



DAVIDSON  
& ROBERTSON  
THE RURAL EXPERTS

Summer  
Bulletin

Rural insights from our teams across Scotland & Northern England

ISSUE 39 / July 2025



Strathearn JAC



Strathbogie JAC

Congratulations to SAYFC Tug of War winners – see more inside

## Infrastructure implications revealed at the Royal Highland Show seminar

**The industry needs twice the level of transmission infrastructure (pylons) than has been created in the past ten years – but it must be achieved in just five years. That has huge implications for landowners.**

Ian Austin, D&R Director, and Head of Utilities, Energy & Infrastructure hosted a seminar at the Royal Highland Show. The theme was “All about The Grid” and the challenges around delivering the huge infrastructure projects needed to achieve the 2030 Clean Energy Plan. “Ultimately, transmission development is behind where it has to be, but there is huge political support driving delivery to meet targets.

Unfortunately, there appears to be a lack of appreciation from some of the key decision makers within SPEN, SSEN, NESO and developers, in terms of consent by landowners and how the transition to clean power will affect them.

The government's National Energy System Operator (NESO) has been in place since November, and with a full reform of the grid connection process, is hopeful of getting more deliverable projects approved and progressing at a faster pace. The revised process reopens in the autumn and will demand that all applications ensure land rights agreements are in place with landowners; the development is needed to deliver the 2030 Clean Energy Plan; that planning is progressing and that it can demonstrate a real need for a grid connection.

Our key message to those potentially affected is even more crucial: “Make sure you speak to an experienced Agent at the outset.”

**Read on inside...**

SAYFC Tug of War results



It's all about the grid: implications for farmers



Rural property sales: a market update



Adding value to your business

[www.drrural.co.uk](http://www.drrural.co.uk)

# Huge infrastructure implications on the horizon for farmers (cont.)

**D&R predicts this summer will see urgency coming from developers, moving at pace to be in a position to get gate 1 & 2 applications in, capitalising on the planned reopening of grid applications.**

We are already seeing developers rushing to re-engage on contracts for projects currently on hold or looking to swap projects or introduce new ones. For many landowners, this means there will still be a rush to have contracts concluded with their developer partners or amended and new agreements made for future projects.

For farmers and landowners faced with infrastructure project crossing their land, it is more important than ever, to take professional advice from Agents who have significant years of experience in this sector. Above all, do not sign anything until you are fully aware of your rights and options, and be aware that in most cases, utility companies and developers will reimburse reasonable professional costs as part of your compensation or as part of a commercial deal.

Another result of the NESO review is that landowners are seeing large scale Lithium Ion Battery projects dropped by developers because they cannot establish the need in this saturated market.

Lithium batteries are likely to be superseded by technological advances which include looking at liquid flow batteries and compressed air flywheels.

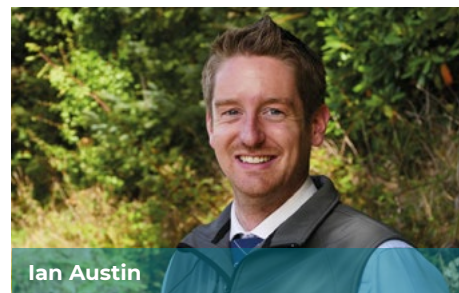
As technology advances, hydropower may become more of an option for landowners. High-density 'heavy water' which is 2.5 times denser than water, means that where a hydro project typically needed 500 metres of fall, in the future only 200 metres may be sufficient. It could open up the option for more landowners to consider. Agreements will need to consider issues arising from leaks and any resulting liability for damage to waterways.

The UK operates 10GW onshore wind with 1GW in construction, and a strong pipeline of future projects. Thanks to the lifting of the wind ban in England new opportunities across the border can now also be considered. A massive 27-29 GW onshore wind is needed to meet UK 2030 goals. Similarly, solar will continue to see an increased demand, currently only generating circa 20GW of electricity with a

2030 target of 60GW. In both cases, developers are hugely keen to acquire sites and agree terms to make a grid application.

For the first time, the debate at the All Energy Conference extended beyond transmission lines and pylons, considering the distribution of energy to the wider networks (pole lines). Tom Hughes, Assistant Director Energy, National Infrastructure & Service Transformation Authority estimated £37 - £50 billion spend will be required for new distribution works – that is on top of existing pole repair and renewal budgets. For landowners, distribution infrastructure has a substantial impact as it affects a significantly greater number of landowners.

Anyone likely to be affected by infrastructure projects should seek professional advice as soon as possible.



Ian Austin

**For a confidential conversation contact Ian Austin, Director and Head of Utilities, Energy and Infrastructure on 0131 449 6212.**

## Young Farmers on the ropes in epic Tug of War final

**The SAYFC Tug of War finale is one of the most exciting and energy filled events at the Royal Highland Show and requires great teamwork. It involves power, passion and dedication to training ahead of the regional qualifiers. Competition this year was so fierce that neither of last year's winning teams qualified for the final.**

Winning the battle of physical and mental strength in this year's ladies competition was

Strathbogie JAC, who stepped up a place on last year, with Avondale YFC taking second and Callander YFC, taking the third spot. The gents event was won by Strathearn JAC, with Lesmahagow YFC, taking second place and in third, were Deveron & Speyside YFC.

Prizes at the event were presented by the sponsors Davidson & Robertson, represented by Graduate Surveyor Vicky Haddow, whose family has a long involvement with the tug of



war competition. Vicky said "It's brilliant to represent the company today - supporting young farmers is something I'm very passionate about, both in my role at D&R and as the current Chairwomen of Lesmahagow YFC. My Dad has coached the TOW team for nearly a decade, so I fully understand the commitment and dedication ►



that goes into training for this competition.” The club was represented in the TOW finals by their gents team who came second.

Jillian Kennedy, Chair of the SAYFC, expressed heartfelt appreciation for Davidson & Robertson’s continued support and said “Having Davidson

& Robertson back with us this year has been fantastic. Their support not only makes the event possible but their enthusiastic backing in the run up and on the day creates a real atmosphere of excitement and anticipation amongst members. It’s partnerships like this that help showcase the strength and spirit of Scotland’s rural youth.”



## Regional infrastructure update: What will affect you?

**Energy infrastructure project updates: SSEN Transmission has already committed a £22 billion grid infrastructure investment in Scotland by 2030 which indicates the level of activity required in the next 6 years.**

In Argyll, our team has been busy with numerous preconstruction agreements with clients on the LT194 Creag Dhubh - Inveraray 275kV OHL Project. The work has now begun, and we continue supporting our clients through the works and post-construction issues.

In the North East, our clients are being affected by large pylon refurbishment projects including the Kincardine to Kintore - East Coast 400kV Upgrade (SPEN XL). Across central Scotland, the large pylon refurbishment project from Denny to Kintore is in the preliminary stages, and we are already supporting existing and new clients at this early stage.

In central and southern Scotland, the Cross Border Connection is seeing opposition. The proposed new pylon line from Galashiels to Cumbria has been through public consultation on the preferred route corridor on the Scottish side of the Border, and we have already provided feedback on behalf of existing clients about potential issues and how this project will impact their property and businesses. The next stage will see proposals for tower placement, and we expect consultation on this to begin in Q3 2026.

Major transmission pylon maintenance is required right across Scotland. It includes surveys

of concrete foundations, painting pylon towers, and replacing spacers and cables. The large glass insulators are 8 feet tall and weigh a tonne, so will be lowered by a winch and new ones erected. We have many clients affected by these works already and know of new works planned around Perth to Glasgow, Glasgow to Edinburgh, Edinburgh to Scottish Borders and Galashiels to Eccles.

The Eastern Green Link 4 high voltage cable from Fife to Norfolk, will see cables from the substation travel offshore, and down the southeast coast to Norfolk. It has a short but significant 16km onshore element in Fife and we are acting for clients in the area.

Water, gas, and rail infrastructure updates: Most of the works across these utilities are focused on repairs, upgrades, and new connections rather than major new projects, with a substantial number of projects underway.

We understand that Scottish Water’s next major budget will focus on existing assets as they try get in front of critical incidents on their network, upgrading and repairing old apparatus. Some of their older pipes are no longer fit for purpose, and combined with capacity and volume changes, it means refurbishment work is progressing to deal with leaks, bursts, and sewage issues.

The story is similar for gas pipelines where SGN/NGT (Gas) are refurbishing pipelines but also potentially looking at upgrading old gas pipes to cope with hydrogen in the future.

For Network Rail, the focus is also on maintenance. Their planned Border’s Railway Electrification Project (BRP) has still not come to fruition, but our clients are still affected by the initial works ahead of electrification.

If you are likely to be affected by infrastructure projects seek professional advice as soon as possible.

## Our Renewable Energy Teams

For over 25 years, D&R has been actively supporting clients in the renewable sector, and as the demand for these services grows, we have now created two specialised teams – supporting landowners and renewable developers. It means we are well equipped to keep landowners abreast of new renewable projects, and potentially share opportunities with developers, brought forward by our landowning clients.



Alasdair Allan

**For more information contact Alasdair Allan or the D&R Utilities Energy & Infrastructure team on 0131 449 6212.**

# Case Study: Supporting farmers through infrastructure disruption



**A major new substation was proposed on an 80-acre section of the family farm. The proposed development was close to the farmhouse and steading, severing key parts of the land and threatening the overall viability of the farming business.**

Over the course of 18 months, D&R supported the family through a complex and often stressful process. The landowner and D&R engaged with the local authority, Ofgem, NFUS, and other stakeholders, exploring alternative sites and managing surveys, consultations, and discussions with third parties.

The uncertainty surrounding the proposal placed enormous strain on the family, making it difficult

to plan for the future and putting their home and livelihood at risk.

Through D&R's negotiations, Scottish Power agreed to purchase the main part of the farm. This was the best possible outcome, allowing Bryce and his family to move on without further disruption. D&R also assisted with the purchase of a new farm near Montrose, around two hours away, helping the family establish a new base for their farming operations.



**Bryce and Katie Lamont**

Bryce Lamont of Hawkhill Farm said:

"D&R stood by us through every twist and turn, giving us the guidance and support we needed during an incredibly stressful time. Thanks to their dedication, we were able to secure the best possible outcome for our family, a fresh start with a new farm and a renewed sense of hope."



**Martin Hall**

**For a confidential conversation contact Martin Hall, Senior Director on 0131 449 6212.**

## Landowners need to be prepared for the Land Reform Bill

**The Land Reform Bill (Scotland) is passing through Stage 2 of the Parliamentary process, taking proposed amendments from MSPs for consideration. At time of writing, over 500 amendments have been put forward.**

Whilst this is a dynamic situation, subject to change before becoming an Act of Parliament, the headlines are likely to remain part of the legislature. There will be implications for landowners and estates:

Landowners will be required to notify Scottish Ministers if selling part or whole of a "large land holding." The size is still to be determined,

initially set at 1,000ha (2,470 ac) but amendments to bring it as low as 500ha (1,235 ac). If this is the case it captures many farms.

For estates exceeding 3,000 hectares (7,412 acres), there is a requirement for a Public Management Plan. Proactive businesses should already have a plan/plans in place for their enterprises, so it should not be too problematic to pull together

a summary for the public to understand what the business is trying to achieve.

Large businesses that do not have constitute parts in place, like long-term forest plans, should start creating these building blocks now. Clients we have helped develop plans are already finding them beneficial, working as an engine for growth.

The resumption process for Agricultural Tenancies is being revised and is likely to follow a statutory valuation process for compensation. All resumptions will need to be notified to the Tenant Farming Commissioner, but there are still questions around the



dates when compensation is valued, and whether willing parties can agree shorter resumption periods.

Given that there are several elements of the 2016 Land Reform Act still awaiting enactment (with suggestions some never will), and the Scottish Government's tendency for secondary legislation to provide the real detail, there could be a long road before measures are effective. It is not even certain that the Bill will be passed before the end of Parliament (May 2026).

Estates and landowners who may be affected but have not yet developed or finalised management plans, should do so now.



Niall Milner

**If you are unsure how you will be affected, contact Niall Milner, Director and Head of Property & Forestry on 0131 449 6212 to discuss your options.**



## Case study: £4M sale of a prestige arable & beef finishing farm

**A retiring farmer appointed D&R to manage the sale of a high-quality, well-maintained arable and beef finishing farm, valued at over £4 million. The property, in excellent condition with modern infrastructure, required a strategy that would attract serious buyers while maximising returns.**

D&R created a detailed, professional brochure to showcase the farm's strengths and implemented a

tailored lotting strategy, dividing the land into smaller parcels to appeal to a wider range of buyers. This approach allowed the client to extract greater overall value from the sale.

D&R oversaw the entire process: from targeted marketing and viewings to negotiations and legal coordination - ensuring the client was kept fully informed throughout. Multiple offers were received, and all lots sold successfully over a four-month period.

Tom Neil, seller of Bog Head Farm:

"From start to finish D&R kept me well informed of the process and offers that came in. I would recommend D&R to anyone who was thinking of selling their farm."



Chris Edmunds

**Thinking of buying or selling? Contact Chris Edmunds, Director & Head of Agency on 01900 268 633.**

## What's happening in the rural property market in 2025

**Last year's tax announcements saw a shift in attitudes and priorities from farming businesses who are now focusing on a longer term, strategic review of assets and opportunities.**

We have seen a recurring theme, with smaller parcels of land coming to market as farmers choose to consolidate their assets, selling land away from the homestead to raise capital for diversification, reduce debt or to invest in core parts of their businesses.

Depending on the asset, market prices have generally been fairly static for 18 months and realistically, land and rural property is unlikely to increase in value to the levels of

2 years ago. As a result, sellers are adapting their expectations as to what their property sale can achieve and are more confident to come to the open market.

Growing confidence in the open market is reflected by the increase in appraisals with a view to selling later in the year, and we are also seeing clients coming to market who asked for appraisals 18 months ago and are now more confident to sell. It is also very apparent that we are receiving a larger proportion of appraisal requests for properties valued at £1M+, demonstrating that we are very much in the mix for higher value rural properties, farms and land.

A number of sellers have swapped from the off market route to listing on the open market, nevertheless, off market remains robust as it is generally a less complex process, and buyers are in a position to proceed with funds in place. We always have a number of off market sales on the market and several in the pipeline for 2025.

Looking ahead, we believe that with such volatility in the investment market, investors are likely to look for land and property opportunities which is a better 'safe haven,' despite the issues around taxation which have been recently well documented."

**If you are considering a property sale and would like a free, no obligation discussion, contact our Agency Team on 0131 449 6212 or 01900 268 633 or email [sales@drurual.co.uk](mailto:sales@drurual.co.uk).**

## Properties for Sale



### West Shirva Farm, Kilsyth, North Lanarkshire Offers Over £1,450,000

A fantastic opportunity to acquire a mixed livestock farm extending to approximately 251.26 acres (101.68ha), equipped with a centrally located steading with a good range of buildings and a four-bedroom farmhouse.



### Skelgill Farm, Newlands Valley, Keswick, Cumbria Guide Price £1,200,000

A Lake District farmhouse that captivated Beatrix Potter. Six-bedroom traditional farmhouse in the Lake District National Park.



### Millers Byre, Isle of Whithorn, Newton Stewart Offers over £450,000

A spacious five-bedroom detached house in the beautiful seaside village of the Isle of Whithorn, Dumfries & Galloway. Coastal living with panoramic harbour views.



### Heathery Wood, Libberton, South Lanarkshire Offers over £200,000

An exciting opportunity to acquire a high quality compact commercial woodland extending to approximately 39.04 acres (15.8 ha).

## Your local Agency Team



**Chris Edmunds**  
Director & Head of Agency  
Cockermouth 01900 268 633



**William Dalrymple**  
Senior Associate  
Edinburgh 0131 449 6212



**Abi Wass**  
Land Agent  
Cockermouth 01900 268 633



**To view all properties for sale, scan me**



**To unsubscribe from our mailings, email [marketing@dr rural.co.uk](mailto:marketing@dr rural.co.uk)**