



# **ASWAR report on initial reaction to the McAlpine/RES Swift Wind Farm planning application**

**November 2013**



The River Swift below Holy Trinity Church in the historic conservation village of Churchover

## 1. The purpose of wind turbines is twofold

- Their secondary purpose is to generate electricity. In this they are inefficient, uneconomic and unpredictable
- The primary purpose of turbines is to generate money for speculators at the expense of the public. In this turbines are exceptionally efficient and predictable

How has this been allowed to happen? It is based on scare-stories and the fiction that wind turbines will 'save the planet' by significantly reducing global warming. **Nothing could be further from the truth.**

The real scare-story is that:

- turbines contribute little if anything to reduce CO<sup>2</sup> emissions.
- are staggeringly poor value for money
- have a negative cumulative impact on the landscape
- have an adverse effect on wildlife (900,000 bats killed every year)
- divide communities
- make an intermittent, tiny contribution to the UK's energy needs (all UK's turbines together produce less energy than one gas power plant)
- drive manufacturing jobs off-shore...
- ...and ordinary people into fuel poverty
- while rent-seeking landowners get rich and some 80% of the enormous subsidies, get paid to overseas companies
- every windfarm job costs £100,000 in subsidy every year, taken from your electricity bills

But the most unsatisfactory feature is that, since **turbines fail to generate electricity when the wind is either too strong or too weak**, conventional fossil-fuel power stations need to be kept running as backup. So we are maintaining two energy systems in tandem, the wind turbine one eye-wateringly expensive – hardly a sensible proposition.



In addition a diesel generating back-up system is now being built across the country, and only recently exposed to public knowledge, it costs an astronomical six times more than even the 'more than double' expense of wind, so added together wind **turbines don't even save CO<sup>2</sup>**.

Ofgen has warned that Britain's energy production spare capacity will drop to 2% in 2015, with likely triggering of black-outs reminiscent of the Seventies. **Wind turbines exaggerate this disaster-scare** because of their intermittency that the National Grid has difficulty in coping with. Remember, electricity cannot be stored.

## 2. Cost of wind turbines

If you want to know how much subsidy you are paying in your electricity bill go to the Tax Payers Alliance website called <http://www.energyswindle.com/> where there is a simple calculator that tells you how much subsidy you are paying.

Nationally a cross party group of 105 MPs last year led by our next door neighbour Christopher Heaton Harris MP for Daventry, said quote: “We think it is unwise to make consumers pay, through taxpayer subsidy, for inefficient and intermittent energy production that is typified by on-shore wind turbines.”

*Because of current government policy the public will be compelled to return McAlpine/RES’s capital outlay in full in around four years, after which, other than some maintenance costs, the company will receive a gravy train of publically funded subsidies of around £1,200,000 per year for the next twenty years; a total of £24million, which make bankers’ bonuses look mean.*

A recent report commissioned by the accountancy firm KPMG came to the conclusion that if the government dropped its windfarm subsidy policy it would save the nation £34 billion which means £550 saved for every person.

Below is a table based on a report in the Daily Telegraph showing the money that what Sir Tim Rice has called the ‘rich twits’ were yearly making in 2011.

Land owner	Number of turbines	Annual income : £		
		Land owner	Energy company	Subsidy
Duke of Gloucester	5	75,000	2,956,500	1,478,250
Jeremy Dearden	5	75,000	3,357,800	1,773,900
<b>Cameron’s father in law</b>	8	120,000	3,483,700	1,741,850
Earl of Seafield	8	120,000	4,056,900	2,028,450
Duke of Argyll	9	135,000	2,292,500	1,146,250
Earl Spencer	13	195,000	6,149,520	3,074,760
Duke of Beaufort	19	285,000	13,160,000	6,580,000
Sir Alistair Gordon Cumming	29	435,000	18,448,560	9,224,280
Duke of Roxburghe	48	720,000	34,058,880	17,029,440

Those involved with the proposed Swift Windfarm keep their numbers secret but based on the above figures each of the land owners (John Lee of Streetfield Farm and Penny Tyacke - daughter of Monica and Fred Green - now living near Meriden) will receive at least £30,000 per year for 20-25 years. The Dolbys who were going to have five turbines on their land in the defeated SSE proposal will miss out and comparatively get ‘chicken feed’ for hosting the wind mast and still have to put up with the turbines within half a mile of their bedrooms.

### 3. Kill subsidies = reduce electricity bills

**The farming of Subsidies are the motivation for wind turbines – and nothing else.**

Every political party is talking about making a fairer society. How can it be fair for already wealthy land owners and companies to be paid twice or more, than the value of what they produce and expect the whole community, including the poor and vulnerable, to subsidise them? **Turbines re-distribute wealth in a surprising direction!**

### 4. Some Councils are fighting back

There has been a landmark ruling against a windfarm development near Hemsby, where High Court judge Mrs Justice Lang, ruled: “...that the right to preserve the landscape was more important than the governments renewable energy targets”.

The recent Milton Keynes High Court ruling on separation distances confirms that **local authorities can set exclusion zones to protect local people from inappropriate development**. Press statements from the wind industry suggesting that the judgment prevents local authorities from doing so are false and as usual misleading.

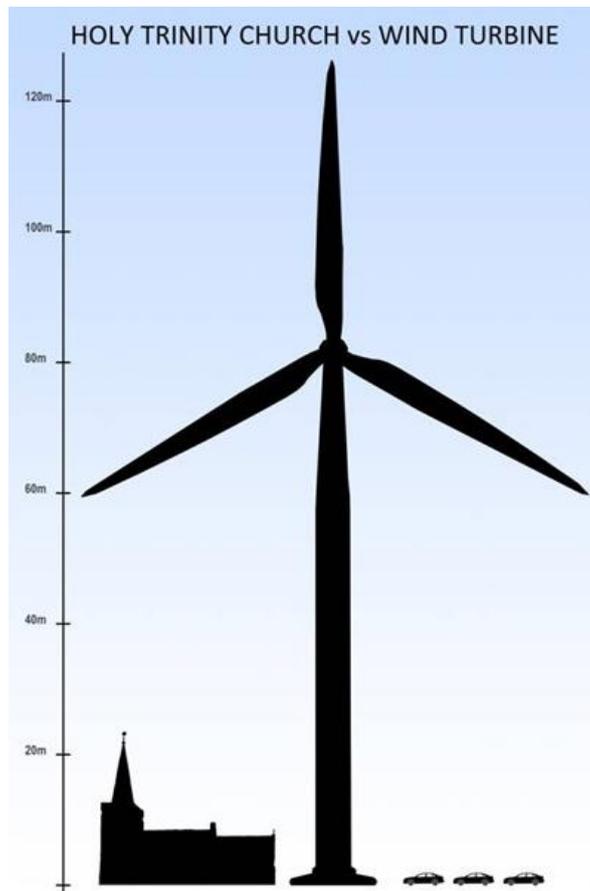
Lincolnshire County Council has issued guidance that “There is a presumption against windfarm development on the grounds of **negative cumulative visual impact**”

### 5. How could anybody ask this village to put up with more turbines?



Above is a recent photo of Holy Trinity church that has peacefully dominated the beautiful meandering Swift Valley below Churchover for 1,000 years and as can be seen is already affected by the Swinford turbines at three miles. What would it be like with more at just over half a mile?

Below is an accurate scale diagram of the size of a turbine v Churchover’s listed church. (**Five times larger than the spire**). Could anybody say that this turbine will not ruin the landscape **that this conservation area church, has dominated for 1,000 years?**



The nucleated medieval settlements typical of the Feldon area of North Warwickshire are still renowned for their historically important Ridge and Furrow. Much of it has been lost, but some of the finest is around Ryehill Spinnery (what some of the Churchover village children call 'Magic Wood').



Rugby Borough surely has a responsibility to help preserve this historic beauty that historians say typifies the topography of the area on the Northamptonshire / Warwickshire / Leicestershire border. The voters love it and want it protected from vandal windfarms such as below.



## 6. Developers should not always be trusted

They have oodles of money for PR spinners, top lawyers and the backing of a wind lobby focused very clearly on keeping the subsidies coming. It certainly is a David and Goliath struggle. **But David can win.**

There is this company RES, owned by the mammoth McAlpine construction Group, who pretend they are independent in all their propaganda literature. Perhaps they don't want their cleverly designed green 'save the planet' image to be undermined by the fact that their owner was the centre piece of a **BBC Panorama programme this year that accused McAlpines of setting-up the illegal blacklist in the building industry!**

McAlpine/RES have bought the land owner contracts from SSE so the community can be threatened and put under siege for a second time.

**Developers downplay the inefficiency of turbines.** McAlpine/RES admit a 32.9% efficiency for their turbines in their propaganda. Nevertheless other Midland windfarms along the A14 at Kettering were reported as working at 19% and one in Reading at 15%. The normal UK average is 25% (that includes windy offshore ones). Can we trust McAlpine/RES's figures? The real problem is that the on-shore wind subsidies offer more than twice the actual value of the electricity they produce and developers still make a killing, so they will continue putting in applications where they think they can get away with it.

Developers mislead with their photomontages. They use wide panoramic images which, unless printed at a specific size and viewed from a specific distance, downplay the impact on landscape.

## Misleading visuals



Photomontage view from ADS - south side of Chatterton (1) x 72 degrees horizontal field of view, 32.5m viewing distance, view direction 240 degrees.

Standard wide-angle photo-stitch used by the industry to "demonstrate" lack of impact on landscape



The same project and virtually the same viewpoint but using a 55mm lens to reflect more accurately what the human eye actually sees, and what people actually experience

See the difference above between the last lot of developers' (SSE) images and a 55mm lens to reflect more accurately what people actually see. (There is an article explaining in detail about LVIA on the ASWAR website - see <http://www.aswar.org.uk/content/analysis-landscape-vandalism>).

**Following the recent UN landmark victory for Christine Metcalfe**, who lodged a complaint with the UN on the grounds that the UK and EU had breached citizens' rights under the UN's Aarhus Convention Article seven, Developers may no longer be able to brush off requests about the real effects of wind turbines.

Developers have always assumed the planning system does not require them to justify their proposals with regard to economics, health hazard, and property price reduction.

She claimed the UK's renewables policies have been designed in such a way that they have denied the public the right to be informed about, or to ascertain, the alleged reduction benefits in CO2 from wind power, or the negative effects of wind power on health, the environment and the economy. The Court agreed with her.

## 7. Which brings us to the harmful health effects of turbines

You may have seen the BBC2 documentary 'Windfarm Wars'. It showed how McAlpine/RES, got permission on appeal, to build turbines at Den Brook in Devon almost four years ago.

They have still not built them. Why not?

Well a local hero, called Mike Hulme, with a couple of experts, have fought appeals, right up to the High Court. They lost on the rejection of permission, but an Inspector required McAlpine/RES, to abide by some sensible, Amplitude Modulation noise restrictions, which should protect residents from, in simple terms, the disruptions to some people sleeping properly.

A lack of sleep over a period of time is hazardous to health. This has been called Vibro Acoustic Disease or Wind Turbine Syndrome.



See <http://www.windturbinesyndrome.com/>

Now Big Wind argues, that windfarms operate within the government noise guidelines, called ETSU-R-97, and they say there is nothing for residents, to be worried about.

Why 97? 1997 was when these guidelines were created, when turbines were smaller, and a number of issues like wind shear, were not fully understood (for those of you who are interested, there are academic papers on all of this, on the ASWAR website - see <http://www.aswar.org.uk/content/noise-health>)

Although it has been accepted by everyone, for many years, that low frequency infra-sound, gives health hazards, ETSU-R-97 does not demand that low frequency infra-sound from turbines be measured, and Big Wind are in denial that turbines create low frequency infra-sound.

**Developers are terrified of it becoming common knowledge.**

The Davies family of Spalding, almost achieved a breakthrough, but on, metaphorically the steps of, the UK High Court, when they were just about to successfully sue a windfarm developer, who had ruined their lives, and thereby create a precedent in law, for others to use, they were bought off, with millions plus a gagging order.

We have spoken to Mike Hulme at Den Brook, who has now been under the McAlpine/RES cosh for six years but continues to fight the battle. Is it too dangerous for Big Wind to build the turbines near him unless the AM noise restrictions are lifted? If they were forced to turn-off their turbines every night, what a precedent that would set.

## 8. People know instinctively that windfarms reduce property prices

At last a Cabinet minister, Owen Paterson, has called for a proper open investigation of the facts. (See <http://www.aswar.org.uk/content/property-de-valued>)

How much money has Rugby spent on marketing the town as the historic heart of the game of Rugby? Do we want the town to become known as the heart of windfarm country? There are turbines to the east and north in Daventry and Harborough Council controlled land. This McAlpine/RES application is the move to the North West. **To help frighten off other developers to the south, this one must be stopped.**

## 9. Where does all this appalling policy come from?

The Government Energy policy is driven by EU directives and of course the 2008 Climate Change Act that burdens us with an £18 billion extra cost **every year** up to 2050 (government numbers).

Before the last Energy Minister (John Hayes) was moved on, he let the cat out of the bag and said “enough is enough” based on the fact that the target for UK wind capacity was 13GW by 2020. Well, 7GW is already built and 6GW has already been given permission, all of it 7 years in advance of the wind turbine 2020 target.

There used to be regional renewables targets but these were abolished, so Rugby has to work within the national targets and these have already been reached.

**There is no policy that a District must have turbines.**

## 10. What is happening across the world to wind turbines?

Within the last two months two EU Commissioners, Mr Tajani (Industry) and Mr Oettinger (Energy) have publicly recognised the huge damage that the EU’s quixotic and unilateral climate policies are doing and are calling for change and the development of shale. (See <http://www.thegwpf.org/green-suicide-brussels-fears-european-industrial-massacre-sparked-green-energy-costs/>)

Tajani said “I am in favour of a green agenda, but we can’t be religious about this. We need a new energy policy. We have to stop pretending, because we can’t sacrifice Europe’s industry for climate goals that are not realistic, and are not being enforced worldwide. **We face a systemic industrial massacre**”

He warned that Europe’s quixotic dash for renewables was pushing electricity costs to untenable levels, leaving Europe struggling to compete as America’s shale revolution has cut US natural gas prices by 80%.

Even European President Herman Van Rompuy has echoed the growing sense of alarm, calling it a top EU priority to slash energy costs. To Quote him: “Compared to US competitors, European industry pays today twice as much for electricity, and four times as much for gas.



One of the first policy announcements of Australia's new Government was to Stop the flawed Carbon Tax and confirm an investigation into the health impacts of wind farms.

Canada is following suit re. carbon tax and Japan has slashed its CO<sup>2</sup> emission targets.

John Howard, Australia's PM between 1996 and 2007 and whose policies allowed Australia's economy to be almost unaffected by the recent recession, is an agnostic on 'global warming' and has warned (see <http://www.thegwpf.org/john-howard-religion/>) that though some groups advocating rapid cuts in emissions acted out of genuine concern, others saw a commercial opportunity. "There are plenty of people around who want public money in the name of saving the planet." **Wind turbines come to mind!**

Germany has the highest number of turbines and has the most costly electricity in Europe. It is now building brown-coal (the most sulphurous polluting coal) power stations, (after the greens forced the closure of Germany's nuclear power stations), in order to provide some stable back-up to intermittent renewables and try to reduce costs. Their Environment Minister has resorted to publishing a booklet advising Germans to use less energy, suggesting they could reduce their TV brightness and contrast!

Spain is slashing wind subsidises. The Czech Republic is stopping renewables and going to coal, like Poland.

China and India are at the forefront of building new coal-fired power stations and 1,200 are planned in the global pipeline to come on stream, leaving us as the only country in the world, by Act of Parliament, committed to swingeing uneconomic reductions in the opposite direction! See <http://www.thegwpf.org/anti-nuclear-anti-shale-1200-new-coal-fired-power-plants/>

## 11. Do we in this country want to put our global competitiveness on the chopping block?

Already British jobs are being lost in electricity intensive manufacturing. Factories are closing in Europe and opening in the USA because of comparative electricity costs.

In Rugby there are 1,000 well-paid skilled engineering jobs in fossil fuel power generation and a miniscule number in wind turbine technology. Are Rugby Councillors going to prefer to support a small handful of wind jobs, subsidised at £100,000 each per year or 1,000 unsubsidised proper jobs?

## 12. Government has abolished the presumption in favour of renewables

At last some ministers are realising the electorate want change and they have replaced planning guidelines with a new policy for renewable and low carbon energy which was published on 29 July 2013. (This may help us in our technical planning objection). For more information see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-practice-guidance-for-renewable-energy>

The guidance lists the criteria to consider when deciding planning applications:

- the need for renewable or low carbon energy **does not automatically override environmental protections**;
- **cumulative impacts require particular attention**, especially the increasing impact that wind turbines can have on landscape and local amenity **as the number of turbines in an area increases**;
- **local topography is an important factor** in assessing whether wind turbines could have a damaging effect on landscape and recognise that the **impact can be as great in predominately flat landscapes** as in hilly or mountainous areas;
- great care should be taken to **ensure heritage assets are conserved** in a manner appropriate to their significance, including the **impact of proposals on views important to their setting**;
- **protecting local amenity is an important consideration** which should be given proper weight in planning decisions.

## 13. Government is emphasising Localism

Interestingly when a Cabinet Minister visited Rugby a couple of months ago, he confirmed to an ASWAR representative personally that Michael Fallon (Energy Minister) and Eric Pickles (Communities Secretary) were working to stop further on-shore wind farms. You may not be aware that Pickles 'called in' some eight windfarm appeals in June and more since, as opposed to having them decided by the planning inspectorate.

ASWAR believes that developers will now be less able to overturn local Council rejections, on appeal to the Inspectorate.

Why are so many windfarms built next to the boundaries between different constituencies? **Developers know windfarms lose votes**. Put them on the edge and half the Nimby voters affected are in the next constituency. For example Cotesbach is the same distance as Churchover from the appalling McAlpine/RES threatened proposal. But they are not in Rugby Borough.

Should the Cotesbach voters be ignored? Rugby planners say they won't be but their White LCS report mentions only south of A5 issues.

The Rugby MP Mark Pawsey has said, quote: "This is an issue which should be determined by local authorities and local communities".

We thank our local politicians, Leigh Hunt (local Rugby councillor) and Philip Morris-Jones (Warwickshire County Councillor) who have given a lead on behalf of their constituents in the directly affected community.

The community around Churchover and Cotesbach is very clear about what it thinks and as the Rugby Advertiser leader column said: **"it is commendable to see people power in action"**.



Join us in our fight to defend the community around Rugby - come and win with us a great 'David and Goliath' battle.

In practical terms:

- Write an objection letter or email now to [nathan.lowde@rugby.gov.uk](mailto:nathan.lowde@rugby.gov.uk) check out <http://www.aswar.org.uk/content/letters-objection>
- Join us at a rally at Rugby Town Hall when the planning committee consider the application in the New Year.

For further advice call **Lorne Smith** on **01788 833834**