ST. BREOCK WINDFARM COMMUNITY FUND MEETING

On behalf of Withiel Parish Council, I attended the meeting on Wednesday 16th November called to assess the first round of funding and discuss arrangements for the second round. About 15 people attended, from REG Power Management (who operate the windfarm on behalf of the owners), WREN (who administer the community fund), the Wadebridge East Cornwall councillor Steve Knightley, and representatives of the various parishes that are beneficiaries of the fund.

REG Power Management and WREN gave presentations describing their activities. I got the impression that WREN strongly supports devolving control and decision-making about which applications to fund to parish groups, while REG would like to see more centralised control of it. However, the organisational structure created by Cornwall Council remains in place.

On reviewing the first (2016) round, there was general agreement that it had worked well, with panels approaching the task in a fair-minded and responsible way; there have been no objections or criticisms of the decisions made. However, one or two panels were perceived as needing to be more robust in energising their communities to participate, volunteer etc., in the work of organising a panel. Withiel is not among these. Some people at the meeting argued that there needs to be more effort generally devoted to drawing in local people other than town or parish council members to participate in panels.

For the second round (2017) of funding, when once again £50,000 will be available for distribution among the seven relevant parishes, the provisional dates are: 1st December 2016, applications for funding open; 13th February 2017, applications close; late February 2017, REG and WREN screen and collate applications for circulation to panels; March 2017, panels meet to consider and decide on funding allocations; April 2017, decisions on funding awards communicated to applicants.

Finally, the meeting reviewed the six-monthly updates which successful applicants have been asked to supply. Most projects are now well on track for completion on schedule. A few (including Withiel Playing Fields Association) have experienced some slippage but no underlying problems are envisaged. A small number of recipients have yet to supply an update and are being chased up.

David Cubitt
17th November 2016