

Application - CB/12/00718/VOC

Our general objections remain the same as the previous planning application **CB/11/04077/FULL** (see below)

With regard to the noise aspect and condition 9 – we have several specific concerns:-

1. The exact same condition was previously applied by the Planning Department when **CB/10/01359/FULL** was approved – however – no objection was raised by the applicant at that time.
2. The previous successful application **CB/10/01359/FULL** with the same noise condition was for a turbine of 120.5M. The recent successful application **CB/11/04077/FULL** with the same noise condition that is now in contention - was for a turbine of up to 120.5M. The applicant is alluding to a smaller size turbine in the second application. Should this not make noise a smaller problem – not suddenly a larger problem.
3. In seeking to remove condition 9 the applicant in our opinion is clearly making a statement that noise will be a problem for residents. Considering the distance to the nearest residence – it concerns us that wildlife habitats all around the turbine site will be considerably more affected. Subjecting wildlife and habitats to noise pollution must surely be in direct opposition to the applicant's public objectives at the Forest Centre and throughout the Marston Vale.
4. Should the Planning Department remove condition 9 – this will effectively take away any rights by residents regarding noise pollution from this industrial size structure which in our opinion should never have been entertained in its proposed location.
5. The applicant is claiming that it is illegal for the Planning Department to impose this condition – and in hiring a lawyer – appears (in our opinion) to be spending a great deal of money to make the Planning Department look incompetent in the eyes of the public.

In conclusion we feel that both the public and the Planning Department have been 'played' by the applicant.

In our opinion the applicant did not want the original planning they were granted re **CB/10/01359/FULL** because it did not (for whatever reason) include an industrial size substation and therefore they 'dangled the carrot' of looking at a smaller turbine in the second application **CB/11/04077/FULL** (despite never submitting any actual plans to that effect) as a way of ensuring that the substation received planning by default.

Much is made of the public consultation. This happened 6 years ago and gave that impression that it was a green solution for the applicant to generate its own power for its own use – see point (2) in previous comments below. The size of the turbine applied for some 5 years later - would suggest an altogether more commercial venture and we feel the public have been seriously misled on this matter.

We ask that the Planning Department does not remove condition 9 and further does not enter into any mitigation on this point.

Previous Comments Application CB/11/04077/FULL – still stand as follows:-

We are following on from our opposition to the original Planning Application for an Industrial Sized Wind Turbine situated in the heart of the Forest of Marston Vale in The Millennium Country Park Marston Moreteyne.

Our original concerns still stand and have been updated and incorporated in this objection.

It now appears there could be a possibility of a reduction in the height of the turbine from a planned 120.5 metres to an unannounced height – Please note they offer no actual specification regarding height or design of the new turbine even though the project managers have stated within the application that due to ‘funding restrictions’ it is now necessary for the turbine to be completed by March 2012

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/portal/showimage.asp?j=cb/11/04077&index=413094> (bottom of page 5) . The application wording is ‘up to 120.5 metres in height’ and therefore having no other heights measurements put forward – if planning is granted again – the applicant effectively will have permission to erect a turbine of 120.5 meters.

We still consider this proposed development would be a significant and irreversible move towards the re-industrialisation of The Marston Vale by the very same Trust set up to regenerate The Vale and surrounding areas. The sheer size and elevation of the proposed turbine would be completely out of scale with its surroundings and therefore dominate the Marston Vale landscape.

The new application raises further questions and a growing number of major concerns and we object to the application on the following grounds:-

(1) The inclusion of an industrial sized sub-station also on site and within the immediate vicinity of the Forest Centre itself and the adjacent pathways and bridleways.

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/portal/showimage.asp?j=cb/11/04077&index=413094> (bottom of page 2/top of page 3). This begs the question – if it was not necessary to have a sub-station at all in the original application for a larger wind turbine then why is it necessary now? We understand from research that a substation under 29 cubic metres approx would NOT require planning permission – so why not a smaller one instead of the proposed 37.5 cubic metres?

(2) We object to the “false advertising” and implications that the Project will provide the electricity for the Forest Centre and excess would go back to the National Grid. This was the loud and clear message given way back in 2005 when the so-called public consultation took place. Documents and planning applications have been amended to now state that the wind turbine will produce electricity equivalent to that needed by the Forest Centre and 900+ homes. This is a major step backwards from its initial conception as an educational tool for us to all see electricity being produced and used in a move towards a “greener society”. Why indeed would the Forest Centre now need to produce its own electricity when it clearly states in the above mentioned Deed of Undertaking and Deed of Easement that £10000 per year is being “donated” by Covanta (in addition to the already agreed £250000 and £50000 per year for five years) towards the costs of the electricity bills of the Forest Centre?

<http://infrastructure.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN010011/2.%20Post-Submission/Development%20Consent%20Order/Consent%20Order/Covanta%20-%20a%20copy%20of%20the%20counterpart%20Deed%20as%20executed%20by%20Marston%20Vale%20Trust.pdf> (4.2 Page 11 of pdf (page 7 of Deed of Undertaking). This means that the whole Project is now a money-making scheme (an industry with an industrial sized wind turbine and industrial sized sub-station far in excess of the needs of the Park) – totally destroying ten years hard work and the one thing the philosophy of the Forest Centre stands for “to de-industrialise the Marston Vale”.

(3) The introduction of a deadline of the COMPLETION OF THE PROJECT by the end of March 2012 causes concern.

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/portal/showimage.asp?j=cb/11/04077&index=413094> (bottom of page 5). This is quoted as being necessary to satisfy the demands of the “funders”. We are members of the “Friends of Marston Vale” and asked the question of the Managing Director as to who the funders are.

The information was declined and will apparently be announced publicly in the next edition of “Commentry” – the Vale’s newsletter which will be after the closing date of this application AND the retirement of the current Managing Director. **The fact that the Project is being “hurried” to satisfy the anonymous funders will have a detrimental effect on wildlife.** A copy of an email within the planning documentation clearly states that the project regarding Great Crested Newts will not be completely carried out to the satisfaction of the regulations.

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/portal/showimage.asp?j=cb/11/04077&index=413094> (bottom of page 5/top of page 6). Not only is that totally contrary to what we believe as “Friends/members” to be the philosophy of the Park - but March (Spring) an extremely important time for all wildlife and the inclusion of the massive upheaval of such an intrusive project has the potential to destroy habitats and migratory patterns beyond repair.

(4) We are extremely concerned that the flicker factor and noise may stop many people enjoying the County Park – which is in direct conflict with the mission statement in the Forest Plan 2000 (<http://www.marstonvale.org/brochure/documents/ForestPlan2000.PDF>) “Mission Statement - The Forest of Marston Vale is working in partnership towards a long-term vision of a varied countryside within a woodland framework for the benefit of **everyone**”. Pages 40 – 46 (labelled 36 – 42) in the same document talk at great length about Access, Recreation and Sport – why is it now acceptable to deny access to the Country Park to those sensitive to the light disturbances and noise creating by the wind turbine?

(5) We have several concerns regarding the actual structure of the wind-turbine. Whilst appreciating that incidence and occurrence of the following scenarios is extremely rare – if they occur the consequences will be disastrous and have long-term detrimental consequences for the park and surrounding area.

At over 100 metres high this structure will have its foundations in a 40 metre high mound – whereas turbines of this size are mainly erected on flat ground. Should this create instability (or heaven forbid) a collapse the debris and damage will affect a wider area due to the incline. With Stewartby Lake on one side and The Show/Display ground on the other we cannot rule out human involvement or injury.

It is not unheard of for wind-turbines to catch fire (see Ardrossan Wind farms Scotland 08 12 2011). <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2071633/UK-weather-Wind-turbine-EXPLODES-hurricane-force-gusts-batter-Northern-Britain.html> Thankfully turbines are usually situated on flat (and uninhabited) land. The fact that this proposal is on an elevated site which is surrounded by natural woodland – and the close proximity of the Forest Centre Building and proposed sub-station) the possibility of fire spreading rapidly and widely cannot be ruled out.

We are also disturbed by the New Scientist reports (tested but not substantiated) that the waves caused by the movement of the sails can (and have) caused the lungs of very small mammals to “explode” in phenomenon likened to the “bends” in divers. The site is a proven haven for bats – and therefore this structure has the potential to destroy several colonies. <http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn14593-wind-turbines-make-bat-lungs-explode.html>

(6) Since the last application was granted – the EfW Incinerator Project for Covanta has received the go-ahead from the IPC (Infrastructure Planning Commission). The implications of this on the reindustrialisation of Marston Vale need no clarification – except that both projects in their applications (and indeed in the IPC’s decision http://infrastructure.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/111013_Rookery-Decision-and-Reasons.pdf (5.72 listed as page 33 [page 34 of document) actually quoted and used each other’s development as a logical reason to demonstrate that each individual project would not affecting the skyline.

We have further concerns on more detailed inspection that the Deed of Undertaking and Deed of Easement signed on 8 July 2011 on behalf of Covanta and the Marston Vale Trust includes full access to a strip of land within the Millennium Country Park where cables can be laid under. <http://infrastructure.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN010011/2.%20Post->

[Submission/Development%20Consent%20Order/Consent%20Order/Covanta%20-%20a%20copy%20of%20the%20counterpart%20Deed%20as%20executed%20by%20Marston%20Vale%20Trust.pdf](#) (all of page 6). We are unable to ascertain – due to the lack of clarity on the plans due to photocopying in monochrome (in Schedule 2 and Schedule 5 at end of same document) exactly where the strip would be – and whether the wind turbine and substation are implicated in this. Attempt to gain clarification from the IPC and Covanta have so far been unsuccessful - therefore due to the time constraints of this planning application we have to make some guesses and assumptions which may not be accurate – however it would appear extremely odd to pass cables through the Millennium Country Park land if they were not destined to terminate at a sub-station.

In conclusion – we continue to have no faith in the Marston Vale Trust’s own assessment of the area and the impact upon wildlife both in construction and during operation. Having spent the last 10 building up important wildlife habitats – it appears that MVT are now happy to brush wildlife to one side when they see an opportunity to make money.

We used to have confidence in the Marston Vale Trust regarding the protection of wildlife and their habitats – believing that they had the best interests of the Marston Vale community at the heart of their operation.

In our role as Friends/members of the Forest Centre, immediate neighbours and concerned villagers we urge the planning committee to ensure that our concerns are given full consideration and result in this application being refused.