

Vale of Leven Windfarm Planning Application

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The Chairman of the charity Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs expresses his lack of surprise at The Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park's objection to Coriolis's Vale of Leven Wind farm proposal. John Urquhart, Chair, said: "The National Park Authority are, after all, supposed to be the guardians of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs, so you might expect them to come out fighting against anything that might damage the place. For once they even had the support of eco warrior Nick Kemp, who is more usually to be found on the other side of the environmental barricades taking pot shots at them from his ParkWatch blog.

Their arguments are of the all too familiar NIMBY variety – you know the kind of thing - of course wind turbines are essential, but can you please put them somewhere else because we don't like the look of them. Apparently Balloch and Haldane Community Council did a "survey" and found 70% of people agreed that they too didn't like the look of wind turbines. But this is pathetic stuff. Self-elected community councils are infamous for their "opinion surveys", which have all the reliability of a Russian election. A National Park, with all the resources it has, really should be doing better.

The fact is that there is no good evidence that wind turbines spoil views or are hugely unpopular. There are now umpteen windfarms up and down the country and yet to the best of my knowledge there has been no sign of the citizenry being overly troubled by their presence. There is plenty of evidence of course of the activities of a few NIMBY zealots writing letters to the press claiming their house prices are falling, the turbines are noisy, the turning blades cause "flicker" which can damage your mental health and anyway half the time they don't work because the wind doesn't blow and the other half of the time, they have to be switched off because the wind is too strong - all of it of course, just so much vacuous bumkum.

The fact is that land-based wind turbines are the cheapest, quickest and most effective way of achieving the rapid decarbonising of our energy production, essential in the battle against global warming and the battle for energy security. If, as they say in their "Partnership Plan", the National Park is serious about maximising "benefits that can be provided for nature, climate and people", they need to think again. If global warming continues unchecked, there might eventually not be much of a National Park environment worth looking after. To quote the National Park's own mantra, a truly effective response to global warming requires action "HERE, NOW and from ALL OF US". You would imagine that would include the National Park."

Company Contact:

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Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs

T. 07496 433134

E. info@lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk

W. <https://www.lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk>

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