

Annual report for Hempnall Parish Council, 3 March 2010

Chairman's report

As ever, the Chairman's report is much akin to the "curate's egg", some good, some bad!

In my report last year I explained the financial impact that Enertrag's wind farm application and the ensuing public inquiry would have on each household with in the village of Hempnall.

The good news was that that Enertrag's appeal was turned down at the public inquiry in September, but the bad news was that in the final paragraph of his summing up, Mr David Lavender, the inquiry inspector, included a caveat which in effect invited Enertrag, or for that matter any other onshore wind farm developer to come back with a revised application.

It was therefore no surprise to any of us to recently learn that Enertrag is to submit another application for four turbines in the same area as last time.

Like Tesco, Enertrag and the other windfarm developers like them, just do not seem to understand the word "no"! When the public, the parish councils, the district councils and public inquiries all say no, they still have the arrogance to come back with more applications.

To sum up their cynicism in the planning process, it was reported in last week's EDP that Enertrag recently invited members of the public to a consultation event at Tivetshall, so far so good! The sting in the tale was, admission to the event was by invitation only, and those who were opposed to the concept of windpower in their back yard were barred. Such is the integrity of their interpretation of the term "public consultation".

On the face of it the next application we face will be for a reduced number of turbines, four instead of seven, and this might sit more conveniently with SNC's Wind Turbine Sensitivity policy. However, there have been numerous examples in the UK where similar smaller re-applications have been made, and permission granted, only for further applications for additional turbines made and receive a green light.

Once we have just one turbine in our landscape, it would be hard to assert that further turbines would ruin our landscape as one would have already ruined it.

Mr David Linley from Enertrag UK Ltd, at an early consultation evening at Hempnall, clearly indicated that the Bussey's Loke site was large enough for up to 17 turbibes.....you have been warned!!!

In the run up to the last planning consideration, this parish council received a strong mandate from the people of Hempnall to oppose this application and I am proud to have been a member of this parish council who has robustly opposed it all the way through to the planning inquiry.

I am enormously grateful to members of this council, including our parish clerk, who regularly burned the midnight oil to ensure that documentation relating to the initial planning application, and the subsequent public inquiry was submitted in a complete and professional manner

Being mindful of the enormous cost of opposing the last application, when the next application comes before us, as a community, we will have a very simple choice. Firstly, we could roll over and concede to the greed and arrogance of both developers and two local landowners, or to stand shoulder to shoulder and oppose then to the end.

As an individual who lived in Hempnall for 59 years, I really hope that the strength of the community will once again emerge and send out a really powerful message to all concerned that Hempnall is not the place, for a variety of reasons, for an on-shore windfarm.

Now, off my soap-box, and on to more pleasant topics. I would like to place on record my sincere thanks to our parish council clerk, Ian Nelson. In addition to the most professional services received from Ian, for which it is easy to expect as the norm, I would like to express my gratitude for the time and effort he has taken to develop our new Hempnall Parish Council website. As an individual who is one of life's acknowledged "non technocrats", even I can find my way round this wonderful new source of Hempnall information. Ian, thank you!!

My annual report would not be complete if I failed to recognise, with sincere thanks, the weekly contribution that Derek Cracknell makes to the quality of our fine village with his weekly sorties in collecting the litter from our streets and keeping our bus shelter in "fine nick", Derek, thank you!!

In summing up, I would like to say another enormous "thank you" to everyone who has, in the last year, made Hempnall a village to be proud to be part of.