

We moved to East Ayrshire in 2013, to a quiet cottage with views over the Ayrshire countryside and as far away as the Isle of Arran. We moved in with the full knowledge, confirmed by our solicitor in his searches, that a small farm-scale 50kW turbine was planned on the lands of the neighbouring farm. We checked the planning permission, and saw that this turbine was silent at 160 metres, and was to be sited around 350 metres from our cottage.

In the event, this turbine was never built, and planning permission lapsed in March 2015 without any development on the site.

In mid-2015, the UK government announced that feed-in tariffs (FIT) for wind turbines were to be drastically cut with effect from January 2016. In November 2015, a medium-scale wind turbine (NPS 100-24C) was built, without planning permission, on a site nearer our cottage (and those of our neighbours) than had been consented in the original planning permission which had now lapsed. Immediately it was commissioned, it created a noise problem for ourselves and our neighbours, and shadow-flicker problems for some of us.

The noise from the turbine can be heard clearly in our homes. We cannot get a good night's sleep as the noise is relentless when the wind blows from any direction which is most of the time here as we are 700 feet above sea level. We cannot enjoy our gardens or Community space.

Complaints to East Ayrshire Council were, at first, met with statements to the effect that the turbine had been authorised, and that no noise limits on its operation had been set. Approaches to the owner, and the landowner, a "local" farmer who lives around five kilometres away, were met with downright denial that any problems existed.

We contacted the highly respected windfarm noise consultant, Dick Bowdler who reviewed the developers Noise Impact Assessment.

He found several flaws in their survey which was incomplete and also found Amplitude Modulation occurred at an unacceptable level. He concluded that this particular turbine was sited too close to properties and the constant and relentless noise was unacceptable and had a high annoyance level. The Council's own Consultants, ACCON, concurred with his opinion. (Reports attached).

Despite having been built without planning permission, the unauthorised turbine was registered as eligible for the Feed In Tariff subsidy from the first day of operation. East Ayrshire Council has refused to notify Ofgem that the subsidy is being paid for an unauthorised turbine (they have no duty to do so), and Ofgem will only take notification from official bodies. So the owners have received the subsidy ever since.

In October 2016, we provided evidence to East Ayrshire Council that the development was unauthorised, and at a site with no history of planning permission. The council planning record for the unbuilt turbine was incomplete and inaccurate and non-existent for the one which had been built. In December 2016 East Ayrshire Council declared the turbine was unauthorised.

It took until March 2017 before an Enforcement Order was drafted (but not served) to force the owners to take the turbine down or seek retrospective planning permission. An application for planning permission was submitted and scheduled for consideration in early November, with a published recommendation by the Planning Officer for refusal. A Noise

Abatement Notice was issued to the operator and landowner the week before the Planning Committee was due to meet. On the eve of the meeting the turbine owner requested more time for gathering evidence relating to the noise problems to enable them to consider mitigation measures.

East Ayrshire Council agreed to this, and the planning meeting will not be held until 2018, BUT, they insisted the turbine be turned off permanently except during periods of testing. So, for the first time in two years, there is no noise from the construction or operation of the turbine! Heaven.

The saga continues, and there is still no end in sight, but the turbine has stopped at least for the moment. It has not been easy, the process has been stressful and progress has been glacier slow. We doubt the noise can be mitigated as the turbine is just too close to our homes.

To be continued .....