

Dear Sir/Madam,

While I realise that this Inquiry is an Australian matter, I understand that you have invited responses from around the world. I hope that my response to you is of interest. I am offering a snapshot of the effect on two villages, two communities in South East England, only one mile (1.5 km) or so apart. The affect of a proposal by one developer. Nevertheless, this is being repeated in communities across the UK.

More and more people in the UK are beginning to realise the futility of having an energy policy so reliant on wind energy which, despite the propaganda, is probably the most inefficient form of energy generation known to man. During the recent cold spell despite nearly 5% installed capacity, wind only managed to generate 0.1% electricity. The problem here as I see it, is the horrendous damage to Britain culturally and financially before officialdom wakes up to the futility of its actions. I say culturally, because the human cost of wind farms is unfortunately rarely seen by commentators.

I am a District Councillor representing the Tillingham ward for Maldon District Council, Essex, and have for the last six years been involved in a battle to prevent the destruction of our area, initially by RES NPower Renewables, and now two further developers, Ridgewind and RES, at the nearby villages of Southminster and Burnham-on-Crouch. Six years ago a bombshell was dropped on us by NPower, publishing their proposals for a wind power station of 25 turbines, 400 feet high, on around 2500 acres of the flat open marsh farms of Tillingham and Bradwell-on-Sea, with the nearest turbines only 700m from houses. They immediately held public exhibitions and tried to sell themselves as saviours of the planet.

Bradwell-on-Sea is on the mouth of the River Blackwater and has the oldest Christian church in Europe, St Peters on the Wall, standing on the ruins of the ancient Roman fort of Othona. The large house, Bradwell Lodge, was at one time home to the artist, Gainsborough. Tillingham is the village immediately to the south. The area has a strong historic past and the remains of Stoneage fish traps can be found in the river and Roman salt pans in the fields. There is rich and diverse wildlife. The marsh farmland is designated as one of the three or four most tranquil places in East Anglia by the Council for the Preservation of Rural England (CPRE). It is a "Big Sky" landscape.

Despite already having a nuclear power station at Bradwell-on-Sea, the outcry against the proposal was almost universal, with over 90% of residents being against the idea. The strength of feeling can be easily seen as the local group set up to oppose the development, Bradwell and Tillingham Tackling Lost Environment (BATTLE) immediately attracted a membership of nearly 1000, mainly from a local population of around 2500.

Due to the rules on "Interest" imposed on councillors by the last Labour government, I had to make a decision as whether to make public my opposition, or save my views for the planning decision when this was made by Maldon District Council. I felt that I had no real choice and spoke out against the proposal, thus preventing my input into the planning process. NPower immediately sent me a threatening letter, warning of legal action being taken against me as I was showing bias against their scheme. When I responded telling them that I would continue

to campaign against them, they wrote a similar letter to Maldon District Council trying to persuade them to quieten me. The solicitor at Maldon robustly responded that I was at liberty to make any comment I wished, and that as a councillor I was well aware that I could take no other part in the planning process. So much for NPower, the charity!

BATTLE started their campaign by printing their first campaign letter, printing stickers for car windscreens and having a blimp made, to be flown at 400 feet to demonstrate the height of the turbines. Due to the height, the blimp had to be licensed by the UK's Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Because of the overpowering effect of the blimp NPower tried, and failed, to get the CAA to revoke the license.

The pressure from BATTLE and members of the public was so intense that four of the five landowners withdrew their land from the scheme, leaving only a block of approximately 350 acres with probably 3 turbines, at Bradwell-on-Sea available to NPower. NPower immediately responded by breaking the density rules that they had set themselves at the public meetings and announced that the scheme on this farm was now for 10 turbines, still only 700m from houses. One can only guess at what they would have attempted to do if they had retained the whole 2500 acres.

After about two years NPower applied for planning consent and this was refused unanimously by councillors at Maldon District Council. NPower appealed this decision and the appeal was duly heard by the UK's Planning Inspectorate (PINS) over a three week Public Inquiry, after which the Inspector approved the application. BATTLE took legal advice and appealed to the High Court on a number of points, that the decision should be overturned. The Secretary of State's office caved in before it reached court and another Public Inquiry was held in November 2009. In January of this year a PINS Inspector again approved the application. BATTLE again took legal advice and was advised that the Inspector's decision was illegal on 8 major points and so put in another High Court challenge. This challenge is due to be heard at the High Court in London on the 1st-3rd March 2011. Assuming this is successful one has to assume that there will be yet another Public Inquiry at some future date.

I now come to what I called the human cost. By March 2011, BATTLE will have been in existence for 6 years 2months. In that time it has held several public meetings with invited speakers, carried out fund raising events, printed around 18 newsletters to keep the membership up to date with events, employed planning specialists, planning solicitors and planning barristers. The list goes on. All this comes at an appalling cost to the community. Financially it is in excess of £90,000 (\$150,000Au) so far, raised by collection buckets, donations, a monthly lottery and a raffle. no small task for two country villages. Measured in time it has cost the volunteers that make up the committee, and others, many countless hours gathering information, organising meetings, fund raising and collating evidence for the legal teams. The last was no mean feat in itself. Many residents have put their lives on hold for the last six years, with those living closest (700 metres) to the turbines wondering if their lives will ever be the same again and whether their houses will be saleable, or even liveable in. This last is not that far fetched, in Lincolnshire the Davis family, farmers who did not object

to their neighbours windfarm, have had to move out of their house which has become uninhabitable due to the neighbouring turbines noise.

I am sorry that this letter is so long, but I have only touched on the events that have happened, and the work involved in fighting a ruthless international company backed by government policy and government grants. We are not alone, there are now hundreds of campaigns such as this one being fought around the UK with varying degrees of success. Nor are we NIMBY's (Not In My Backyard), another nuclear power station is proposed for Bradwell-on-Sea and the vast majority of residents would either welcome it, or like myself, accept its necessity. It is the destruction of our area and community for no worthwhile gain that is anathema to us. We are desperately trying to persuade the UK government of the folly of pursuing its present policy. Meanwhile the human cost of fighting to preserve our communities continues its relentless rise.

I do hope that this letter is of interest to you and hope that you will forgive my interference in Australian matters.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Dewick.