

CELTIC ENERGY LTD



REPORT ON THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION INTO THE REINSTATEMENT OF PARISH ROAD, CWMGWRACH

JANUARY 2020

Background

The following document sets out the findings of a public consultation exercise carried out to inform Celtic Energy Ltd as well as the Local Planning Authority in regard to the options for reinstatement of the Parish Road that originally ran between Cwmgwrach in Neath Port Talbot and Rhigos in Rhondda Cynon Taff ('The Parish Road').

The Parish Road is currently stopped up to allow the completion of Mining and Restoration at the Selar Opencast Coal Site, within the county borough of Neath Port Talbot. The length within RCT still officially open albeit it is in effect a dead-end that only serves to access the former Selar Opencast Coal Site.

The Road has been stopped up under an order made by the Welsh Ministers under sections 247 and 261 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The current order came into force on 28th August 2014 and remains in place until 31st October 2020.

Introduction

The public is an essential stakeholder in the planning process and for major developments it is now a requirement of the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 that Public Consultation is carried out. Although this proposed scheme does not constitute a Major Development, following discussions with Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC) it was considered that the potential impacts associated with the roads' reinstatement warranted a public consultation exercise so that the communities most affected could have a say in the final proposed scheme.

The Public Consultation Exercise

Initial Consultation

A Meeting was held with County Councillors and Planning Officers from Neath Port Talbot on 8th May 2019 to discuss potential options at which it was concluded that 2 options should be put forward. These would form the Basis of Option 1 – A through Road and Option 2 – A bridleway with Car Parks.

Option 3 came later following a request by local councillors to include an option that provided a link to a possible new bridge to replace the former Langey Bridge in Glynneath.

The options were drawn up and are presented in Appendix 1 of this report.

The dates for the Public Consultation were set as the 25th November 2019 to be held at the Welfare Hall in Cwmgwrach and the 26th November 2019 to be held at the Rhigos Community Centre. The advertisements are included at Appendix 2 and for the Cwmgwrach Consultation were posted in the following places:-

- Welfare Hall
- Dunraven Notice Board
- Community Council Facebook Page

The Advertisements for the Rhigos Consultation were posted in the following locations:-

- Rhigos Community Centre
- Rhigos Rugby Club
- Mount Road
- Halt Road

Public Exhibition

The Consultation took the form of a Public Exhibition at which the three options shown in Appendix 1 were displayed on large notice boards. Celtic Energy Staff were on hand to discuss the options and those attending were invited to offer a preference for an option as well as any comments that they felt they would like to make through completing a feedback form (also included at Appendix 1.)

The information at the Exhibition was also made available digitally through Celtic Energy Ltd's website at: <http://www.coal.com/community-consultation/parishroad/>.

Each event lasted 2½ hours and each was attended by approximately 100 people. Due to the number of responses the consultation has remained open until the end of December 2019.

Results of the Consultation.

Between the 26th November 2019 and 31st December 2019, 269 responses to the consultation were received by Celtic Energy. Whilst there was clear support for the 3 options tabled it became obvious during the consultation that a significant number of people were looking for the road to be reinstated as a Tarmac Road as well as a number who wished for it to be closed altogether and not reinstated in any capacity.

These have been reflected in the comments received back through the feedback forms (which are included as Confidential Appendix 4 to this report for Data Protection Reasons). In order to interpret the results and reflect the consultation, two further options have been included i.e. Reinstatement of the road with Tarmac finish (Option 4) and Close the road altogether (Option 5).

In the case of Option 4 then any feedback form that says the word 'Tarmac' on it has been included in this category, similarly with Option 5 where it has been clearly stated that 'The Parish Road' should not be re-opened then these feedback forms are included in this category. An option detailing Option 4 is also included at Appendix 3.

Table 1 below summarises the responses from the Consultation: -

Table 1: Summary of Consultation Responses

Proposed Option	Number of responses choosing Option	% of responses choosing option
Option 1 (Through Road – Forestry Track)	24	8.89%
Option 2 (Bridleway with Car Parks)	73	27.04%
Option 3 (Bridleway with Car Park and Link to Proposed Bridge)	88*	32.59%
Option 4 (Through Road with Tarmac Finish)	75	27.78%
Option 5 (Road not to Re-Open in any form)	5	1.85%
No Clear Option	5	1.85%

*10 Consultees chose options 2&3 these have been included in Option 3 only

This table indicates that the majority of the respondents, 59.63% favoured an option that included a Bridleway with 35.93% preferring a through road (forestry track or tarmac) option.

In order to fully understand the responses then the locations where the responses came from also must be considered. The responses from the locations given on the feedback forms / correspondence received are summarised in Table 2:

Table 2: Summary of Response Locations.

Location	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Cwmgwrach	165	61.11%
Glynneath	15	5.56%
Hirwaun	1	0.37%
Rhigos	89	32.96%

During the consultation it also became evident that the location of the consultee had a significant bearing on which option they favoured. Table 3 below shows the preferred option by location of the responder as a percentage of the number of responders in each location.

Table 3: Option Preference by location

Location	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	No Clear Option
Cwmgwrach	3.64%	41.82%	46.67%*	3.03%	2.42%	2.42%
Glynneath	13.33%	26.67%	40.00%	13.33%	6.67%	-
Hirwaun	-	-	-	100%**	-	-
Rhigos	17.98%	-	5.62%*	75.28%	-	1.12%

*10 Consultees chose options 2&3 these have been included in Option 3 only. ** 1 respondent only

It can be seen from the above tables that the majority of responders who gave their location as Cwmgwrach, 88.49%, favoured options 2 or 3 (i.e. those that proposed a Bridleway with Car Parks)

The responders from Glynneath also favoured options 2 or 3 with 66.67% showing support for these choices.

Only one respondent came from Hirwaun and they were in support of Option 4 – A Tarmac Road.

In the case of Rhigos 93.26% supported a through road with the majority (75.28%) indicating that a Tarmac Road would be the only option.

The results of the consultation therefore indicate that there is strong feeling in both communities as to how the road should be reinstated.

Overall the majority of respondents 59.63% opted for options that included reinstating the road as a Bridleway.

Other Concerns

Over the course of the consultation other concerns were raised these included:

If opened as a through Road:

The increase in Fly Tipping

'Boy Racers' Using the road as race track

Added litter due to the KFC opening in Cwmgwarch

Added Traffic because of the KFC

The unsuitability of the existing Parish Road to Cope with any additional traffic

Safety of pedestrians on Parish Road

Added public expense for Maintenance

Increased theft from properties and farms along the route

Other criminal behaviour – Drug Dealing

If the road did not open:

Anti-Social Behaviour in proposed Car Parks

Provides another access if A465 and B4242 (Rhigos Road) are blocked as has happened recently

Longer Route to new Doctors Surgery

Restrict disabled access to Nature Reserve – i.e. could not drive through the site to see the countryside.

APPENDIX 1

APPENDIX 2

APPENDIX 3

APPENDIX 4
CONFIDENTIAL