

Reference: APP/Z2830/A/11/2165035/NFW

Appeal by Broadview Energy Developments Ltd, Spring Farm Ridge.

Witness: Roger Miles, 3 Cross Lane, Helmdon, NN13 5QL

Statement: additional comments April 2013

I have been the Helmdon Parish Paths Warden since October 2006. In my statement to the 2012 Inquiry I reviewed how well-used footpaths and bridleways would be impacted adversely by this development. I drew attention to particular paths where the loss of public amenity would be most severe.

All the points I made last year are equally relevant in 2013 and are underscored by the following:

1. On the day that the Inspector walked some of the threatened paths with me, she did not include bridleway AP15/AN32 and her comments indicated that she was assuming a tree screening effect, without testing that view on the ground. Parts of this popular route run through open flat pasture and the turbines will be very close to walkers, riders and their horses.
2. The Helmdon Health Walks now have more regular walkers. I reported an average of 15 last year but since Christmas we have often has 20 walkers, including some newly registered members of this nationally promoted scheme to improve the nation's health and wellbeing. It is now even more important to have path AN10 fully available, which it would not be during the erection of the turbines. This is an essential link to other paths that are needed to offer a variety of routes to the regular Health Walkers.
3. Numbers of people using this attractive countryside for leisure walking will soon increase as the major housing development to the North of Brackley is now underway. People from those houses will be within easy walking distance of the paths in the area that would be afflicted by the wind farm development. Note that the HS2 planners have made detailed plans to preserve countryside access paths to the North of Brackley for the enlarged community.
4. Natural England has undertaken extensive restoration works on the Helmdon Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) along the route of the former Great Central Railway. Tree and scrub removal to improve the habitat for rare butterflies has opened out views from footpath AP35 that the turbines will obstruct. This costly amenity gain would be nullified by the turbines.