

Notes of meeting on 13th March at Beckwithshaw Village Hall

To discuss the proposed applications to erect a further 29 large wind turbines in the countryside close to the existing 8 Knabs Ridge wind farm. Approximately 40 people attended the meeting with a talk and questions led by the Beckwithshaw Parish Council Chairman, Ian Galloway. The meeting was very friendly and constructive.

The main points arising from the talk/subsequent discussions at the meeting are as follows:- Please note: these notes were taken at the meeting and in good faith but the accuracy of all the facts cannot be totally guaranteed.

- Each of the proposed new wind turbines are higher than the existing Knabs Ridge units and range from 327ft to 408ft high from ground to blade tip. To put this in perspective, Blackpool Tower is around 500ft high.
- Official figures for Knabs Ridge wind turbines show them in 2011 to have only a 17% rolling load factor and 17.6% annual load factor (normally you would expect them to be in the range of 21% to 25% of rated electrical capacity).
- Ground rent for having wind turbine units is around £12k per year per turbine.
- Life expectancy of a wind farm is between 15 and 25 years.
- Germany and Holland are moving away from wind power whilst the UK is moving towards it.
- Household electricity bills are estimated to include an extra £200/yr in order to pay for the manufacture, construction and government feed-in tariffs to make wind farms economical.
- Strong concerns were expressed over visual impact, noise, loss of green land, property blight and safety with regard to the closeness of the turbines to property (Beckwithshaw PC are arguing for a 2km minimum separation distance from property). It was commented that in practice, the separation distance is largely determined by noise constraints and that a footpath could be as close as directly below an outstretched blade and still meet statutory and safety requirements.
- Particular worries that one man (Government Inspector from Bristol) could overturn any objections, including HBC, as was the case for the Knabs Ridge Wind Farm.
- Beckwithshaw PC are appealing for volunteers to help fight the proposals and suggested that as many people as possible write to the Prime Minister and MP on the lines of the attached draft letter (Beckwithshaw Circular).
- Reported that Wind farm proposals were being fought against in many other parts of the country and that a bus was being arranged on 18 April 2012 to collect people from the North East to travel to London to lobby their MP's. Beckwithshaw representatives are hoping to be on the bus.
- Reported that proposals for a wind farm in Wensleydale had so far been rejected due to strong local opposition.
- A national web site was currently being designed (available in about 2 weeks time) details of which Beckwithshaw PC will put on their web site
- www.beckwithshawpc-gov.co.uk/index.htm. They ask if other Parishes affected could also put the information on to their own PC web sites.
- Mentioned that the current proposals contravene at least 3 national PPS guidance documents including PPS5 and PPS7.
- Not sure if these proposals are the last for others may arrive extending the wind farms further into the Penny Pot/Nidderdale areas.
- A, as yet unpublished, controversial KPMG report alerted to by the Sunday Times on 4th March 2012 was referred to as being worth reading. The article on this web page is also relevant <http://www.wind-watch.org/news/2012/03/05/blown-away-4/>

Overall, virtually all present were against the proposed new wind farms for various reasons but mainly that there is far too many turbines which will destroy the local countryside and that they are simply there to provide a quick fix solution to enable the Government to achieve its Energy Conservation commitments.