

Appeal by Hendy Wind Farm Ltd against refusal of planning permission to construct and operate 7 wind turbines with a maximum tip height of 110m and maximum hub height of 69m together with ancillary development comprising substation, control building, new and upgraded access points and tracks, hard standing and temporary compound and associated works at land off A44, SW of Llandegley, Llandrindod Wells, Powys, LD1 5UG.

Evidence of Graham Williams – Outdoor Tourism

on behalf of

Brecon and Radnor Branch of The Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales



Contents

Section

1. Concerns about Wind Farm Developments set in Outstanding Landscapes
2. Our Riders' Views on Wind Generators
3. The Future

Appendices

- A: Freerein Brochure 2018: pages 4,6,8,10,12,14,16,18,22,26,28,30,32,34,38,40 & 48
- B: Map of trails in the Radnor Hills
- C: List of 58 described trails adversely effected by proposed turbines
- D: Regeneris Report: Study into the Potential Economic Impact of Windfarms and Associated Grid Infrastructure on the Welsh Tourism Sector (February 2014)
- E: Inspector Nixon Decision APP/T6850/A/13/2198831 – Land at Pentre Tump, Appeal Dismissed 28/1/2014
- F: The British Horse Society: Advice on Wind Turbines and Horses for Riders and Carriage Drivers 08/2015
- G: The British Horse Society: Wind Turbines and Horses – Guidance for Planners and Developers 08/2015
- H: Extract from The Great Outdoors magazine September 2016

Witness details

My name is Graham Williams

My address is Wernos, Erwood, Builth Wells, LD2 3TX

Experience relevant to Outdoor Tourism:

- During the 1960's I bought two old army lorries and ran climbing expeditions to the Atlas Mountains of Morocco and the Pyrenees in Northern Spain.
- In the 1970's and 1980's I ran 6 day trail rides in the Brecon Beacons National Park and Canadian Canoe Trails down the River Wye. I also bought the Maesllwch Arms Hotel in Glasbury to cater for outdoor-minded people.
- In 1989 I set up Freerein to offer self-guided horse hire riding trails. These operate in the Radnor Hills and Cambrian Mountains and remain unique in that no one else in the UK offers self-guided horse hire.
- I am at present setting up Hoof trek Wales Ltd - a project which I hope will preserve the herds of feral Welsh Mountain ponies now in danger of extinction.

1. Concerns about Wind Farm Developments set in Outstanding Landscapes

1.1. Put simply my business sells two things of equal importance:

- sensible fit horses trained to look after their riders
- scenery (see Appendix A, in particular the cover of the Freerein Brochure and pages 4,6,8,10,12,14,16,18,22,26,28,30,32,34,38,40 & 48)

1.2. Riders come from all over the world to ride these hills. Local (i.e.UK riders) come regularly year after year, some do several trails per year.

1.3. The proposed turbine development is in the middle of the horse trail network which we have developed over the years (Appendix B) and will dominate the most impressive landscape views along 58 of our most used described trails (Appendix C).

1.4. Our riders stay at 25 inns, hotels, farms, and guest houses along their trails through the Radnor Hills and Cambrian Mountains. They spend 2,500 nights in these overnight stops in the hills and pay for bed, breakfast, evening meals, drinks and packed lunches (approximately £70/night). This contributes c. £175,000 per annum directly into the local economy. They also hire their horses from Freerein (at £170 per day) which will this year employ six people plus myself working on bookings, baggage transfer, horse management, guiding and rider back up as needed.

1.5. Any defacement of the landscape will inevitably devalue what we offer.

2. Our Riders' Views on Wind Generators

2.1. The outdoor tourism businesses I have been running during the last 52 years are small. I have always had direct contact with my customers and hear directly from them their opinions about a whole range of things. The Regeneris Report on wind turbines and tourism examines a number of surveys assessing the public's opinions on windfarms – see Powys South local study, impact assessment and Para 5.31

(Appendix D). From this report it would appear that only a small percentage of the public say they would not visit areas with windfarm development.

2.2. This small percentage are our customers who are “highly sensitive receptors”. Inspector Nixon fully recognised the significance of impairing the enjoyment of rights of way, and the impacts of turbines on riders in particular, in the planning balance when he dismissed the developers appeal against refusal to grant permission to erect 3 x 100m turbines on Pentre Twmp (Appendix E).

2.3. These highly sensitive people spend in total £240 per day in the Radnor Hills. They are buying sound horses and quality landscape.

2.4. See also Appendices F and G, advice from British Horse Society re wind turbines and riders.

3. The Future

3.1. Radnorshire has a unique resource – an extensive network of Rights of Way linked together by the OCRs, unsurfaced old council roads. Freerein offers riders 700 miles of described and mapped trails. This network is hardly used by anyone else. Powys / Radnorshire has no Tourism Officer, no one responsible for looking after the interests of tourism, no one responsible for protecting the network from intrusive development, no one promoting outdoor tourism. This must change if these beautiful hills are to be vibrant and thriving with the changes that are surely coming. The area is potentially a honey pot for those able to diversify into catering for high spending outdoor users – walkers, mountain bikers, horse riders. This will be the future of the hills - if the scenery is protected from unsuitable and intrusive development. The outside world is beginning to find Radnorshire. The Great Outdoors – a leading magazine for outdoor users – drew attention to the Radnor Hills in its Sept 2016 Edition which included a double page picture of Llandegeley Rocks and a four page article on the Radnorshire landscapes (Appendix H). This edition also featured the National parks of USA, the Lake District and the Scottish Highland Peaks. Radnorshire

has a great and prosperous future and will be an important resource for many people who need unspoiled space and landscapes for their wellbeing. The economy of Radnorshire would be well served if it were treated as a National Park when proposed developments were considered.