

Windturbines

I live in the settlement of Haydon, just outside Wells, Somerset, and I am also a local caver. Myself and other residents have been made aware that a local farmer intends to allow the construction of a wind turbine at the location of Victoria Farm, East Horrington (NGR 59777, 47997). The turbine is a commercial concern, which is being developed by a company called ClearWinds, based in Hampshire. They are proposing a 313' turbine (ground to tip of blade at highest point) on the site. I am also aware that a second 313' turbine is proposed at Maesbury Quarry, near East Horrington (NGR 596, 475) by TUK Ltd, who are a front company for Renewable First, based in Stroud. The quarry has been designated a RIGS (Regionally Important Geological Site).

A third turbine of the same height is also under consideration by the landowner at Warren Farm, Maesbury (NGR 620 467 approx). A small private turbine already exists here.

There are also three local landowners in the areas of Binegar and Haydon, who we believe are also considering placing commercial turbines on their land, albeit that these may possibly be smaller. Together with the existing turbine at Shooters Bottom, Chewton Mendip, all of these turbines, if granted planning permission, would fall within an area of less than 4km².

Local people, myself included, have formed a protest group called AATOM - Action Against Turbines On Mendip, because it appears that East Mendip is set to become a sacrificial lamb as far as wind energy is concerned. The group is fighting the proposals on the potential detrimental affects to individuals, and also on the following grounds:

- a) Visual Impact - Which is being grossly under exaggerated by the developers. We believe that the turbines will be visible well beyond the 30km radius claimed by them.
- b) Ecological Issues - i.e. There are known to be rare bats within 3 miles of the proposed turbines.
- c) Effect on Hydrology - There are underground watercourses and aquifers in the area that feed St Andrews Well in Wells and there is concern that these maybe interfered with or polluted.
- d) Geological Concerns - Karst (Carboniferous Limestone rock) areas are internationally protected due to their fragility and construction of the turbines will undoubtedly damage this environment.
- e) Archeological Issues - The Hill Fort of Maesbury and the course of a Roman Road lie within the proximity of the proposed turbines. There are concerns that potential sites of archeological importance maybe lost.
- f) Interference with Aviation - The proposed turbines are in close proximity to Bristol Airport, The Mendip Gliding Club, RNAS Yeovilton and other private airstrips. At least one developer has stated that there are no aviation concerns in the area. However residents seek reassurance that air safety will not be compromised.
- g) Disruption to Public Footpaths – The Victoria Farm development is close to an established public footpath which may have to be diverted or lost altogether.

As a group AATOM are carrying out their own research and seeking professional opinion on all of the aforementioned issues. We also feel that it is of paramount

importance that the proposals are brought to the attention of any individual or organization that has an interest in preserving the beauty and integrity of the Mendip Hills.

The group is not against the need for sustainable energy and we are not seeking to influence personal opinion as to anyone's belief that wind power will contribute to lessening the effects of Climate Change. However more than at anytime, it is now being acknowledged that wind turbines rarely produce the amounts of electricity that developers claim and huge numbers will be needed to make any impact in reducing our reliance on conventional forms of power generation. Also the complex science surrounding global warming is deserving of far more research, before the misleading claims that man is solely responsible for this phenomenon, is proven conclusively; a belief that is now being questioned by the governments of many countries. However developers who seldom live in the areas where they construct their turbines, continue to exploit this belief. They pay little heed to the opinions of local residents and appear to be more interested in the financial rewards that an industry, heavily subsidized by the tax payer, can bring.

AATOM has entered into dialogue with the developers, ClearWinds and TUK UK Ltd, whose transparency, despite holding public consultation meetings, regarding the details of their planning applications (which we believe may be submitted by the end of the summer 2012), is very questionable.

The group are interested in hearing from anyone who wishes to support us, or help us with any information, which may assist our research, especially with regard to the particular issues that may affect them individually or collectively as an organization.

We can be contacted at - aatom.hills@gmail.com

Many Thanks