

Electricity Act 1989

Tealing to Kintore Overhead Line upgrade

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COMMUNITY HEARING STATEMENT by SHONAH CAMPBELL

‘ROLLING THUNDER CLYDESDALES’

My name is Shonah Campbell and along with my horse partner Amanda Merchant, we are the owners of Rolling Thunder Clydesdales. I have been involved with Clydesdales for over 30 years. We are a small stud situated between Fettercairn and Luthermuir, our aim being to breed quality Clydesdales and to help with the preservation of the breed.

Unfortunately, Clydesdales have declined in number so much over the years that they are now on the Rare Breed Survival Trust with an (at risk) status. In their heyday there were around 200,000 in Scotland alone, now there are only 5,500 worldwide. If I tell you there are thought to be 3,500 Giant pandas, it puts into perspective how endangered they are.

There are several reasons for this, not least that they are very difficult to breed. It is hard to get a mare in foal and during the pregnancy which is anywhere between 11 and 12 months, they need constant care, with any upset potentially causing them to abort the foetus. In addition, there are frequently birthing problems, and any breeder will tell of disasters at this stage. We lost a very well known show mare and her foal a couple of years ago which was devastating to us, but with only 200 breeding mares in the country any loss of a mare is disastrous. The UK and NI register approximately 150 foals each year. Not all will reach maturity.

My house, stable block and paddocks are approximately 300mts from the proposed line of pylons, and I am very concerned that the noise of machinery and construction process will cause upset to the pregnant mares.

As an example of this we weaned our precious filly foal Sky, last year (2025) and took her to Amanda’s paddocks to be with our other mare. We moved her on a

Friday and on Monday morning a large tracked excavator, which was to be used for testing in Lady Jane woodland, was backed off a lorry at the top of our paddocks, without any notice or warning, causing a lot of noise and disruption. This resulted in Sky panicking and running through a wire fence heading for the road. Fortunately Amanda was in the roadside field and Sky went to her. You can imagine what might have happened. The injuries from fence wire can be horrendous and cause permanent damage and the implications of running onto the road are obvious. This is a prime example of what could happen.

We do our best to showcase our horses, both of us have served on the Council of the UK and NI Clydesdale Horse Society. We take them all over the UK to shows including the Yorkshire and Devon shows to promote Clydesdales along with the English equivalent the Shire Horse, and the two other heavy breeds. We have taken part in Remembrance parades, local galas and even had an 18 hand horse into a care home, as a resident was too poorly to go outside to see her, which I must say was incredibly rewarding. We have taken part in the Kelpies anniversary celebrations with a demonstration of dressage to music in the main ring.

I have attended two World Clydesdale Shows, one in the US, the other in Canada and we took part in the World show when it came to Scotland in 2022, with three horses taking part in everything from inhand showing to Concours D'elegance and even fancy dress. You will see from all this we are committed to the breed and try to promote and protect them as best we can.

As you can imagine all this is very costly and any losses are devastating not only financially but personally.

Clydesdales are a very versatile breed of horse, bred originally to work in agriculture and now enthusiasts are using them in ploughing competitions although they have become a very popular riding horse able to do anything any other breed can do, in addition able to pull three times their own weight which means around 3 tons. No doubt some of you will have seen and heard the spectacle that is the Clydesdale driving classes at the Royal Highland Show.

I would hope that when the decision into the proposed line of pylons is being considered it is met with a recommendation of refusal.