

The Mid-Wales (Powys)
Conjoined Wind Farms Public Enquiry

Witness Statement of Yvonne Smyth

6th. October 2013

Opening Statement.

I wish to object to the Llanbrynmair & Carnedd Wen wind-farm proposals in Area SSA B which are to be considered by this enquiry.

About me

I was born in Ebbw Vale, Gwent & lived there for 26 years. When my husband & I retired we moved here from Northamptonshire after a year of careful research. We have lived here for 14 very happy years. Our house is on the edge of the village, private, not too close to the main road (A458) & enjoys a beautiful outlook. I particularly appreciate the peacefulness of its setting.

My husband is a member of CUP, & we both support the Alliance. The prospect of these developments – & the other two (Rhyd Ddu & Dyfnant Forest) which are waiting in the wings -- is causing us both high levels of anger & mental anguish.

My reasons for objecting

1. Visual impact

There are no commercial wind-farms visible in our valley now. As soon as we leave our gate we can see a temporary anemometer mast for Carnedd Wen. It is 3km away & only 80m. high but it certainly catches the eye. It unfairly gives the impression to the passer by that this is the height the turbines will be. There will be a cluster of Carnedd Wen turbines on the southern upland near where the mast is if these proposals are approved : they will be 137m. high with rotating heads & will dominate the landscape.

Both developments will spoil the upland views in many places

along the A458. This includes our favourite view of the whole valley (OS SJ044094) as we approach Llanerfyl on the way home from Welshpool & continuous views after Llangadfan for nearly 6km. Our local Dyffryn Restaurant windows will have the turbines in clear sight.

2. Health Issues

Because I have related health problems, I am very worried that flicker from the rotating turbine blades will affect my vision. Similarly, any noise transmission from the turbines would be a major health issue for me. Can you imagine an infinite number of turbines turning at different speeds ?? The thought of the noise they will make (yes, it has been proved that they do) & the not inconsiderable chance of flicker, fills me with dread.

3. Transport in the construction phase

The A458 is our lifeline. We have no alternative way of reaching our shops, our doctors & hospitals, our friends, family & leisure interests. Emergency services on which we depend have no other way of reaching us. The Air Ambulance is already essential to us but it is a charity which we help to fund as it receives no government funding & as yet there are no flying fire-engines !

Our journeys will be disrupted & lengthened for the long construction period because of the extra conventional heavy lorry traffic. The road is already busy, particularly in the summer. Slower traffic breeds frustration & is likely to lead to even more accidents than we already have. When the abnormal loads begin to arrive, we shall have daily weekday blockages for many months during which our local town, Welshpool, will be brought to a standstill. Police resources will be diverted from crime prevention to convoy control. We very rarely have police presence on these roads as it is. It is also a serious possibility that to be able to keep some vital appointments (you can't always chose which day you prefer) we will have to have B&B in Welshpool, & who will pay for this ??

4. Economic Effect

Many of our friends depend on tourism & leisure enterprises. The unspoilt uplands, easy access & wonderful views are an important part of the draw to visitors. Local tradesmen & businesses in turn are supported by the leisure facilities. A long period of restriction and blight is threatened. The blight is already affecting house prices & making properties more difficult to sell.

5. Electricity Infrastructure

As if the wind-farms themselves were not enough, if approved they cannot generate electricity unless a huge sub-station & 40 miles of pylons & underground cables are provided as well. This extra & highly unpopular project should be part of the enquiry. It is ridiculous that the Inspector should consider the wind-farms in isolation.

Closing statement

These projects will bring no benefit to us at all : no cheaper or more reliable electricity, only ruined countryside, undermined local economy, large-scale disruption. Also money used to grease palms – sorry give subsidies – would be so very much better spent on the NHS, education, supporting our war-wounded & giving better support to the generation that were not work shy & did not demand endless benefits. I am also of the opinion that these windfarms infringe our human rights. If a community holds a referendum & 70% of the voters vote Nay (as in our case) then the project should not be forced on them.

I would ask the Inspector to save us from this prospect by withholding his consent & allow our community to live happily the lives that we have inherited or chosen.