

David Bell
Chairman

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North East Hertfordshire
Constituency Labour Party

East Hertfordshire Rural Branch

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27 June 2008

Ms Hazel Summerfield
East Herts District Council
Development Control
Wallfields
Pegs Lane
Hertford SG13 8EQ

Planning reference: 3/08/0889/FP

Dear Ms Summerfield,

SUPPORT FOR BENINGTON WIND FARM

The proposed windfarm at Benington is within the area covered by the East Hertfordshire Rural Branch of the Labour Party. Accordingly, the branch considered the proposal at one of its monthly meetings and decided to give strong support to the proposal.

The East Hertfordshire District Labour Party has long been pressing for steps to be taken to lessen the impact that we all have on the climate, for example by pressing for increased recycling. The East Hertfordshire Rural Branch shares that concern and is very much in favour of both reducing the demand for electricity and for producing as much of that reduced demand as possible from renewable sources.

Wind energy is perhaps the best source of renewable energy that we have at the moment. It also has the great merit that, should a better way of generating electricity be found, the turbines can be dismantled comparatively easily leaving hardly any impact on the land used.

Indeed, once installed, wind turbines have a minimal impact on land use, allowing crops to be planted right up to the towers or animals to graze around them.

We note also that electricity transmission over the National Grid gives rise to losses of, on average, 8% of the electricity generated. In order to minimise the distance that electricity is transmitted, and therefore the losses from the Grid, it is important to have generating facilities as near as possible to

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the point of use. This means having windfarms, such as the one proposed, close to centres of population in as many places as possible around the country where the sites have prevailing wind speeds which justify their installation.

Some branch members have been to visit installed wind turbines to check the alleged problem of noise. They found that, even standing underneath them, noise levels are low. There is the swishing noise of the blades, somewhat akin to the sound experienced on a sailing boat, and a low hum from the generator. The latter, however, is inaudible at around 50 metres. We note that there are no dwellings close to the site. The only dwelling within a kilometre of the site is Gregory's Farm, and that is about 750 metres away.

No doubt, there are some people who think that the turbines mar the appearance of the countryside, which in itself in areas such as Benington is artificially created as a result of farming. However, most of us think that they are quite attractive and possibly even enhance the landscape. They are certainly better than electricity transmission towers and many radio masts.

We would also point out that the East of England used to be covered with windmills to mill corn and to pump water. We now go to great lengths to preserve those that remain, but, no doubt, had there been planning laws at the time of their construction, many people would have objected to them as spoiling the countryside in which they stood.

Yours sincerely

David Bell
Chairman