

21 October 2013

**Chairman  
Windfarm Enquiry  
Royal Oak  
Wels hpool**

Dear Sir

I wish to make this submission to your enquiry. I attended the meeting at Dolfor and listened with sympathy to the many contributions from those expressing their personal despair at the potential loss of a landscape they find deeply meaningful, uplifting, awe- inspiring and restorative. I also listened to the gentleman explaining how, in ancient times, the landscape had been used by humans to chart astronomical events such as the equinoxes and the position of the sun and moon at significant times in the year, observations we can still experience today.

I then listened to the impassioned contribution of the young man from CAT and his challenge to us to consider how 1kw of electricity produced by wind means 1kw less produced through his example of a huge open cast coal mine in Colombia, with its massively detrimental effect on the environment both through the destruction of the landscape and the burning of the coal. And I listened to Roland Davies's carefully set out argument that the inward investment he sees accompanying windfarm development in mid Wales is a 'once in a lifetime opportunity' to offer an improved economic future for young people in the area.

These are hard arguments to reconcile. The profound yet intangible spiritual nature of landscape is so much more than 'just the view from someone's window'. Natural landscape, and particularly hills and horizons have nurtured the human spirit throughout the ages. Two quotes spanning over 2,000 years are testament to this: "*I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help*" says the psalmist, whilst evocatively etched into the Millenium Centre in Cardiff in Welsh and in English the words, "*In these stones horizons sing.*" Yet in our modern world it is very difficult for this 'soft' perspective to be valued against economic 'evidence', especially when significant fortunes may be made. Spiritual poverty against material poverty; spiritual wealth against material wealth.

The charge of exporting landscape destruction by opposing windfarm developments in mid Wales is, for a moment, arresting. Until we stop to consider the overwhelming degradation of our planet by companies in search of economic and material gain. The open cast mine in Colombia is just one example, the destruction of thousands of acres of rainforest in Indonesia for palm oil, or in the Amazon for raising beef is another. The race to drill beneath the arctic ice for oil and gas and the excavation of tar sands in Canada's wilderness are simply two more of many, many examples of huge environmental degradation across the globe. Faced with this, there can surely be no option but to attempt at all costs to safeguard one small, precious, unique area – Montgomeryshire and mid Wales. A quick glance at the photographs chronicling the building of Cefn Croes windfarm dispels any doubts about the environmental impact of these schemes.

(<http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~hills/cc/gallery/> ) And 1kw of wind electricity for 1kw less of coal electricity is not really meaningful given the short but devastating list above.

However, none of this is necessary. The arguments can be reconciled but by taking a completely divergent approach. Instead of attempting to reduce CO2 emissions by building windfarms on our uplands, we should instead be using the resource we have to absorb CO2 from the atmosphere and store it. The huge contribution of mid Wales to climate change would be to create a carbon sink. We need to work with nature, not against her. We have the knowledge, we know how our uplands have already been compromised in their ability to absorb and store CO2. Instead of using subsidies to further compromise this infinitely valuable resource, we should be using payments to restore, regenerate and conserve our uplands and especially peat bogs and marshland. There is already a successful collaboration between farmers, landowners and the Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust on the Pumlumon uplands (<http://www.montwt.co.uk/pumlumon.html> ). How ironic that this project is appealing for charitable funding when all around it subsidies are being offered for controversial and destructive windfarm development. However, by following that example, the inward investment can still be attracted through subsidies and tourism, the landscape is protected, wildlife habitats and bio-diversity is enhanced, the spiritual nature of the uplands is preserved and an inestimable contribution is made to the effects of climate change.

Perhaps this is beyond the remit of your enquiry. Unfortunately, if so, there would appear to be nowhere else for it to go. 'Sustainability' and 'climate change' appear to be two different governmental departments. There are some I have heard who hold that your inquiry is

predetermined, decided before it began, and is just an exercise in PR. If that is wrong and there really is a chance to alter what appears to be an unstoppable rush to windfarms, I would just like to offer the following.

Quakers are reminded and advised as follows;

*“We do not own the world, and its riches are not ours to dispose of at will. Show a loving consideration for all creatures, and seek to maintain the beauty and variety of the world. Work to ensure that our increasing power over nature is used responsibly, with reverence for life. Rejoice in the splendour of God’s continuing creation” (Advices and Queries 42)*

A guiding principle with particular resonance in this debate perhaps? I look forward to your response as to whether this submission will meet with consideration.

Yours sincerely

Veronica Grant