issue then will step down

He then handed over to Philip.

Philip thanked the politicians for attending and said they were welcome to stay or leave. All opted to leave at that point.

Item 3 on agenda – ad hoc sub-committee to respond to the proposed development

Jim, Philip and Julie were suggested and this was accepted. No one else stepped forward.

Philip then said the current committee is neat in terms of numbers and we are looking for more members.

Fiona is taking after the website, mail, Facebook and WhatsApp administration.

He asked if there is anyone else who wants to get involved.

One resident (Anne Yuille) pointed out that they had reached out following the last request for members. Philip apologised and said that was his fault that he hadn't got back. She will consider whether she is going to get involved.

Julie volunteered to join the committee. No one opposed this.

Funding – Martin Kelly - Treasurer

Martin mentioned that the Association asked for £10 per house a while back. There is a bank account for the association which is run like a business account – there is a couple of hundred pounds in it – it is used for renting the hall etc.

There will be a bit of an escalation in funds needed based on what we have heard tonight.

3 signatories are in place – 2 are needed to take money out the account.

Banking changed recently and we there are now £4 a month charges for the account

Martin said we will write out asking for more funds but asked if people would be happy to contribute.

There was agreement across the room.

Karen asked about being supported by the local council and how does that work.

It was clarified that we aren't a statutory organisation although we are constituted one. We don't have an official route into the consultation. If 20 people in Hareshaw get together they can write to the council to set up a community council. We could look into it if the village wants to have its own community council

Brian mentioned that if it helps then it would be a benefit – having an official voice might open up the absent communication.

Agnes said it would be good to know if there are any advantages or disadvantages into being a community council.

Martin asked - is that why we were not consulted? I think in addition to that – what other advantages will there be for the community. I would like to think it would open other lines of community.

Craig Stitt commented:

This place being on our doorstep and adjacent to the village – the farmers who lived there all say they were from Hareshaw. It's not adjacent to the village – it's within the village.

Philip then asked:-

We did have a contact from the NLC Community Partnership Officer and they want to speak to the village – I would like to volunteer someone to speak to them – is anyone wanting to take that on – phone call then report back.

As there were no volunteers – Philip said he will do what he can.

Jim

Lastly – is there any other business that anyone would like to raise tonight – none

Thank you all – the support that you have shown – I do think that if we work hard at it we will get a result but we really have to work hard at it. That's why Philip is asking if anyone wants to come on to the committee.

Everyone here is a volunteer. The pavements, the drainage etc there are so many things that need to be dealt with outside this issue.

We don't meet on a frequent basis – monthly is sufficient.

If you have time and if you would help it would be appreciated.

Thank you all very much, thank too to Fiona, Martin and Philp as always. The amount of work he covers is quite considerable.

Thanks to Valery, Agnes and Gillian for registering people that come in tonight

I shall now declare the meeting finished and thank you all once again for attending.

