



**RWE**

# **Pen March Wind Farm Newsletter**

**Winter 2021/2022**



**Introducing the Project Manager**

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# A warm welcome from the Project Manager

Jenny Cowley gives an update on the Pen March Wind Farm proposal



Thank you for taking an interest in the Pen March Wind Farm proposal.

In this newsletter you will find information about our plans and what to look out for in the next few months.

We have been developing the Pen March Wind Farm project for a number of years, undertaking ecology and land surveys, wind assessments, and more, in order to determine how suitable the site is for a wind farm. In March 2020, we undertook an informal public consultation to introduce the project to local people, and received valuable feedback.

We've also been speaking to political representatives to ensure that they are updated and can inform us about local factors that we need to take into consideration when developing the project. We are particularly pleased to be working with Caerphilly Council on ways that they can be shared ownership partners in the project, discussed further below.

In 2022 we will be undertaking the formal pre-application consultation. This part of the planning process is required by law, and the feedback we receive needs to be included in our planning submission. You can find out more about the planning process below.

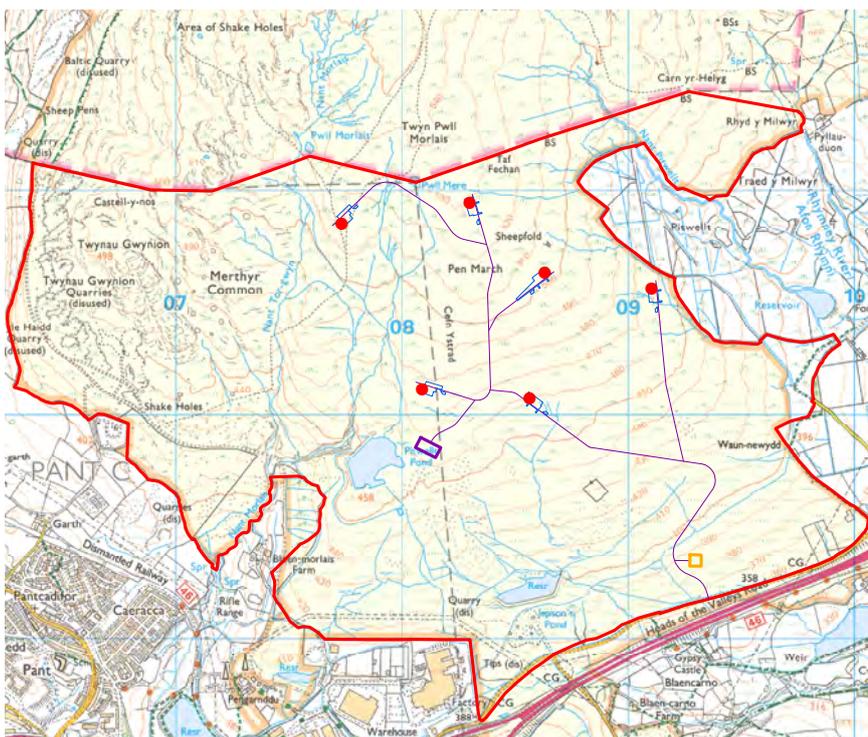
Climate change is at the forefront of our minds as we progress our plans, with members of the public and their political representatives telling us they also share our concerns about the impact that a warming planet will have on future generations.

Renewable energy plays a critical role in enabling us to transition away from the fossil fuels which are creating the climate emergency. There is now a sense of urgency among policy makers at the global, national, and local level, who are all working to tackle climate change, with each and every one of us being urged to play our part.

I hope that you find this newsletter informative. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me. I'll be in touch again to let you know when the pre-application consultation is due to take place and to explain how you can get involved. ▲



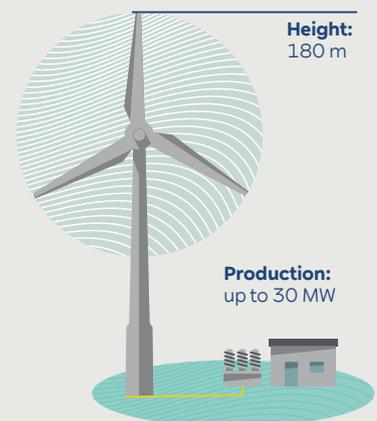
**Jenny Cowley,**  
Pen March Development Project Manager



The proposed Pen March Wind Farm site is north of the A465 Heads of the Valleys Road, north-west of Rhymney and north-east of Merthyr Tydfil.

## Pen March Wind Farm – at a glance

- Up to 6 turbines
- Each turbine will be up to 180 m in height (to blade tip)
- Generating up to 30 MW
- Shared ownership and community benefit funding



# The planning process and the race to net zero

Decision by Welsh Government with input from local people



## Pen March - Timeline

- **2019 – 2022** – project development, including assessments of the site such as bird surveys, ecological and habitat studies, landscape and visual, noise, wind speed, transport and access
- **2019 – 2022** – discussions with local authorities, councillors, community council, MS and MP
- **March 2020** – informal public consultation
- **May-June 2022** – statutory pre-application consultation
- **July 2022 onwards** – consider consultation feedback and submit planning application
- **2023** – examination of planning application and decision by the Welsh Government

Wales is legally obliged to achieve net zero by 2050 and there are interim targets in place to keep the country on track, including that Welsh renewables should generate electricity equal to 70% of Wales' consumption by 2030.

To help achieve this, the planning process in Wales has changed and the Pen March Wind Farm proposal is categorised as a Development of National Significance. RWE must undertake a six-week pre-application consultation on the draft Environmental Statement with a number of different groups, including members of the public, community consultees, and statutory consultees. A central document in the planning process, the Environmental Statement, includes details of the landscape and visual impacts, transport and access, ecology and habitats assessments, and much more, and is a central part of the planning application.

After submission the planning application is considered by a planning inspector who will undertake their own consultation and may decide to hold hearings or an inquiry. The planning inspector is guided by laws and policies that shape decisions on large scale renewable energy projects, including Welsh Government's Future Wales: the national plan 2040. The planning inspector presents their findings and recommendations to the Welsh Government Minister, who takes the final decision based on the inspector's advice.



The local authorities of Caerphilly and Merthyr Tydfil are statutory consultees and provide their own views to the planning inspector. As Pen March is on Gelligaer and Merthyr Common, a separate permission to develop on common land is also required, which will be applied for at the same time.

We intend to conduct the pre-application consultation in May or June and hope to be able to submit our planning application towards the end of 2022, with a decision expected in 2023. ▲

# Local benefits

## Shared ownership

**The Welsh Government has said that it wants all new energy projects to have an element of shared ownership, and that's just what RWE hopes to offer on the Pen March project.**

In 2021, RWE and Caerphilly Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to work together to deliver local benefits, chiefly to explore ways in which the Council could invest and own part of the project. The MoU will facilitate discussions on shared ownership and ensure that both parties work together to maximise local opportunities.

A Council spokesperson said: "This is an exciting opportunity that not only meets the Council's priorities to lower carbon emissions, making the county borough an even greener place, but also links to our commitments to maximise opportunities for commercial investment and deliver wider community benefits." ▲



RWE produces around 12% of the UK's electricity. In Wales, we are currently operating almost 1GW of renewable energy projects across onshore and three offshore wind farms, and hydro plants, and we are the largest investor in renewable energy. In operating these renewable energy projects, we employ well over 100 people in Wales, with offices in Baglan, Llanidloes, Dolgarrog, and Port of Mostyn. We have a pipeline of new renewable energy projects in development across Wales in offshore, onshore, battery storage and hydrogen, including the Pen March Wind Farm proposal.

In the last decade, RWE has contributed more than £10m to neighbouring communities from funds associated with our renewable energy sites in Wales. ▲

## Opportunities for businesses and contractors

If the project gets the go-ahead, local companies will be encouraged to bid for contracts to help develop and construct the site. There are all sorts of skills, goods and services required to build a wind farm, and RWE would like to work with local businesses on the project. On 9th February 2022 RWE hosted an online business breakfast attended by local businesses, where RWE shared the potential opportunities arising from Pen March Wind Farm.

**Businesses who wish to register their interest as a supplier are invited to submit their details [online here](#).** ▲

## Community fund for local good causes

RWE is committed to supporting the communities that host renewable energy projects by offering flexible community benefits packages. In the last decade, wind farms operated by RWE in Wales have provided over £10 million into local communities. Once a wind farm gains planning consent our Community Investment Officer, Kathryn Harries, starts to work closely with local communities to tailor the package ensuring local people are at the heart of how the fund works, and that it makes a lasting difference to the local area.

We'd love to know how you think a Community Benefit Package could help your area. If you'd like to share your ideas, please contact Kathryn by email: [community.investment@rwe.com](mailto:community.investment@rwe.com) ▲

## How to contact us

### Keep in touch and let us have your views



You can contact the Pen March team by emailing us at [penmarch@rwe.com](mailto:penmarch@rwe.com)



Further information can be found on the Pen March website [www.penmarch.co.uk/](http://www.penmarch.co.uk/)

In our next newsletter, we hope to bring you news of our public consultation and ways in which you can get involved.