

**NEWS RELEASE**

1 OCTOBER 2020

**Green light given for East Ayrshire Wind Farm**

An ambitious wind farm in East Ayrshire has been approved by the Scottish Government – and will deliver a host of benefits to the community as well as generating clean, green electricity.

Banks Renewables is delighted that its Lethans Wind Farm, east of New Cumnock, has been given the go-ahead, after plans were revised to maximise the supply of electricity. Approval means Lethans' 22 turbines, at a maximum tip height of 220m, (the tallest turbines granted planning permission in Scotland to date), will have a maximum output of up to 105.6MW.

The Hamilton-based renewables employer has worked closely with local independent renewable energy consultant and service provider Natural Power to deliver the project. Both green energy companies have previously worked together on a number of projects to contribute to Scotland's net-zero pathway.

Robin Winstanley, sustainability and external affairs manager at Banks Renewables, said: "This has taken many years of hard work, planning and close consultation with the local community and it is a major milestone to see it over the line.

"As well as being a meaningful advance in Scotland's green energy agenda, approval for Lethans will also deliver real, deep and long-lasting benefits to the local people, the environment and to the economy of East Ayrshire.

"We'd like to thank everyone who has contributed to the planning processes over recent years, particularly those members of the local community who have fully embraced the process. We're excited to move this project forward and make the many benefits that it will deliver a reality."

Approval is the latest significant success for Banks Renewables which saw its Kype Muir Wind Farm in South Lanarkshire start operating in April 2019. It is already delivering financial benefits to its local community.

Once built, Lethans will bring Banks operational wind farm portfolio in Scotland to 300MW, including Kype Muir, Middle Muir, and across the UK to 400MW.

Robin Winstanley added: "Over the 30 years of its lifespan, Lethans will contribute at least £7.1m into a local community benefit fund. It will also contribute another £7.1m to East Ayrshire Council's Renewable Energy Fund.

"That is money that can be targeted to make a meaningful and positive impact on life in the area, particularly on projects which local people have identified as important to them."

Emily Galloway, principal project manager at Natural Power, said: “As the renewable energy industry works towards its climate change targets, it is vital that onshore wind farms maximise their efficiency in order to provide low cost, low carbon electricity to energy consumers. Therefore larger, more productive turbines that maximise energy yields must be considered.

“We are really delighted to see another pioneering scheme pushing the boundaries of turbine dimensions - securing the best possible outcome for our client and the wider energy sector.”

Among the diverse benefits Lethans will bring will be a £1.3m skills and training fund targeted to support up to 440 local, unemployed people to get into work or training.

The project will also pay £38m in business rates over its lifetime – while a local community body will have the opportunity to purchase a 5% equity stake in the wind farm with a generous, 25% community discount.

Construction of the project will also deliver major local benefits, since Banks Renewables has a proud legacy of sourcing local businesses for its projects. At Lethans, its Connect2Renewables Charter, is expected to see at least £16m invested in the area via local suppliers and contractors.

Natural Power has acted as owner’s engineer, providing construction management, electrical and grid support for all of the Banks Renewables onshore wind farms since 2007 at West Durham, then at Armistead, Hazlehead, Heysham South, Hook Moor, Kype Muir, Lambs Hill, Marr, Middle Muir, Mill Rig, Moor House, and Penny Hill, spanning more than 40 renewable energy projects throughout the UK.

Working closely with Banks throughout the development and pre-construction phases to advise on aspects which will benefit the overall project, Natural Power has also delivered post construction services such as grid code compliance testing, control centre and HV support.

The original plan for Lethans Wind Farm was approved in March 2018. However, Banks Renewables undertook an extensive redesign of the project to maximise efficiency, including reducing the number of turbines from 26 to 22 and changing the layout of the wind farm.

To reflect those changes, the company submitted a Section 36 planning application to the Scottish Government’s Energy Consents and Deployment Unit, which has now been fully approved.

**ENDS**

**Issued on behalf of Banks Renewables by [www.holyroodpr.co.uk](http://www.holyroodpr.co.uk). Further information on 0131 561 2244 or [info@holyroodpr.co.uk](mailto:info@holyroodpr.co.uk).**

### **Notes to Editors**

- ! Banks Renewables is part of the Banks Group ([www.banksgroup.co.uk](http://www.banksgroup.co.uk)), a family firm founded in 1976, based in Durham and Hamilton, which now employs around 300 people in the renewable energy, property and surface mining sectors

- ! Banks Renewables is a member of the trade bodies RenewableUK ([www.renewableuk.com](http://www.renewableuk.com)) and Scottish Renewables ([www.scottishrenewables.com](http://www.scottishrenewables.com))
- ! Banks Renewables is also a member of British Wind – the partnership of independent energy generators and suppliers
- ! Banks Renewables' experienced development team works with landowners and takes projects from inception to completion, handling all aspects of the planning and delivery process. Development with care is at the heart of everything we do and therefore we develop all our sites in close consultation with the local community
- ! Banks Renewables currently operates ten onshore wind farms: 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
- ! These ten wind farms provide over 222MW of renewable electricity generating capacity across Scotland and the north of England
- ! The 14 wind farms that Banks Renewables have gained planning permission for, so far, are: i) Armistead; ii) Hazlehead; iii) Heysham South; iv) Hook Moor; v) Kype Muir; vi) Kype Muir Extension; vii) Lambs Hill; viii) Lethans; ix) Marr; x) Middle Muir; xi) Moor House; xii) Penny Hill; xiii) Quixwood Moor and xiv) West Durham. We sold Quixwood Moor and West Durham to other operators. For more information about each of these projects please see the Banks Renewables projects page: <https://www.banksgroup.co.uk/projects/list/>
- ! Connect2Renewables is an initiative between the local communities, Banks Renewables and local authorities which seeks to maximise the social and economic benefit of the development to the local area. For more information about Connect2Renewables including a downloadable copy of the Charter and videos shot at the launch in November 2014 please go to: <http://www.banksgroup.co.uk/banks-group/banks-renewables/connect2renewables/>

## **About Natural Power**

- ! Natural Power is an independent consultancy and service provider that supports a global client base in the effective delivery of a wide range of renewable projects including onshore wind, solar, renewable heat, energy storage and offshore technologies.
- ! Natural Power has a global reach, employing more than 400 staff across 12 international offices. Its experience extends across all phases of the project lifecycle from initial feasibility, through construction to operations and throughout all stages of the transaction cycle.
- ! For more information please see: <https://www.naturalpower.com/uk>