

**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 EDWARD TIMS

ON BEHALF OF MR MICHAEL TIMS AND MRS JOAN TIMS

OF STUCHBURY HALL FARM

I appear at this inquiry on behalf of my parents Michael and Joan Tims (who would find it too emotional to represent themselves) and my family. The reason for me doing this is to make sure everyone concerned is aware of the dramatic impact the proposed wind turbines would have on our everyday working and social lives.

We spend our long working days in and around Stuchbury Hall Farm. We work long hours doing a job we love and have been doing this for 5 generations. Our hobbies are all country activities spent around the farm because we love our home and the landscape.

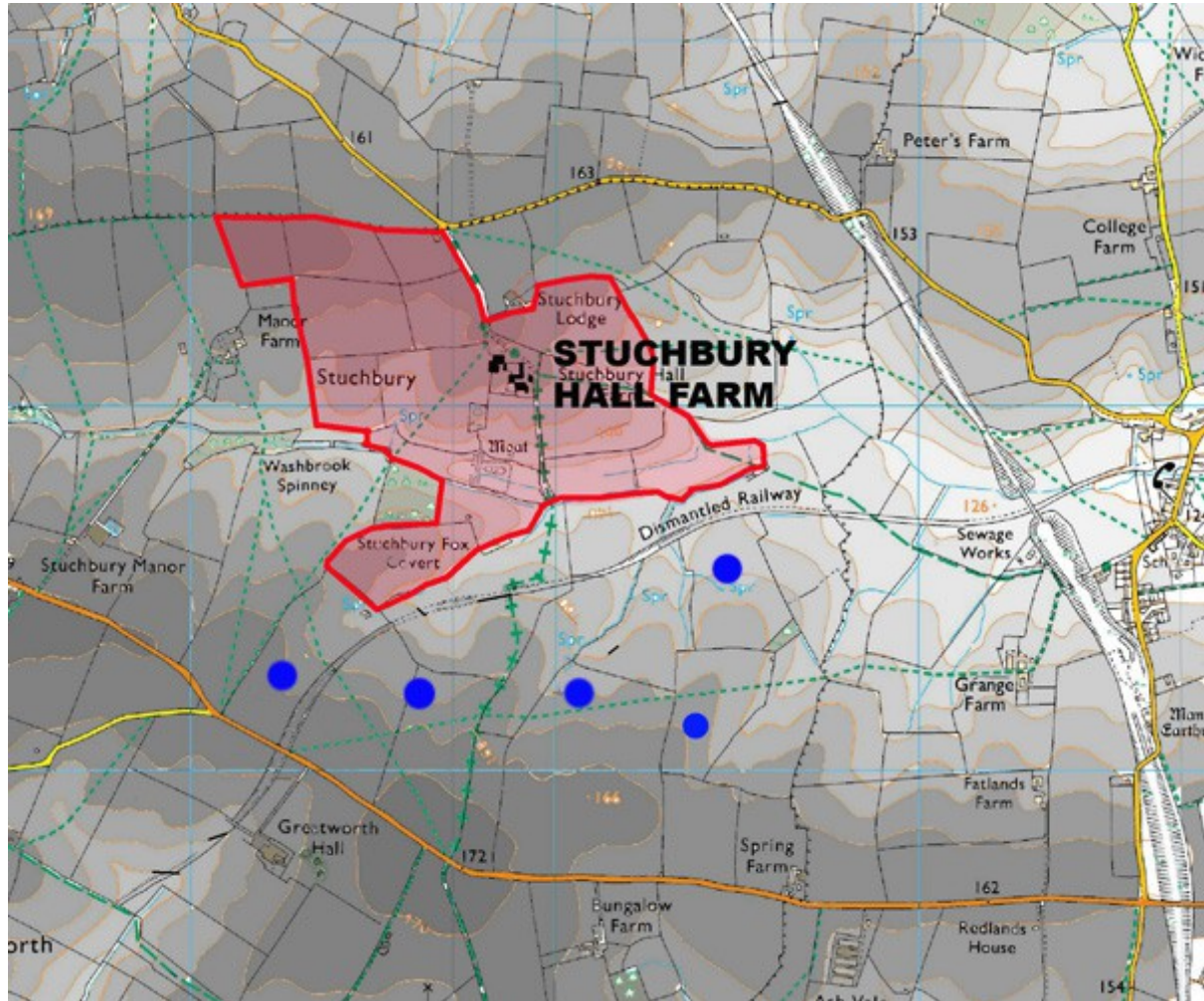
Stuchbury Hall is a fine example of a traditional Northamptonshire farmhouse, occupying a site which was once a monastery and medieval village, the outlines of which can still be seen. The house and farm buildings are on the northern slopes of a tranquil valley comprising small fields, copses and hedgerows which can have changed little since the time of the enclosures. The wholesale removal of hedgerows which has so blighted the English countryside has not happened here. Our fields are predominantly meadowland given over to the raising of livestock. Until the construction of the wind monitoring mast there were no intrusive elements in this secluded landscape. We have spent time and money maintaining Stuchbury Hall which we believe makes an essential contribution to the quality of this little corner of unspoilt English countryside. We encourage people to share and enjoy our peaceful surroundings. We have an excellent relationship with the foot path walkers and bridle way users all of whom share our values.

I would suggest that the photographic panorama of the view southwards from our farm, attached as Appendix 1, demonstrates this more than mere words. The public byway passes right through the middle of the countryside shown in this photograph. The former wind monitoring mast can be seen and it should be noted that the turbines would be twice as high. The top of the turbine column would be 20 metres higher than this mast, at the centre of the 90 metre diameter blades, continuously rotating in a way which no photograph or montage could depict. Three of the turbines would be closer to the farm than the mast, one of them by over 200 metres.

Our farmhouse would be approximately 760 metres from the nearest turbine. Two turbines would be at 900 and 950 metres and two at just over 1000 metres. The bases of the turbines

on the opposite side of the valley would be at much the same level as the house. They would totally dominate the landscape to the south of the farm in an arc of 100 degrees.

The contour map below shows in pink shading the extent of our farm holding and underlines just how our land would be forced to share this small valley with the turbines.



In their Environmental Statement, Broadview admit that the presence of the turbines would create what they call a “new windfarm landscape”. In the absence of an explanation of this description, we take this to mean that in such a landscape the overwhelmingly dominant features would be the 125 metre high turbines with their 90 metre diameter whirling blades. Inexplicably, this new landscape character is said to extend only to 600 or 700 metres from the turbines thus, it seems, just stopping short of our house and terminating more or less at the valley bottom or a little beyond.

From the map and indeed at the farm when facing the proposed site, it is obvious that those of us living and working on the northern slopes opposite the turbines would have no respite from them. We have noted that in Broadview’s Environmental Statement there are no maps showing the relationship of our farm holding to the turbines, no attempt to describe or illustrate the topography of the valley, and no photo montages from anywhere near Stuchbury Hall Farm.

However, I note that Mr Stevenson's proof of evidence to the previous inquiry does now contain a wireframe diagram of the turbines as seen from our farm. This simply confirms that all five of them would be the totally dominant new features in a field of view of 100 degrees. I think it would have been useful to this inquiry if Broadview had seen fit to use this wireframe to produce a photo montage from this point, demonstrating the character of the landscape as shown in my appendix 1 and the HSGWAG montage from View 5. This would have enabled the appropriate witness to describe how these new features "*relate well to the grain and scale of the surrounding landscape*" as claimed in the Environmental Statement.

This montage from View 5 can be seen in Pack A of the professionally prepared photo montages submitted by the Helmdon Stuchbury and Greatworth Windfarm Action Group. It should be noted that this montage shows only three of the turbines. To the left of the photograph would be Turbine No 5, the closest to our house and to the right, Turbine No 1.

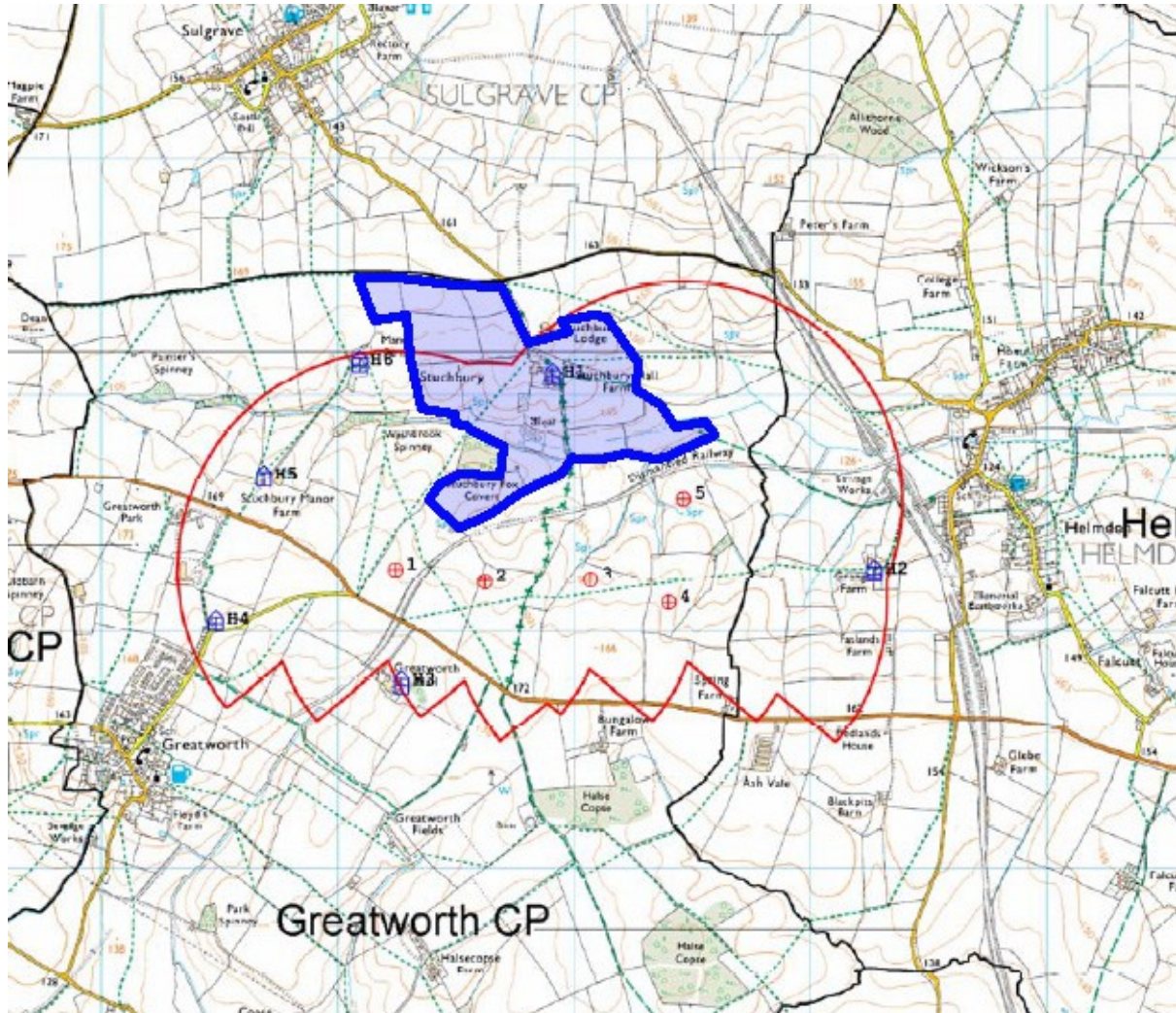
To demonstrate that there would be no unacceptable effects on Stuchbury Hall Farm, Broadview simply rely on the statement that "*...this property is a two storey farmhouse located within farm buildings which would partially screen views of the proposed development..*"

Nevertheless, the conclusion reached was that the level of effect would be major and significant. It should be noted that this conclusion was reached when the nearest turbine was proposed at 816 metres. As we now know, this distance has been reduced to 760 metres in order to avoid disturbing the bats.

What this simple statement cannot explain is how the presence of the turbines would affect our everyday life at the house. The wire frames produced in Mr Stevenson's proof of evidence demonstrate just how dominant the turbines would be from the moment we turn into the approach road to our farm at Stuchbury Cottages on the Sulgrave to Helmdon road. The former wind speed mast which is less than half the height of nearby Turbine 4 could be plainly seen alongside our house as we reached it. We park our cars and farm vehicles in the open area to the east of the house, where there would be a temporary respite from the turbines by virtue of the mature trees. A glance to the left on the doorstep would reveal Turbine 3 in its unscreened entirety. We then enter what might be called the working part of the house, the farmhouse kitchen. This faces east and turbines would not be seen from the window. However, for relaxation, we use our sitting room in the part of the house which faces south towards the turbines. Through the patio doors of this room would be seen the full turning circle of the blades of at least two turbines and parts of another, constantly visible above the low roofs of our traditional farm buildings. The sitting room patio doors open on to the garden where once again the full turning circles of three turbines would be visible over the low buildings forming the southern garden boundary. This is demonstrated in the photo montages at View 4 in the HSGWAG Photomontage Packs "A" and "B". The turning blades would be seen even amongst the tree cover, which itself is seasonal and intermittent. The south facing window of the main bedroom above would have an uninterrupted view of three turbines and this room would be the main recipient of the noise increase which is not disputed.

Thus, the wind turbines would overshadow us and be seen from wherever we are on the farm, from our garden, from our sitting room and from the main bedroom. Not only are we very concerned about the visual impact, we are also concerned the effect the movement of

the blades would have on us and our stock. The turbines would dominate the whole of our southern boundary, being as close as 200 metres in places. Broadview's flicker map, reproduced below, indicates that at least three quarters of our holding would be within the area subject to flicker and shadows. This would be particularly severe in the fields along our southern boundary.



I am given to understand that the predicted noise levels at our house are said to be acceptable under current government guidance. This does not mean that we will not hear the turbines. Indeed, given the prevailing wind direction we are likely to be conscious of the noise a great deal of the time at the house and almost all of the time in the majority of our fields. It seems that there could be times when the noise level at our house could be doubled, especially at night when it is generally exceptionally quiet at Stuchbury Hall.

When you add the noise increase to visual intrusion, flicker and shadows, it will be seen why I said at the beginning of this statement that there would be a dramatic impact on our everyday working and social lives.

My mother and father have worked hard to maintain a working farm to pass on to the next generation and I hope to do the same. My parents were planning on semi-retirement to a property on the farm and their dreams of living on the farm in their retirement with time to

spend with their grandchildren would be completely ruined if the wind farm development took place.

I would like to explain our family situation in that my parents and my family work on our traditional small farm. We have been at Stuchbury Hall for 5 generations and my parents made a decision many years ago not to diversify because it would ruin what they hold most dear – the tranquillity, peace and isolation that Stuchbury Hall offers. In short they value their home and lifestyle more than the financial benefit such changes would have meant. The proposed development of five wind turbines would be an infringement of what they hold most dear. They will totally monopolise our peaceful valley and destroy what my parents have spent their lives maintaining and treasuring. The threat of this proposed development has been, without doubt, the biggest intrusion on their lives and has caused them immense distress.

Since the last inquiry, both my parents have had health issues which has highlighted the more urgent necessity for my family and me to move home. It is becoming hard for them to cope with early and sometimes very late work. We have therefore applied for planning permission for a home in the most convenient stone barn on the farm which would be no more than 720 metres from the nearest turbine.

This new home would thus be 40 metres closer to the nearest turbine (No 5) than the existing traditional 16th century farmhouse which would be 760 metres from Turbine 5.

The fact that Turbine 5 was moved almost 40 metres nearer to our home because of the bat survey is, I think, an insult to our feelings and totally insensitive.

We all work on the farm 7 days a week – we love it and we love what we do – now we dread what might be.

Mr Corrigan told my parents quite unkindly “You do not own your view”. He is absolutely right we don’t own our view but that doesn’t mean we and hundreds of others can’t enjoy it, love it and care for it.

We don’t live in a national park, or an area of outstanding natural beauty but we do live in an area of unspoilt, traditional English countryside which, I suggest to you, has the kind of “intrinsic character and beauty” which the recent National Planning Policy guidance requires to be taken account of in reaching the decision such as the one to be made here.

I appreciate that the decision on this appeal must have regard to any contribution the proposal might make to the fight against global warming, an issue which concerns us all. I simply ask that in making the decision, regard is also paid to the massive impact which the wind turbines would have upon us as a family, every day of our lives.

Thank you.

APPENDIX 1



Left hand.



Right hand.

Note: For the paper copy of this statement, these two pictures are designed to be printed on individual A4 (landscape) sheets and joined together to form a panorama.