



# D. T. O. G.

## community newsletter

# Appeal under way

**Deadline for letters to the Inspector is 4th June.**

**On 17th January the Torridge District Council Plans Committee voted 7-2 to support the Case Officer in his recommendation to refuse the application for 3 x 100m turbines at Dunsland Cross.**

It is the second time in 4 years an application from this developer for a wind farm on this site has been refused. On 11th March, Bolsterstone plc, the developer, appealed against the decision to the Government's Planning Inspectorate in Bristol.

Bolsterstone asked the Planning Inspectorate for a full Public Inquiry involving days of examination and cross-examination of well-paid expert witnesses by very highly-paid lawyers because, it claimed, the reasons for refusal were very complex and needed to be tested. TDC Planning Department said the reasons were not complex and that an informal Hearing would suffice. This would not require so many expensive participants and would be much quicker and easier to organise.

The Planning Inspectorate agreed with Torridge and the Appeal will proceed by means of an informal Hearing on a date and at a venue yet to be announced.

### The TDC Reasons for Refusal

1) The proposed wind turbines by reason of their siting and scale would result in significant adverse impacts on the character and appearance of the surrounding landscape, contrary to the aims of Torridge District Council's "Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Torridge: An Assessment of the Landscape Sensitivity to Onshore Wind Energy and Field-Scale Photovoltaic Development", by virtue of their introduction of significant vertical elements into the landscape resulting in skylining; their impact on long views across the landscape including views towards Dartmoor and loss of the sense of openness of the landscape; their adverse impact on the high levels of tranquillity, wildness and remoteness in the locality and the landscape character as a result of their proximity to an area of Culm grassland. The development is therefore contrary to Policies DVT2C, DVT6, DVT7, ENV1 and ENV5 of the Torridge District Local Plan, Policies ST1, ST16, CO1 and CO6 of the Devon Structure Plan and the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2) The proposed wind turbines would result in detrimental impacts on the outlook of residential properties Cranmore, View Farm, Fairlawns and Little Copse where the turbines would be unpleasantly overwhelming and an unavoidable presence in main views from them, would have a significant adverse impact on residential amenity and therefore would be contrary to Torridge Local Plan Policy DVT11 which seeks to protect or maintain amenity appropriate to the locality, with special regard to the likely impact on neighbours.

### What You Can Do Now!

The genuine letters of objection to this wind farm outnumbered the genuine letters of support by 9-1, but the developer is trying to tell the Inspector that there are more supporters than objectors! This is because the number of so-called 'supporters' includes shoppers and holidaymakers asked to sign pro-forma letters of support in Bideford last year, by eco-activists hired by Bolsterstone for the purpose. You can write a short letter to the Inspector before 4th June so he or she is under no illusion about the strength of feeling against this wind farm in this locality. Details overleaf...

## How to make your views known to the Inspector in advance of the Hearing

1. Send **3 copies** of your letter to: Planning Inspectorate, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6PN to arrive **NO LATER THAN** 4th June. Later arrivals will be ignored and sent back.
2. Include your name and address, the Appeal reference (APP/W1145/A/13/2194484) and the address of the appeal site (Land at Dunsland Cross, Brandis Corner, Devon).
3. Start your letter 'I am against the appeal proposals' then go on to say why. If you have already written a letter of objection to TDC then it will be passed on to the Inspector so you do not need to repeat anything you have already said. You may simply wish to say (in your own words) that you support the decision of the professional planning officer at Torridge and agree with his reasons for refusing the application. You may wish to add other reasons as well, but your comments must not be libellous or abusive. They must relate to planning matters only, which include all adverse impacts you think the development, if consented, will have.

N.B. DTOG will be sending the Inspector a detailed report arguing that the noise impact of the turbines on nearly all nearby properties and the impact the turbines will have on wildlife are also serious concerns.

## On the day of the Hearing

Hearings are open to members of the public. The Inspector will open the Hearing by explaining what the Appeal is about. He or she will then go through some routine points, including asking who wants to speak.

The Inspector will usually give a summary of the developer's and the council's cases and say which topics will be discussed at the Hearing. Then the developer will speak first, followed by the council, then anyone else who wants to comment. Hearings give everyone concerned the chance to give their views. When everyone who wants to speak has done so, in most cases, the Inspector will suggest that the Hearing is continued on the site of the proposed development. Most Hearings end after any discussion at the Appeal site. After the Hearing, the Inspector writes the decision and publishes it, usually within 7 weeks.

## Bolsterstone is fond of Appeals

Bolsterstone plc, a Midlands-based property and investments management company, has yet to erect a single turbine anywhere despite entering the wind farm arena around 8 years ago. It has started at least 12 projects throughout the UK and has, so far, hit trouble in 10 of them. Five never reached the planning application stage because the 'meticulously screened sites' proved to be flawed. Two newer sites are still being assessed. One project is in near-permanent limbo as it is a two-county application and permission has finally been granted by one county but not the other. The other four projects were all refused by their respective local authorities, two of them more than once. Bolsterstone has appealed against all of these refusals. In Carlisle it lost the Appeal against a first refusal for 3 turbines and then lost the Appeal against a second refusal for fewer turbines as well. Two more Appeals (including Dunsland Cross) are still in progress.

The one Appeal that Bolsterstone won over three years ago in Oxfordshire has still not resulted in any wind farm being built because it has now been realised the turbines will cause serious difficulties for the radar system at London Oxford Airport. As a result the Local Authority has refused to discharge a vital condition so Bolsterstone has appealed against that decision too.

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**Contact DTOG via any of the addresses above. If you would like to support DTOG please send donations to**

**DTOG, View Farm, Dunsland Cross, Brandis Corner, HOLSWORTHY, EX22 7YH.**

**Cheques should be made payable to 'Dunsland Turbines Opposition Group'. Thank you.**