



Anglesey **Against** Wind Turbines

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VICTORY FOR ANTI-WIND TURBINE CAMPAIGNERS

Residents of Penmynydd and Rhoscefnhir, Anglesey, are absolutely delighted that a long-running battle to stop the erection of a monster turbine on land at Ty Gwyn in Penmynydd has been won.

In a decision published on 15 October the Planning Inspector has dismissed the appeal brought by the applicant, Windberry Energy Operations. The proposed turbine was to tower 62 metres (203 feet) high and would have dominated the magnificent views to Snowdonia from this part of the island.

Two packed public meetings, held by the local community council, had unanimously opposed building of such turbines in the area. Windberry made the appeal to the Planning Inspectorate on the grounds of non-determination by Anglesey County Council.

Anglesey County Councillors, when considering the application at a Planning Committee, expressed their dismay at the Windberry's resorting to the appeals procedure, when the Council was still awaiting the views of a statutory consultee, and voted to refuse the application.

The Inspector reached his decision, after calling a public hearing, so he could properly evaluate conflicting technical noise evidence related to the turbine. He wasn't happy that Windberry's noise consultant hadn't bothered to turn up at the hearing to be questioned, or that Windberry's ecology consultant wasn't present either to address concerns about bats in the vicinity.

It was revealed at the hearing that a hedgerow, a bat habitat feature, had been grubbed up, apparently by the landowner, and that the Council was considering taking enforcement action to have the hedge restored. Vital bat monitoring equipment too had been damaged.

Besides the effects of the turbine on neighbouring residents, particularly where turbine noise was concerned, and on bats, which are protected by law, the Inspector identified as a main issue the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding rural area and concluded there would be "a significantly harmful effect".

He quoted the Welsh Government's Technical Advice Note 8 (TAN 8) *Planning for Renewable Energy* which states "that there is a case for avoiding a situation where wind turbines are spread throughout the whole of a county". The north of Anglesey, as he acknowledged, "has a number of large and medium sized wind turbines and the proposal [for this turbine] would represent a southward extension into the largest landscape character area in the south eastern part of Anglesey".

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The Inspector agreed with speakers at the hearing that the area was an important buffer to the Menai Straits and that a turbine “would significantly reduce its quality as a buffer and decrease its sensitivity to further changes”. These could come about, if, for instance, other turbine applications in the area were to be approved. The hearing was an emotional occasion, as local people spoke movingly of their close ties to the area and the island. Richard Edwards, Penmynydd resident, explained how he and his wife had spent time, money and effort in making a home in which to bring up their young family, but plans for this huge turbine were blighting their lives. Another resident spoke of her distress at contemplating such a huge structure dominating her home and the surroundings she cherished.

Candy Jones, longstanding resident, commented, “As residents of Penmynydd and Rhoscefnhir we’ve had no choice, but to defend ourselves against the many applications for giant industrial size wind turbines. We’ve spent two exhausting and very stressful years fighting to keep our countryside unspoilt, not only for ourselves and other islanders, but for the enjoyment of the thousands of visitors to the island. We see this decision as a victory and we really hope that it sets a precedent to deter future turbine applications”.

“It’s a David and Goliath situation, when a community fights a wind farm developer. Developers, who’ve grown rich on the backs of subsidies paid by consumers through their energy bills, can concentrate time and resources to getting what they want. Ordinary people, trying to get on with their lives, don’t have that luxury,” said Mairede Thomas, anti-wind turbine campaigner. “So this victory is a real tribute to the sheer tenacity of local people in opposing unwanted developments on the island they love.”

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