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PARISH COUNCILS SUPPORT WEST YORKSHIRE WIND FARM LIFETIME EXTENSION PLANS

The two Parish Councils closest to the site of a West Yorkshire wind farm have given their support to plans to extend its lifespan by 15 years.

Renewable energy firm Banks Renewables is looking for an extension to the lifespan of its Hook Moor Wind Farm, which sits to the east of Leeds near the junction of the M1 and A1.

The five-turbine wind farm has been operational since the end of 2015 and was originally given permission to run for 25 years, but having carried out regular maintenance work on the wind turbines and reviewed their efficient ongoing operational performance, Banks decided to seek planning permission to extend the wind farm's lifespan by an additional 15 years, to 40 years' duration.

A planning application on the proposed extension was submitted to Leeds City Council late last year and is expected to be considered in the coming months.

In advance of this, Aberford and Micklefield Parish Councils have both written to the City Council to express their support for the application and to highlight the positive impact that the wind farm has had on their respective communities, both in terms of the renewable electricity that it generates and the funding it has provided to support local community groups and good causes.

Around £10,000 from its revenues is directed every year into the Hook Moor Wind Farm Community Fund, which supports community and environmental projects put forward by local voluntary groups and charities and which would also be extended for a further 15 years if the planning application is approved.

Grants totalling more than £40,000 have so far been made from the fund, with Banks Renewables recently temporarily relaxing its eligibility criteria to enable even more local community groups to access support from it.

Cllr Keith Dunwell of Aberford Parish Council says: “Getting funding for community projects over recent years has often been very challenging and we’ve been thrilled to bits to have access to the Hook Moor Wind Farm Fund.

“It’s helped to meet lots of changing funding needs since it came into being, especially during the pandemic, and more and more local groups have been able to access it to help them complete projects which might otherwise remain out of reach.

“We’ve never had a single complaint about the operation of the wind farm, and in fact, plenty of people seem very excited when they see it!”

Cllr Jon Crossley of Micklefield Parish Council adds: “The wind farm has run exactly as we’d expected, we’ve never even had the slightest moan about it and the turbines are now very much part of a landscape that’s well used by local and visiting walkers.

“It makes sense to get the most possible use out of this type of infrastructure that we can, especially when we know that the UK needs to produce more of the energy we use from our own renewable sources, and we’d therefore be happy to see Hook Moor stay in place for this additional time.

“The benefits fund has been just the right size for meeting the needs of local groups, especially now that it can contribute to their running costs, and it’s been really well used across the community.”

The Hook Moor Wind Farm generated more than 23,665 MWh of green electricity in the 12 months up to the end of December 2021, which is enough to meet the average annual electricity requirements of around 7,633 homes, and by doing so, it displaced over 5,983 tonnes of carbon dioxide from the electricity supply network.

No other aspects of the wind farm’s operation would change as part of the application, no new turbines are being planned and all the existing planning conditions under which it operates, including those which protect the residential amenity of local residents, would remain unaltered.

Lewis Stokes, senior community relations manager at the Banks Group, says: “We’ve maintained positive relationships with both Aberford and Micklefield Parish Councils ever since the idea of the wind farm was first raised, and we’re grateful that they’ve both recognised the positive impact that it has had on their communities.

“Generating as much of the energy that we all use via renewables is a crucial part of the UK’s journey towards its net zero targets and will enable the country to decarbonise its power supply and achieve its climate change targets more quickly than would otherwise be possible.

“We hope that Leeds City Council will approve our planning application to extend the permitted lifespan so that we can continue to maximise the environmental, energy security and social benefits that the Hook Moor Wind Farm is delivering.”

For further information on the Hook Moor Wind Farm, visit www.banksgroup.co.uk/hookmoor

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For further press information, please contact Julian Christopher at Footprint Public Relations on 07891 005034 or via julianchristopher@btinternet.com

Editors’ Notes

About Banks Renewables

- We are members of RenewableUK, Scottish Renewables and the Independent Renewable Energy Generators Group (IREGG)
- In order to achieve net zero the UK will need to deploy substantial amounts of low carbon infrastructure across the UK for several decades
- Banks Renewables is a leading independent sustainable business, **generating electricity at a consistent, low cost and** supporting the UK’s transition to net zero
- As a family business we believe in placing people and planet at the heart of what we do – this is what we call development with care
- We are constantly looking for better ways to deliver renewables projects which tackle climate change, help to drive down energy bills for the consumer and help to **improve the UK’s energy security over the long term.**
- We care about what we do and the way that we do it, including long term relationships with local communities. Last year over £1,000,000 of community funding was awarded to 100+ community groups and environmental projects
- We believe in being a good neighbour, with a long and proud track record of playing a positive role in our local communities
- Our Connect2Renewables initiative is an industry leading approach to support local businesses and communities. We are committed to bringing local businesses into our supply chain to **create local jobs** and **establishing local panels** to guide investment
- Our projects protect, encourage and enhance the local environment while tackling climate change

- We work in partnership with landowners to **provide additional value** to existing business, enable agriculture and developments to proceed
- There is clear, longstanding support, for renewable technologies in the UK amongst the general public¹

Key facts

- Banks Renewables was incorporated in 2006
- We have secured planning permission for 14 windfarms and currently operate ten onshore wind farms across Scotland and the north of England with a combined installed generation capacity of 223MW
- Our ten wind farms are: i) Armistead; ii) Hazlehead; iii) Heysham South; iv) Hook Moor; v) Kype Muir; vi) Lambs Hill; vii) Marr; viii) Middle Muir; ix) Moor House and x) Penny Hill
- We expect our ten onshore wind farms to generate around 596Gwh per year
- We have also obtained planning permission for two solar arrays and are developing other renewable and flexible energy projects too
- We have planning permission for 200MW of renewable electricity generation, with a further 347MW in the planning system
- We have displaced 776,990 tonnes of CO2 from operational projects to date
- The 547MW we have in various stages of the planning and build out process is enough to provide electricity for around 400,000 homes or a city larger than Leeds or Glasgow.

About The Banks Group

- For more information about The Banks Group please see: www.banksgroup.co.uk
- The Banks Group develops, land for a variety of uses including property development, renewable and flexible energy generation and storage, mining, transport and plant services
- Banks Mining has successfully worked and restored 116 surface mines throughout the north of England and Scotland. We no longer mine coal and we are applying this expertise to mining other minerals and are currently mining gypsum and pursuing other mineral extraction projects throughout the UK.
- Banks Transport operates a fleet of HGV tipper wagons efficiently and safely delivering a range of materials to our customers.
- Banks Plant Solutions provides plant and equipment service, maintenance and management for the businesses across the North East of England, Cumbria and North Yorkshire.

¹ Regular polling on behalf of the UK Government has consistently shown that renewable energy has strong public support. The survey for BEIS published in March 2021 showed that 79 per cent of the British public support renewable energy for providing electricity, fuel and heat. 84 per cent of the public support solar energy and 70 per cent support onshore wind energy developments., see: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/985092/BEIS_PAT_W37 - Key Findings.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/985092/BEIS_PAT_W37_-_Key_Findings.pdf)

- The Banks Group is a family business, employing people across the north of England and Scotland. It was established by our chairman and chief executive Harry Banks OBE, DL, FRICS in 1976
- The core values of our business are to undertake all our projects in a sensitive and careful manner. We call this approach development with care. We aim for our developments to make a positive long term impact on the environment and the local communities that host our developments