

**FINAL SUBMISSION**

**NORTH MONTGOMERYSHIRE LOCAL COUNCIL FORUM**

**27th May 2014**



**Conjoined Public Inquiry**

**Mid Wales (Montgomeryshire) Wind Farm Development**

**R A Robinson FRICS AILCM  
Secretary**

## **NORTH MONTGOMERYSHIRE LOCAL COUNCIL FORUM**

Good morning. I am Robert Robinson Secretary to the North Montgomeryshire Local Council Forum representing a number of Councils around the Welshpool area.

We thank you, Sir, for the opportunity to give a final statement to the Inquiry on behalf of the Forum.

The final statement for the Forum will take around 7 minutes Sir.

The whole saga of the TAN8 guidance and the progression to where we are today has been a farce.

There has been confusion, exaggerating, minimising the effects and what appears to be a lack of understanding by the authorities. Even the National Grid and Wind Farm Companies, We think, have underestimated the feeling of the inhabitants of Mid Wales. The Alliance and others have demonstrated that very clearly. Look at the demonstration in Cardiff, the meeting at the Livestock Market, the many surveys carried out among the communities urged to be completed by the Forum and I refer you to the community meeting at the Town Hall on 3rd April 2014.

This was (a) filled to capacity with people being turned away (b) over-ran and (c) included a wide range of speakers in terms of age, background, etc. The Cardiff and Livestock meetings are important but this was the only “mass” meeting that the Inspector (and developers) actually attended where the voices of “ordinary people” were heard.

We said in our last statement that, I believe, you the inspector have to consider the proposals in front of you taking into account a number of factors:

1. An out of date Policy of TAN8 and a policy which was not understood by those who approved it. As I have said in my opening statement, the way this policy was approved was flawed. This is clearly evidenced by my earlier presentations. The Policy of TAN8 should be reviewed properly before any progression should be made with regard to the development of renewable energy in Mid Wales.
2. It is clear that any power supplies would only be acceptable if provided on wooden poles, probably 132kv lines. This has been the stance of the Welsh Government in many statements already presented to you and a stance taken by many opposed to the 400kv line which is in the least obtrusive and industrial in a rural setting.
3. The effect on the economy and local tourism in particular. Please note the official statement issued by the Tourist Industry that The north Powys visitor economy "is more at risk from wind farm developments than in many other parts of Wales".
4. There is an interesting judicial review of a Powys County Council decision of a single wind turbine report. I attach the news item to my submission. The decision to approve this turbine was overturned by the courts. The reason was stated as "We are just

one of dozens of very small businesses here in the hills which depend almost solely on the quality of the landscape'. This is the case in Montgomeryshire so a precedent has been set on this subject.

I also refer to the Renewable energy firm RES who lost an appeal over plans to build a wind farm on a Carmarthenshire mountain.

These cases must surely have a bearing on the applications in front of you at this inquiry.

5. The public feeling, which is so strong, must surely be a material consideration when measuring the effects of the proposals

6. You asked a question, Sir, at the end of my opening statement. That was 'if TAN8 is to be disregarded how do you assess the proposals in front of you'. We put to you that it should be the test of 'demonstrable harm' I mentioned last time. If you find that the proposals do cause 'demonstrable harm' then you must surely consider that an over riding consideration.

When I addressed the Environment and Sustainability Committee on 26th January 2012 on behalf of Welshpool Town Council in Cardiff little did I appreciate the importance of that meeting.

It was so clear from that meeting that there was concern about the level of development and also clear that there was a lack of understanding by those in power at the Welsh Assembly in 2005 when TAN8 was approved. There was also horror expressed with regard to the transport

levels which were confirmed by the Wind Farm Industry an hour later. I also remind you, Sir, that Chartered Surveyor Magazine stated in 2010 that in every case to date the transport issues have been underestimated.

The most important point from that meeting was that the Welsh Government agrees that consultation with the communities affected was poor and in some cases non-existent.

Consultations that have been held, in my view, have not been consultations at all. They have been information meetings where we are shown what is proposed and upon which we can ask questions. There has been little or no movement to placate the communities affected.

The Forum urges you to refuse all the applications on the table for the following four reasons:

1. The demonstrable harm to the communities, economy and environment of Montgomeryshire.
2. The traffic movement levels of all types involved in the developments.
3. The schemes should not proceed until a proper consultation with the elected representatives of the Town and Communities Councils affected is held to seek an acceptable way forward for the provision of renewable energy in the area.
4. That until TAN8 is reviewed fully development of the scale proposed should be considered premature.

Finally we do end on a note which we put forward during my last presentation which is:

On an economic base what we see, if the large scale wind farm developments go ahead with the infrastructure proposed, it is akin to a reverse up to date Robin Hood. Reverse because the schemes will rob the poor, Mid Wales does not have a great economic base, and giving to the rich via subsidies which the local economy does not benefit from. We in Mid Wales pay the price while the developments reap the benefits as you would expect in business.

These schemes together with the resultant infrastructure are unacceptable to all the Communities in North Montgomeryshire.

Thank you for your time.

**Robert A Robinson FRICS AILCM  
Secretary to the**

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# Plans for Upper Pengarth wind turbine overturned



Graham Williams successfully challenged Powys council in a judicial review.

Plans for a wind turbine at a Powys beauty spot have been overturned after a businessman challenged a council decision in the High Court.

Graham Williams, 70, who runs a horse-riding business near Hay-on-Wye, said the turbine in the Radnor Hills would damage the landscape and the economy.

He successfully challenged the Powys council decision in a judicial review at the High Court in Cardiff.

The authority has been asked to comment.

The council approved plans for a 40-metre high wind turbine in Upper Pengarth in the Radnor Hills, near the village of Clyro, last December.

## “Start Quote

We are just one of dozens of very small businesses here in the hills which depend almost solely on the quality of the landscape”

Graham Williams Businessman

But Mr Williams warned of the potentially damaging impact the construction of the turbine would have on the local landscape and economy.

Dr Justin Neal, a solicitor who represented Mr Williams, said: "When councils have to consider new applications for wind turbines, they have to look carefully at their local policies and to act consistently and with care.

"It's all very well to say that a turbine in isolation will have a limited impact on people and the environment, but where there are a number of existing and proposed turbines in the same area, the application should be put in context. That simply did not happen here."

Mr Williams said people visited the Radnor Hills because they were undeveloped and the scenery was "world class".

"We are just one of dozens of very small businesses here in the hills which depend almost solely on the quality of the landscape," he said.