

From: STOP [<mailto:STOP@actoncourt.net>]

Sent: 07 August 2014 15:11

To: Brace, Carl

Subject: 142059

I am pleased to attached 4 e-mails that have been sent to councillors and which it has been suggested may be of interest to you too. The e-mails were initially begun prior to the application for the proposed turbine at Acton.

We hope to send a few more e-mails to councillors and I will ensure you are copied in to these as well.

Thank you for your time.

Kind regards - Ross

I am writing to enquire how aware you are about people's reactions to the proposed wind turbines that g2energy, a company based in Buckinghamshire, is proposing to build in Pencombe and Acton Beauchamp? Planning permission has been applied for one ref: 141529 and we have been informed by g2energy that another will soon follow.

These massive structures, at 252 Ft. (85 Ft. higher than Hereford cathedral) will dominate the local landscape and be visible from many parts of Herefordshire, including areas of outstanding natural beauty. They are completely out of character with the local landscape.

The 2020 targets for renewable energy, agreed under the UN Kyoto Protocol, have already been exceeded by the existing and approved crop of turbines. Yet the relentless tide of new turbines continues, aided by the lucrative returns achieved by the energy companies which build them and despite the fact that land based wind turbines are less efficient than other types of renewable sources.

The attributes of turbines are slowly being recalibrated as more becomes known. Germany is now furiously building coal powered power stations despite, or maybe because of, its glut of turbines and Denmark, with many more turbines, has acknowledged that its carbon footprint has increased due to shortcomings of turbines, so why does Britain continue down this path? Because our subsidies make it financially attractive for the energy companies to build them - they earn double digit returns. These are the same subsidies that are pushing more people into energy poverty – instead of a Robin Hood effect, there is the turbine effect: give to the rich and take from the poor.

Herefordshire prides itself on 'it's our county'. Apart from the landowner providing the site, no-one in Herefordshire will benefit from these turbines. When asked whether the community could participate and benefit from the turbines, g2energy refused beyond offering a paltry few thousand pounds as a one off payment. Even the electricity will be exported as this will be fed directly into the grid. The turbines are estimated to produce an initial income of over £700k pa, index linked for 20 years or more and the vast majority of this money will not be enjoyed by Herefordshire.

Whilst the community will not profit from the benefits, it is being asked to accept the losses:

- The loss of the beauty of the Herefordshire landscape;
- The loss of rural tranquillity;
- The loss of a safe environment for our protected bird and bat populations;
- The loss to the settings of our heritage sites (some 10% lie within 2 Km);
- The loss in the value of properties.

There will be a loss of tourism, a significant employer in the area. The proposed turbines will be seen from many footpaths and affect the use of bridleways. We understand that one company has put a £2m investment in the local tourism industry on hold because of their threat. Studies suggest that tourism has dropped by 16% in areas with turbines. This will affect job creation and impact on existing jobs. A local B&B estimates that it will see a reduction in income of £40k pa and the wider local economy will lose an additional £39k pa if these turbines are built.

There will be dangers to health – this is a low flying area and we often see planes and helicopters flying lower than the proposed turbines. Bits do come off the turbines and it would be a catastrophe if anything hit these or there was a collision. Turbines are not fail safe. There is a risk from ice, my understanding is that flakes of ice, some over 8 Ft. square can fly off the blades and land within a surprisingly large area surrounding the turbine. The turbine blades also cause a flicker or strobe effect that is unsettling and disorientating for people, farm stock and horses. The BHS recommends that horses are not ridden within 100 Yds of a turbine and it is known that this strobing has a pronounced effect on those with epilepsy.

It does seem that the benefits of the proposed wind turbines will be exported from the county but the losses will be imported and will be here to stay. Why? Renewable energy targets have been met.

As mentioned, the relentless tide of new turbines will continue until the subsidies are removed and there is a concern that there are risks involved in setting a precedent with the Pencombe application. No application for a wind turbine of this size has apparently ever been approved in the county. Should this application be approved, it will not be easy to refuse others in similar locations in the county, witness the one in Acton Beauchamp proposed by the same energy company. The cumulative effect of numerous such massive objects, whether in the region of Pencombe, Acton Beauchamp or across the wider county, would be to alter its character, as well as multiplying, perhaps many times, all the other comments noted above.

It's our county, our countryside, our people, our jobs and our heritage – don't let these turbines destroy one of the last unspoilt and most beautiful counties in England.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. We would very much welcome your time to discuss these proposals and our concerns more fully and we will phone to arrange a convenient time.
nvenient time.

Further to our last e-mail, there has been a request for more information and in this and further e-mails we hope to answer some of the questions raised by the proposed wind turbines and their impact on the communities in Herefordshire. This e-mail details some of the issues relating to the technology and efficiency of wind turbines.

The wind lobby is very powerful and well funded. This has allowed some inconvenient truths to be hidden, suppressed and slanted. Unlike the wind lobby, we are not blessed with wealth but the energy and enthusiasm of people who live in the community, and the knowledge that land based wind power is wearing the Emperor's new clothes.

Wind turbines damage the environment. They affect a large area of land in order to collect low density wind. It is true to say that Herefordshire does not enjoy anywhere near the best wind speeds in the country. Therefore it is a puzzle why turbines should be located here when there are better places?

G2energy provides some data on the efficiency of its proposed turbine and its contribution to the environment. It quotes the turbine as having 500 kilowatts continuous Installed Capacity. This is the design output of the turbine at its effective maximum operation and by definition with the wind blowing at the right speed 24/7. It is standard practice to use a Capacity Factor to produce a "mean" output figure depending on local wind conditions. A typical figure for England is 26%, and I would say for Herefordshire, even this is likely to be optimistic. Using 26%, the turbine will produce an average output of 130 kilowatts. An average home can be taken to use the equivalent of 500 watts of continuous electricity. Rural properties will typically use more, due to more being detached, and often larger than urban houses. Using 500 watts, one can see that the turbine can be expected to produce THE EQUIVALENT power used by 260 homes. G2energy's claim of "a minimum of 500 homes" is false on two counts. First, from the explanation above, and second, because the use of the word "equivalent" is vital to an honest statement. Because of the intermittency of their output, wind turbines cannot supply ANY homes on a regular basis - it is estimated by Cumbria Wind Watch that turbines generate nothing at all on between 55 and 110 days of the year depending on wind speeds. The key planning issue of assessing the benefit versus harm is obviously perverted if the benefit is exaggerated, in this case by a factor of 2. It gets worse, the figures used by g2energy are for a brand new turbine but it is well known that machines reduce in efficiency as they deteriorate and wear out.

The attached article also makes the point well; that it is money in the form of subsidies that drives the expansion of turbines, not the greenness:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/energy/8315304/Wind-turbine-costs-more-than-it-saves.html>

It is a fact that:

- Land based wind power terrorises more land per unit of energy produced than conventional power and alternative renewable energy sources. With an estimated 260 homes being powered by one proposed turbine in Pencombe, it is estimated that at least 26,000 homes will be affected and be able to see it – an unbelievable and ridiculous ratio.
- Land based wind power kills more wildlife per unit of energy produced than conventional power and most alternative renewable energy sources. Land based wind power is not the vibrant green of an emerald but a dirty brown in which it is hard to detect the flecks of green.
- Land based wind power is more expensive than conventional power and some alternative renewable energy sources. It also does not and will not have a material impact on reducing CO2 or climate change.

Herefordshire has done much to promote renewable energy and can proudly look to its record with photovoltaic energy. The proposed wind turbine belongs with the Ark, the science is old and thankfully newer forms are being explored:

<http://sheerwind.com/>

Most worryingly, we now have credible evidence that Herefordshire is being targeted for **multiple wind turbines**. This evidence is from more than one source. It appears that the proposed turbine at Pencombe is being used as a test case to establish a precedent and make it harder to refuse planning permission for further turbines.

Multiple turbines will make it nigh on impossible to find somewhere in Herefordshire without a vista of these huge monstrosities and for what? To power the equivalent of a few hundred homes!

If this proposed turbine is allowed, the county, that is arguably the rural jewel of England, will be grossly and needlessly disfigured by industrial machines that, as sources of power, are (i) in the wrong place, (ii) relatively inefficient, (iii) expensive, (iv) outdated, (v) disproportionately large (vi) will not arrest climate change and (vii) do not help the community but damage it.

Thank you again for your time.

Ross Carter

Good morning and in this third e-mail we site some examples and consider whether g2energy has complied with planning law and good practice in connection with the proposed wind turbines.

In the previous e-mails it was indicated that further turbines are in the system. A planning application has now been made for the second proposed turbine at Acton Beauchamp and we estimate that there are more than 10 additional turbines being considered. It appears that there is an attempt to get a precedent turbine passed before the floodgates are opened. Thereafter it will become harder for applications to be rejected.

It is a requirement that energy companies consult with the local communities prior to a planning application for a turbine. The proposed turbines, at 77 Mtrs. high, some 25 Mtrs. higher than Hereford cathedral, will affect so many communities including being seen from Hereford, Worcester, the market towns of Bromyard, Ledbury and Leominster, the AONB of the Malvern Hills and Suckley Hills amongst others, yet no attempt was made to consult with those communities. Pencombe and Acton Beauchamp parishes including Stanford Bishop and Evesbatch were only given one week's notice of a consultation and then it was by informing the respective Parish Councils. Public notices advising parishioners of the consultation were removed overnight and their theft was reported to the police. The question of whether g2energy has observed the law should be asked.

The wind industry has tried to hide and deny certain truths in its pursuit of subsidised gains.

The loss of tranquillity is one such truth. Standards for noise have been set and adopted and can be found in ETSU-R-97. The accepted levels of noise that were agreed 'offer a reasonable degree of protection to wind farm neighbours without placing unreasonable restrictions on wind farm development or adding unduly to the costs and administration burdens on wind farm developers and local authorities.' This standard was set in 1997. ETSU-R-97 recommended that the standards should be reviewed after 2 years – this review did not happen and in the interim turbines have got bigger and bigger.

G2energy has submitted noise reports in its planning application but it is worth considering these in greater depth. It appears that sometimes a noise is not a noise and sometimes the noise disappears to allow the turbines to pass the standards with flying colours.

G2energy has failed to recognise that there is a difference between day and night background noise levels, that topography affects noise and how soundwaves travel and perhaps most misleadingly ignores a certain type of noise, amplitude modulation. This involves complicated calculations but the effects can be more easily summarised by a real life case: Cotton Farm, Cambs. The evidence proves that noise levels were understated by over 10% when comparing reality to the predicted noise levels submitted with the planning application.

A recent study by Imperial College, London indicates that the industry is under-reporting accidents involving turbines by a factor of 10. This is supported by another study conducted by Caithness Windfarm Information Forum. As pieces from broken blades can travel over a mile and go through walls and roofs this under-reporting may come as no surprise.

It is possible to see some reaction to growing concerns over the adverse impact of turbines. Scotland, with far more turbines, has announced a proposal to increase the distance between

wind developments and dwelling houses to 2.5 Km. It is EU policy that turbines developments should be not less than 2 km. from dwelling houses.

The proposed turbine in Pencombe is some 500 Mtrs. from the nearest dwelling houses.

At Acton Beauchamp, the nearest dwelling house is less than 500 Mtrs. and there is a footpath 286 Mtrs. away. These are either not shown on any map or site map submitted by g2energy in its planning application or have been airbrushed out of existence. There is another path, this time identified on the site plan, some 210 Mtrs. from the proposed turbine and regularly used by riders and horses. The British Horse Society is clear in its guidance that wind turbines should not be located within three times the blade tip height of any route used by horses; in this case 231 Mtrs.

Finally, health issues are beginning to be reported. The British Medical Journal recently included a paper that concluded there is now a large body of evidence to suggest wind turbines cause sleep disturbance and impair health. It called for robust independent research into the health effects and into guidance on acceptable noise levels.

There appears to be an effort by g2energy to challenge the core values of local planning standards and guidelines that have served Herefordshire well until now. These proposals, if permitted, will cause severe detriment, loss of amenity and probable threat to health for significant numbers of the communities that surround the proposed wind turbines.

Rather than an ugly duckling growing into a beautiful swan, perhaps the reverse has occurred and the beauty that was the windmills of a few hundred years ago has grown into the carbuncles that are today's wind turbines. HRH the Prince of Wales popularised the word carbuncle in the mid 1980s. Despite having many green credentials, he refuses to allow wind turbines on his land. Herefordshire should do likewise.

Our research into some of the financial impact of turbines will be the subject of the next e-mail.

Good morning and welcome to this our fourth e-mail.

House prices *are* adversely affected

We now know wind developments affect house prices. After many denials by the wind industry, a definitive study by The London School of Economics found that properties within 1.2 miles suffered a drop of some 11%. Other studies have suggested the figure could be higher. The impact has also been officially recognised – the Lincolnshire Valuation Tribunal (case 2525475651/032C) was the first case to see council tax for a house reduced due to a turbine and more cases have followed. But it isn't just house valuations that are affected, tourism is too.

Adverse effects on tourism

Tourism is the second largest employer in Herefordshire and also helps to support many more jobs in the wider economy. The 2010 – 2015 A Tourism Strategy for Herefordshire highlights the attractions of tourists to the county. The industry gives a 900% return on investment and the paper highlights the attraction; 'escape the pressures of modern living, visit Herefordshire – English Rural Living – with traditions and values just as they used to be'.

The document details the advantages enjoyed by Herefordshire, such as: 1300 years of history, heritage attractions, diversity of unspoilt natural beauty, countryside – orchards, pastures, arable land, timeless, escapism, gardens, flora and fauna. These precious advantages are not compatible with wind turbines towering over 250 Ft. and visible from most parts of the county.

There have been many studies into the impact on tourism and even the most turbine friendly of these admit to a loss of tourists, jobs and income. Early studies were based on small sample sizes and dubious statistical analysis but cited a likely drop of 10%. For a number of years a survey, based on just 370 respondents, became the litmus test on whether wind turbines were tourism friendly. More robust studies have suggested a larger drop, sometimes as high as 25%.

Scotland, with its obsession for wind energy, still struggles to admit any damage. It was only in late 2012 that VisitScotland first admitted wind developments could drive holidaymakers away, despite this being something that virtually every study had identified – its most recent research identified that 20% of tourists would not visit an area with wind turbines. Mr Salmond reportedly still states that wind turbines attract tourists.

In May 2014, Northumberland belatedly initiated research into the impact on tourism after much concern and pressure that it was being affected. This was first suggested in 2012 but dismissed as there were not enough turbines in Northumberland (some 27) at the time to carry out a study – a case of adding more fuel to the fire before deciding whether it would be a good idea to put it out.

The effects on Herefordshire tourism have started

Turbines seem to have a larger effect in rural areas compared to cities. Local businesses connected to the tourism industry are concerned. Several private businesses, within a few

miles of one of the proposed turbines, indicated a reduction in income of £340,000 pa to them and the wider community. A business, some 2.5 miles away, has stated that it has suspended a planned multi-million expansion due to the proposed turbine at Acton Beauchamp. These are large numbers for a community and will affect employment and impact on the wider economy. It will tarnish Herefordshire's brand and our reputation for English Rural Living will have been impacted.

Turbines are a bit like a rash. It starts with one spot and before long the whole body is covered. Don't let Herefordshire become a pin cushion for wind turbines. If you accept that further turbines will follow - we have credible evidence to support this assumption, the initial amount of new money coming into Herefordshire will be counted in the hundreds of thousands of pounds to the landowner. We know tourism will be affected and the loss will be in the many millions of pounds. Herefordshire's tourist industry currently brings in over £460 million a year and as with all industries is easily broken. How many jobs will be lost if the proposed turbines are built?

In conclusion

Finally I am indebted to Boris Johnson to sum up the madness:

'It is a good 20 years since I last drove all the way to Scotland and in the interim something unbelievable has been done - in our name - to our green, pleasant and precious countryside.

I mean the windmills, the turbines - whatever they are called. I mean the things that look like some hideous Venusian invasion, marching over the moors and destroying the dales; the colossal seaside toys plonked erratically across our ancient landscape; the endless parade of waving white-armed old lunatics, gesticulating feebly at each other across the fields and the glens.

They seemed to be everywhere, and I asked myself, when were we consulted? Was there a referendum? Did someone ever warn the British people that these moaning seagull slicers were going to be erected on some of the most sensational scenery that God ever called into being?'

Herefordshire has the most sensational scenery in England. We know wind turbines affect 1) house prices, 2) council receipts, 3) tourism and 4) jobs. Why let it destroy the Unspoilt Natural Beauty of our countryside too?