

Proposed Wind Farm Development at Silloth-on-Solway

A Planning Application has been submitted for six wind turbines to be erected at Park Head Farm, Silloth. This site is approximately two miles from Silloth Town Centre. These turbines will be 344 feet high to the tip of the blade which is more than twice the height of Christ Church steeple.

Silloth on Solway Action Committee is a local group of residents who are campaigning hard and lobbying for support amongst local residents and visitors against these turbines, because there they will have a significant effect on the locality both economically and environmentally. The visual impact will be the most obvious. At the moment the area enjoys uninterrupted views over the Lakeland Hills and these will be blighted forever once these massive turbines are erected.

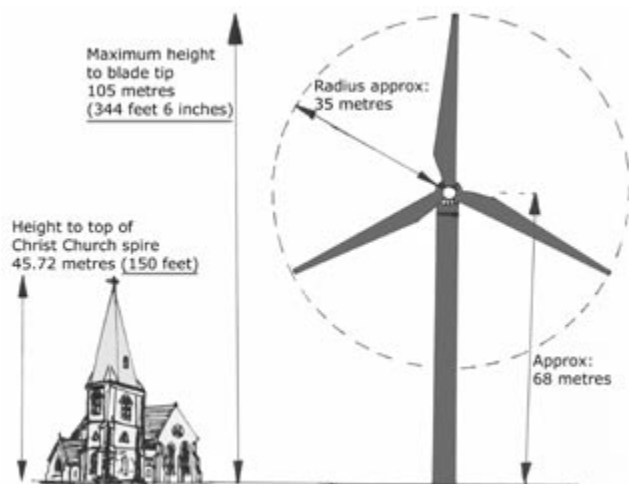
There are many myths surrounding the subject of wind-power. Many of these myths are propagated by the few people who will benefit from it - the Government, the Power Companies and the Landowners on whose ground they are sited.

The argument that Wind Farms are environmentally friendly and will provide clean, renewable energy thereby reducing the emission of global warming gases is the most widely spread myth. Because wind is such an unreliable source of power, turbines can only work to a maximum of 30% of their capacity and will only ever produce relatively small amounts of electricity. This means that conventional and nuclear power stations will have to remain open in order to guarantee a continual supply. Wind Farms will therefore only replace a small percentage of power generated from fossil fuels and they will do nothing to combat other major sources of carbon dioxide such as transport. In fact, the manufacture and installation of wind turbines themselves creates a significant amount of carbon dioxide.

Making present power stations more efficient, controlling traffic and petrol consumption, developing other forms of renewable energy and investing in energy conservation would do far more

to reduce harmful emissions.

We are told that Wind Farms do not affect the tourism that is vital to many rural communities. Silloth relies heavily on its tourist industry and it is a massive gamble to assume that it will not be affected based on this misleading information. Recent research carried out in Scotland found that substantial numbers of holidaymakers would avoid areas with wind developments and a further 10 per cent would not be likely to return to areas if the numbers of Wind Farms increased.



Although there are financial benefits to the community in the form of community 'compensation' funds, these are so low that even a small decline in tourist numbers would quickly outweigh them.

We are led to believe that Wind Farms do not harm the country. Wind Farms industrialise the countryside. Government targets for renewable energy mean that between five and ten thousand turbines will have to be erected. This is both on and off shore. This number of turbines will be needed to meet targets for providing 5% of the country's electricity by renewable means by 2010. This is equivalent to 100 wind turbines being erected every week. Inevitably, large tracts of our countryside will be covered by wind turbines and there will be little or nothing local communities can do to stop this encroachment because planning guidelines are becoming increasingly inadequate and objections on the basis of landscape or scenic grounds will not be acceptable.

It has been said that the construction of these huge man-made structures does not harm the countryside. In fact, there is considerable disruption as site access roads have to be capable of supporting the heavy construction

traffic that will be needed. The site in question at Park Head Farm currently has a very narrow access road measuring just 9' 2" wide that would in no way be suitable for this type of traffic, it will have to be considerably widened. In addition, the roads leading to the specific access road are themselves not adequate for heavy vehicles, also local residents would have to suffer the disruption and inconvenience of this extra traffic while the turbines are being constructed.

We are told that wind turbines are relatively noiseless and cause minimal disturbance to people. However, evidence from people living near to Wind Farms would suggest that this is not the case, their lives have been considerably affected by having to live with a continual background noise. This is because the turbines emit low frequency noise that carries over a large distance, particularly down wind. There are also other problems such as blade flicker and shadow flicker that can make the lives of local residents extremely unpleasant.

It has been well documented that wind turbines kill birds and bats. However low the numbers they are still significant. The Solway is an internationally

recognised site for a large number of migratory and resident birds whose habitat is becoming ever more reduced in other parts of the country due to modern farming methods and the spread of development. The Solway until now has provided a relatively safe haven for many of these species of bird, many of which are rare or endangered species. There can be no doubt that wind turbines disrupt the migratory, breeding and feeding activities of many bird species and also bats.

Silloth is unique in many ways, because of its reliance on tourism it is a natural habitat for many wild species of flora and fauna and has managed to remain relatively unspoilt. This development would spoil the setting of the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage site which is only a short distance away, and it is also close to a designated AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

We all have views on the subject of wind turbines and the need for reducing greenhouse gases. However, as a community it would not be unreasonable to request that a full environmental survey be undertaken of the area by an independent body so that we can all make an informed judgement based on the facts. We hope that strong objections will be registered to this effect.

If you wish to register your objection, you should write immediately to:

**Mr. R. Outhwaite
Planning & Development Manager
Allerdale Borough Council
Workington
Cumbria CA14 3YJ**

Ref: 2/2004/0841 & 0843
For more information about the Silloth on Solway Action Committee contact: David Montgomerie on 016973 31396 or 31062.

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