

## **Wadlow Wind Farm**

# **The fight goes on**

The battle to prevent the proposed Wadlow Wind Farm desecrating one of the finest upland areas of Cambridgeshire continues apace. Following this month's refusal by the Planning Inspectorate to allow a similarly vast windfarm at nearby Boxworth, we are now at a crucial stage in the process.

There is a growing realisation that what is planned for our local countryside is not a few gently-turning windmills, but a monstrous industrial-scale power station. The Boxworth appeal judgement highlights this. After referring to the "modest" and "quintessentially English" local landscape, Inspector Andrew Pykett said in his summing up: "The windfarm would completely dominate the appearance and character of the area to such an extent that much of its existing quality would be overwhelmed. The surrounding area would be defined by the turbines to the extent that its identity and diversity would be diminished and its existing sense of place severely compromised."

Think, then, how 13 vast turbines proposed for Wadlow Farm - each one taller than Big Ben and visible across hundreds of square miles - would devastate the even rarer chalk upland character of the West Wrating and Balsham area. It's hardly surprising that all of the parish councils representing local areas which voted on the proposal have rejected the wind farm. Balsham, West Wrating, Brinkley, Carlton, Great Wilbraham, Little Wilbraham, Weston Colville and other PCs all decided that it would be utterly inappropriate.

Having had its original refusal for the Boxworth power station upheld, South Cambs District Council is now wading through the welter of submissions received since the Wadlow Farm application, a large number of them challenging what many believe to be the omissions, assumptions and flaws in the planning application submitted by Renewable Energy Systems, the big business behind the proposal. The Council received RES's response to some of these challenges at the end of the public consultation period (which closed December 4<sup>th</sup>) and we responded immediately and powerfully. You can see the correspondence at [www.stop-wadlow-wind-farm.org.uk](http://www.stop-wadlow-wind-farm.org.uk).

### **Windfarms discredited**

Renewable Energy Systems suffered a blow on 9<sup>th</sup> December when the Daily Telegraph (see attached) published the results of a study showing not only that windfarms are hopelessly inefficient, but that RES particularly operates the worst-performing turbine in the country which the study describes as "a real turkey."

In our first newsletter (still available from the secretary - see overleaf - or go to [www.stop-wadlow-wind-farm.org.uk](http://www.stop-wadlow-wind-farm.org.uk)) we listed the many reasons why a wind power station would be a disaster for our area. These included damage to our environment, wildlife, heritage, tourism, road safety and property values. We also explained the threats to our well-being from noise and electronic interference and pointed out that the Wadlow

Farm site has actually been officially deemed not windy enough by the Eastern Region Renewable Energy Study! Not surprisingly, many new members rallied to our cause.

But – as the Telegraph article makes very clear - there is more to this than the strength of our local arguments. Environmentalists, politicians of all shades and millions of ordinary folk – people who genuinely care and worry about climate change – are realising that windfarms are (to quote the leading environmentalist Professor James Lovelock) nothing more than a money-making ‘scam’. The only things wind turbines do well is blight rural landscapes and make money for the people who build them (we calculate RES might hope to make £150 million out of Wadlow). As power generators, turbines are hopelessly inefficient and unreliable, and the world is waking up to the fact.

Here are a few examples.

- The well-known TV actor Jimmy Nesbit, joining his local authority in Coleraine, Northern Ireland, to fight a massive offshore windfarm says: “It would be madness to allow our wonderful coastline to be scarred with what amounts to an industrial development. A windfarm may sound green and attractive but the truth is that it is a power station built right on our shoreline and that cannot be acceptable to any of us who know and love the North Coast.”
- A Welsh coalition fighting proposals that could ultimately lead to wind turbines being visible from almost everywhere in Wales says: “Evidence from Denmark, the USA and the UK indicates that houses in the vicinity of turbines lose 25 to 30% of their value.” After giving a series of terrifying examples, it highlighted a July 2005 study on a sample of properties near a proposed wind farm near Lampeter, Ceredigion. Eight properties were valued and estimates made of the loss due to nearby wind turbines. Total loss for the eight properties was in excess of £1.5 million, or typically 20 – 25% on each property.
- The Department of Trade and Industry’s first annual report into the performance of £67m Scroby Sands wind farm said the 30-turbine power station built off the coast of Great Yarmouth generated less energy than had been expected. What’s more, it showed that in the space of a year 39 gearbox bearings needed replacing, along with four generators. The report said this had "serious implications for resources, costs and downtime".
- Plans for a huge windfarm on the glorious Lochluichart Estate in Scotland is being opposed for many reasons, one of which is the threat posed to a wide range of insect, bird and animal life including endangered species such as the golden eagle, golden plover, water vole, red-throated diver and peregrine falcon. Indeed, here and across Europe, large wind turbines have earned the grim description ‘bird slicers’ for the horrific damage they do to birds, particularly larger species. The Scottish developers also refused to guarantee that the turbines will be made in the UK. This touches on another deep concern of environmentalists – that these huge turbines are being made from Chinese and Indian steels produced under massively polluting conditions.

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