

**PROPOSED WINDFARM AT SPRING FARM RIDGE, HELMDON/GREATWORTH,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE (SOUTH NORTHANTS COUNCIL PLANNING APPLICATION
S/2010/1437/MAF)**

PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO APPEAL AGAINST REFUSAL OF PLANNING PERMISSION

APP/Z2830/A/11/2165035/NWF

STATEMENT BY BOB HAYNES, WATENDLATH, HELMDON ROAD, GREATWORTH

I have asked for an opportunity to appear before this inquiry with the following objectives:

1. To explain my reasons for strongly objecting to the proposal to erect five wind turbines on the Spring Farm Ridge Site and
2. To demonstrate that these reasons for objection are shared by the overwhelming majority of the villagers of Greatworth.

My wife and I moved to our present house in Helmdon Road, Greatworth on June 1st 2007, to semi retire, having looked for over 2 years before finding this perfect location within a lovely village community with its outstanding views over the countryside. These enormous intrusions into our unspoilt local landscape would totally destroy what we have strived all our life to achieve.

These turbines, at 410 feet high, that are more at home in wildest Scotland or far away at sea, would dwarf our village and be out of scale and proportion to our beautiful Northamptonshire countryside. The impact on this countryside and our village would be devastating and would be an unacceptable legacy for future generations.

I would like to briefly outline to you what our village of Greatworth has to offer. There is a Primary School, Play School, Church, Chapel, small Social Club, Pub and Shop/Post Office. This village is so friendly, classless and crime free. It is a buzzing, thriving, wonderful community and we are being asked to compromise a wonderful quality of life to live in the shadow of obtrusive industrial turbines.

People mix so well as there are many activities that they may or may not join in. The social club offers billiards, functions, line dancing, skittles and dances. The pub – quizzes, music and beer festival to magic nights and fine ale and food. Gardening Club – monthly visits or talks, Dolly Mixtures – a splinter W.I. offering talks and social events. Thursday lunch club – monthly lunch and natter. Health walks – brilliantly organised and mapped, a twice monthly event. Scrabble club – in the pub, twice a month. Clay pigeon shooting every 3 months. Three villages show, incorporating Marston, Thenford, and Greatworth – annual horticultural show. GRASS – Greatworth real ale appreciation society using the Parish Council free bus to shop in Banbury and enjoy a glass of real ale. Greatworth Village Charity – a 200 year old charity set up to provide funds for the children of the village to assist further education. Bi yearly village fete. Yearly family fun day. Annual fireworks and bonfire display. Whist drives.

Charity cheese and wine evenings etc, plus the usual school fares, discos and quiz nights. Marston Cricket Club, a brilliantly run club and a tight link with Greatworth village.

We involve ourselves with most of the above, we have also worked and produced a very productive allotment plot from a wilderness. We have a garden that we take great pride in, which we have opened to the village as part of "Village Open Garden Day" for the past two years.

Greatworth has a wonderfully active golf society and I've been privileged to be captain for the last two years running. My project for the year as captain is to forge a partnership with Marston Cricket Club to subsidise and encourage their younger members to participate in our season's programme of 10 golf days, in the hope they will join us on a long term basis to help keep the society thriving in future.

My wife and I are keen (dog) walkers and walk between 25/30 miles locally per week. Before our move to Greatworth, for a period of 12 years every Sunday we would drive for an hour from Middleton Cheney into the Cotswolds and do a different 2-3 hour walk. Our move to Greatworth has found us another "Cotswolds" and we now prefer to walk the local paths without the need for an hour's drive. The walk from our house across the proposed windfarm site to the byeway and then either left through Stuchbury and Sulgrave, or right to the underground reservoir and home are particular favourites which we do on a regular basis, once or twice a week. We would find 410 feet high turbines too intimidating to walk the footpaths and byeway in that area thus destroying a beautiful walking option. I would like to refer you to a photo montage prepared for the Helmdon Stuchbury and Greatworth Windfarm Action Group, which can be seen as View 10 in Photomontage Pack B. This was taken from a viewpoint a few minute's walk from my house. It clearly shows the route of one of my favourite footpaths leading towards the proposed windfarm site, where at least three of the turbines in the picture would be within 125 metre "fall over" distance of the footpaths across the site.

I attach as Appendix A, a statement I read out to the previous inquiry demonstrating the high usage of the footpaths in the proposed windfarm site area.

From Friday 6th August to Saturday 14th August 2010, I personally went to every house within Greatworth village with a windfarm questionnaire and I would like to present the outcome of this research to the inquiry to illustrate that my opposition is endorsed by a further 386 home owners. I therefore attach as Appendix B, a copy of my letter dated 14th August 2010 to the Helmdon, Stuchbury and Greatworth Windfarm Action Group.

As a migraine sufferer I am very concerned the turbines would compound my problems. Our bedroom and bathroom look towards the windfarm site and as an early riser I have seen some magnificent sun rises. The sunrise position in the sky moves depending upon the time of the year. During the summer months when at its brightest it would be behind or directly over the site. The fact is the layout of the turbines is such that all five would be in constant view, with some appearing behind others this would make the whole view totally irritating to look at. The photo montage at View 10 in HSGWAG Photomontage Pack B accurately represents the view from my house and I consider that this fully demonstrates my concern.

The early morning drive to exit the village at the top road would be confusing and at the point of driving onto the Welsh lane (B4525) highly dangerous.

I am given to understand that road safety on the Welsh Lane (B4525) is not an issue at this inquiry. I suggest that you come with me and talk to locals about the notorious Welsh Lane. They will in no uncertain terms put you right on this serious issue. Ian Avery, the son of the man who fits kitchens for me was killed in a car accident on this road. The daughter of Pat who works in our local shop/post office was killed just down the road prior to the previous inquiry. The fact that this road is predominantly straight with a series of nasty bends means that you will see these turbines virtually all the way until you pass them. The road is totally substandard with wheel ruts not kerbs at its sides. There are too many HG lorries, many the giant continental ones, taking the short cut east to west between the motorways, along this substandard B road. You can count and record accidents and deaths, but statistics don't show near misses. We fear that more of these near misses will turn into fatalities and from a village blighted by tragedy we hope that you will not take that risk on our behalf.

I know nothing about legal or planning matters, they are the concern of people far more knowledgeable and clever than me, but what I do know is how the village feels about the windfarm. When I moved here I already knew approximately 20 people, I now know well over 350 people, plus many of their children. People always stop for a chat and will talk about things other than the weather, so I think I am qualified to talk about their views. They are totally opposed to this development and insist that the coalition government's guidelines to let local people make local decisions should be followed. They have made that decision and that decision is "No to the Windfarm".

If the wind farm comes, regardless of personal cost, we will move away as I know many others are considering. If the wind farm does not come we will stay and further support village life.

In this statement, I have tried to give an honest insight into the thoughts and feelings of the villagers of Greatworth and sincerely ask that their views are respected and the appeal dismissed.

APPENDIX A

I would like to stress how important the footpaths north of the Welsh Lane are to the villagers of Greatworth.

Over the last month I have travelled to London each day and arrived home late, so I have taken my dog for an early morning walk, between 6 and 7.30, mainly in that area. I have met at least twenty people who say that they walk up there regularly most mornings at that time.

Assume only 10 go up there each day, that is three and a half thousand plus early morning walk visits each year.

The Thursday before Easter 7 of us did the Primrose walk along the dismantled railway south of the village and arranged to meet up on Easter Sunday morning to do the Windfarm site walk along AN9, turn right along AN8 over the railway to AN10 to the byway – AN36, and return through the fields in front of our house via the underground reservoir. 11 people turned up plus 2 dogs. Whilst walking we met 6 others walking AN9. Later on that morning back in Greatworth I met 13 members of the Northampton Ramblers who were walking a circular walk taking in Eydon, Marston St Lawrence, Greatworth, Stuchbury and Sulgrave, they would be walking to Stuchbury via AN36. 30 people on a not particularly nice Sunday morning weather wise, went through that site from Greatworth in a very short time.

We have since learned that many more people visited the site from Greatworth that day along with others from Helmdon and Sulgrave, and this is just one day's foot traffic.

There are many thousands of walk visits per year to that windfarm area, and this one of Greatworth's jewels in the crown.

The start of AN9 over the Welsh Lane is the immediate point of entry from our village to northern village walks, this would become so intimidating and unwelcoming with turbine 1 alongside (at 84.2 metres, well inside the 125 metre fall over distance). This would act as a barrier so that most people would stop using this footpath and as a result they would probably be less likely to walk straight on to Stuchbury and Helmdon either, let alone turn into the turbine site.

APPENDIX B

Bob Haynes
Watendlath
Helmdon Road
Greatworth

14 August 2010

To: H S G Windfarm Action Group

Ref: Windfarm Questionnaire

Dear All,

From Friday 6th to Saturday 14th August 2010 I went to every house within Greatworth village with the HSG Windfarm Action Group questionnaire. If I did not get a reply on the first circuit of the village I returned a second time to each house.

There were 287 houses visited

222 households that took part

65 houses where I couldn't get a reply (people on holiday, shift workers, empty properties and some houses where people were in but did not answer the door etc.)

I took views from owner/occupiers not other family members.

The findings are as follows:

Total views taken	386
Those opposed to the wind farm proposal	325 (84.2%)
Those in favour of the wind farm proposal	15 (3.9%)
Those undecided	46 (11.9%)

Every vote was signed for to confirm opinion. I consider these findings to be representative of village feelings.

What I thought was going to be a quick tick the box and go operation turned into something completely different. The majority had something to say on the issue and made sure I stayed to listen. As a result I spent nearly 23 hours on Greatworth doorsteps, during 2 weekends and 5 midweek evenings.

I think it is important that you the Action Group, the Parish Council etc should be aware of what the Greatworth villagers are actually thinking **now**. The mood of the village has changed dramatically to that of a few months ago when the Broadview and Parish Council questionnaires were answered. For example many people who said they were in favour of the windfarm then, are now most vehemently opposed.

Reasons given for opposition:

The blimp shocked them into realising how tall and close the development would be to Greatworth village.

The HSGWAG meeting of 27th July made people realise the true implications to them personally, (They thought the hour long presentation by Keith Jones was both informative and honest.)

The photoshoot and Banbury Guardian article showing a realistic montage from Peveril Road shocked people into realising the scale of these turbines.

Many worried about the noise in general and the effect on their pets.

Many worried about flicker, especially in the morning.

Distractions for drivers on the very dangerous Welsh Lane, and in particular the northern village exit point, now a turbine to be in the adjacent field.

Impact on house prices and saleability. (Chris Sinclair has the details of the first house sale, (Whitton Close) collapsing at the point of exchange directly due to the wind farm proposal.

Too big, and out of scale and proportion to the South Northants countryside, and the general spoiling of our wonderful asset.

Many walkers worried about the effect on their dogs when on the footpaths through the proposed site.

Horse riders using the byway to Stuchbury have grave fears of horses being spooked.

The total distrust of Broadview – many went to the Marston St Lawrence and Helmdon presentations and got different answers to the same questions, plus a totally biased and prejudiced Broadview view to local villagers questions. As for their MD – Corrigan they found him totally arrogant and insensitive. He had a total disregard and disinterest in valid local concerns.

Many thought that their photographic montages were a joke, especially the ones taken from the graveyard.

The realisation that for all the hassle and aggravation of having them on our doorstep, there is no direct benefit to villagers.

No gain but considerable pain.

Many of the undecided votes were villagers who in principal support green energy and renewables, but could not say yes to this particular proposal.

With regard to the “attend the GPC 6th Sept” box. Following on from the discussions at the 27th July meeting, so far approximately 90 people have expressed a wish to attend, with comments received such as:

Why has the GPC not been campaigning already over the past months against the wind farm as have Sulgrave and Helmdon Parish Councils?

Why have they still not sorted out their position?

How are they going to decide their position?

Why wait for planning permission before starting any action? Don't they know it is a wind farm for goodness sake, they know the village is opposed they must support villagers wishes.

Members with vested interests must not attend any discussions on the wind farm for fear of them leaking information back to Broadview.

If this is not resolved satisfactorily on 6th September, Nick Peart to resign, and someone is appointed who has the time and drive to get behind the campaign to oppose the wind farm.

I explained that a separate letter would go out as to agenda and venue of that meeting.

There is now almost total opposition to the wind farm. The results of the questionnaire support this and villagers are pinning their hopes on HSGWAG and the Parish Council uniting to stop it.

Yours sincerely,

Bob Haynes