

Tribute to Malcolm Hay

As Chairman of the Deveron, Isla and Bogie District Fishery Board and a prominent local landowner, it was to be expected that Malcolm would take an interest in the proposal to build an extensive wind farm in the very heart of our beautiful countryside.

In the event, Malcolm's contribution to resisting the granting of planning permission for this blight on our landscape went far beyond what could reasonably have been asked of him.

For many months he personally investigated and pulled together information, facts and precedents relevant to an inquiry and produced compelling statements, letters and briefing papers.

He employed his undoubted leadership skills to motivate others to do their part and ensured that the skills of a group of experts were brought to bear on the relevant issues. In all these matters he led from the front, personally conducting experts to the site, discussing the issues with them and ensuring that their reports were accurate, timely and focussed on the Clashindarroch proposals. All this from a very busy man with many other responsibilities and business interests to pursue.

At the Public Inquiry itself, Malcolm put the case against the proposed wind farm with great skill and, indeed, stamina - since he was 'in the chair' for very long periods of time.

His advocacy and ability to counter pointed and aggressive questioning by a senior and highly experienced counsel won the respect and admiration of all those who attended the Inquiry. At the conclusion of his evidence, he won a spontaneous and, most unusual for such an event, resounding round of applause from the public benches.

The outcome of the Inquiry is not yet made public, but even if the proposed wind farm does get sanction from the minister concerned, it will almost certainly be less obtrusive, less damaging and more carefully engineered than it would have been without the drive, dedication and leadership of Malcolm. The communities who may have to live in the shadow of this ill-conceived and unsightly blot on our landscape have much to thank Malcolm for.

21st September, 2006