



wewantawindfarm.com

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Why do we want a windfarm?

Something must be done about global warming, before global warming does something about us.

Scientists assure us that global warming is happening. The polar ice caps are melting. According to the Essex Wildlife Trust website, sea levels around Essex are rising by 6 mm per year (a combination of higher water levels and sinking land). There is an awful lot of low-lying land around Bradwell and Tillingham, and even more near Burnham, Mersea and Canvey. The probability of a freak tide flooding these areas increases year by year. Those people who are worried about house prices should forget about windfarms. Worry firstly about the possibility that you won't be able to buy house insurance and secondly about how you will escape when the dread day comes.

Meteorologists agree that global warming is happening. Anyone over the age of 40 will remember that their childhood invariably consisted of cold, snowy winters and summers when a warm day was considered to be anything over 70°F (21°C) and the temperature occasionally reached 80°F and hardly ever 90. In recent years, snow has become relatively rare and summers have become intolerably hot. In 2003, many places in SE England recorded their highest ever temperatures, more than 100°F (38.5°C). In 2004, Scotland recorded its hottest night ever (Aviemore smashed its previous highest minimum temperature by 2°C), and this was followed by a day of torrential rain. Not long afterwards a road was washed away, stranding motorists. 27th May 2005 was the hottest May day since 1947 and the night of 18th June 2005 was, in some areas of SE England, the hottest June night on record. 19th June 2005 was the hottest June day for 29 years. Other features of our weather have become remarkably inconsistent: flash floods have occurred more frequently (Boscastle, August 2004) and much of North Yorkshire, 19th-20th June 2005 and there have been relatively frequent occasions of very much stronger winds than used to take place.

Much of the CO₂ that is produced is the direct result of generating electricity using coal, gas or oil. Windfarms do not burn any fuel, so they have no harmful emissions.

Are windfarms the complete answer?

Most certainly not. Windfarms represent a cost-effective alternative to traditional means of generating electricity but for sheer output they cannot yet compete with more traditional coal, oil, gas and nuclear power stations. They are just one means of helping to reduce carbon emissions and any means of doing this should be considered.

What else can be done to reduce CO₂ emissions?

Reduce any activity which emits CO₂. Power stations are mentioned above but at least as important is road and air transport. We should all do as much as we can to reduce our dependency upon fossil fuels.

Take holidays which do not involve flying. According to George Monbiot (www.monbiot.com) a daily return flight from Heathrow to Miami produces 520000 tonnes of carbon each year. Compare that to the 178000 tonnes which will be saved by the proposed Whinash farm (Cumbria), which, when built, will be the largest onshore windfarm in Europe. In other words, the cancellation of one round trip per day will save as much as 3 Whinashes. Holiday in Britain instead.

Consider the type of vehicle you drive. Is it really necessary to do the school run in a gas-guzzling 4x4? When you next change your car, consider getting a hybrid like the Toyota Prius (an electric motor deals with all the low speed stuff, petrol only cutting in at about 17 mph) or a dual fuel car, which has separate tanks for petrol and LPG. Whatever you get, make sure that the engine size is less than 2 litres.

Is it necessary to do the school run at all, or would you and your children benefit from a walk?

How many other journeys do you make when you could leave the car at home? Most city dwellers find that traffic congestion keeps their speed down to about 15 mph on average, which is hardly any faster than a pedal cycle. Go to work on a bike.

Why not nuclear power?

There are some environmentalists who regard the threat of global warming so seriously that they would prefer to return to nuclear power than take the risk that wind power will not allow us to reduce our emissions sufficiently. There are several questions regarding nuclear power.

What do we do with the waste?

The biggest long-term problem with nuclear power is that the waste remains lethal for up to 1 million years. It has recently come to light that John Major's government had drawn up a shortlist of sites for the storage of nuclear waste that included Potton Island and the power station in Bradwell. No-one can possibly argue that this is a sustainable proposal and for today's techies to argue that it is possible to build nuke-proof bunkers with that sort of life expectancy is simply laughable. The pyramids were built to last, and so they have, but so far less than 5000 years. What sort of state will they be in in another 995000 years?

How much uranium is there in the world?

Although the waste remains lethal for up to 1,000,000 years, according to some sources (*BBC Money Programme et al*) there is only enough uranium in the world for 30 year's electricity generation before the stocks run out, and that figure is based upon existing nuclear countries only. Paul Mobbs puts it slightly higher:-

“At the current level of uranium consumption (67,000 tonnes per year) known uranium resources (2.8 million tonnes of uranium) would last 42 years - a fact highlighted by the European Commission in their Energy Green Paper [EC2001].”

(http://www.fram.org.uk/mobbsey/papers/oies_article.html)

What if uranium or nuclear waste gets into the wrong hands?

That is the nightmare scenario. Western governments are remarkably good at upsetting other countries and every so often they bite back (11/9/2001). Just imagine the outcome if the terrorists who demolished the twin towers had crashed those planes into a nuclear reactor. The death toll could conceivably have been 1000 times greater than it was.

How safe is nuclear power?

The “experts” assure us that nuclear power is one of the safest forms of power available. Unfortunately, every living vertebrate has traces of nuclear waste embedded within the structure of its bones, a direct result of leaks from nuclear power plants. And of course there is always Chernobyl. Western commentators try to assure us that this was down to the inherently unsafe Soviet way of doing things:-

“The design of the reactor (an RBMK) was unique to the former Soviet Union and would never have been licensed for use in the UK or other Western nations. In addition to several weaknesses in the RBMK design, there were very serious operator errors at the power station and crucial safety regulations were ignored. The reactor was run in a way contrary to the safety culture of Western nations including the UK.”

(*Nuclear Industry Association website www.niauk.org*)

That smug “it couldn't happen here” attitude shouldn't reassure anyone. It doesn't explain the Calder Hall disaster of 1958, the Three Mile Island disaster of 1979 and certainly doesn't give any assurances of safety if nuclear technology is exported to every country in the world.

Further information

For further information, please visit our website at <http://wewantawindfarm.com> or email peter@wewantawindfarm.com.