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**Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership**  
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Your Ref: 13/04603/FUL  
Our Ref: gb\_13/04603\_birches2

30th January 2014

Dear Julie

**13/04603/FUL Erection of 1 no. 15kW wind turbine with a hub height of 15.4m and blade diameter of 11.1m and all associated works, Three Birches Mardu Newcastle on Clun Shropshire SY7 8QX**

**The AONB Partnership objects to this planning proposal** on the grounds that the cumulative effect of a second wind turbine at this location will have a substantial negative influence upon the character of the location and the visual amenity of the protected landscape of the Shropshire Hills AONB.

Policy 35 of the 2009-2014 Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan states that the positioning of turbines should, "take account of factors including landscape character and visual amenity..." guidelines recommend that one or two turbines up to 12m to blade tip and within 100m of existing buildings are considered acceptable, while turbines in excess of 25m to vertical blade tip or **closely grouped turbines are not likely to be acceptable** within the constraint boundary of the AONB. The proposed lies some 200m distant from the nearest building and its combined mast and rotor blade height of 20.95, though within the maximum recommended height for turbines within the AONB, it is nonetheless a substantial and intrusive structure..

Paragraph 115 of the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework states that; *"Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in.....Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas and should be given great weight....."*

The revised planning guidance for renewable energy 2013 states in respect to wind turbines that, **"proposals in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and in areas close to them where there could be an adverse impact on the protected area, will need careful consideration"** (Planning practice guidance for renewable and low cost energy, Department for Communities and Local Government, July 2013, para. 15, clause 5).

The proposed site for the turbine lies at NGR 323676,285790 on the top of a prominent narrow ridge of high ground between two steep sided and roughly N-S orientated valleys. The site lies at a height of 425m immediately west (37.706m) of the edge of the public highway, which runs along the ridge top and in close proximity to a recently installed existing turbine at 323633,285837. The AONB Partnership objected to the construction of a turbine at or close to this currently proposed position in 2011, the proposal was withdrawn and subsequently re-submitted at a less intrusive position downslope. The imposition of a second turbine on or close to the originally proposed position will have a significant cumulative impact upon the character and visual amenity of this part of the protected area of the AONB.

Paragraph 15 of the 2013 Planning practice guidance for renewable and low carbon energy states: ***“cumulative impacts require particular attention, especially the increasing impact that wind turbines.....”*** (Planning practice guidance for renewable and low cost energy, Department for Communities and Local Government, July 2013, para. 15, clause 2).

The turbine will also be clearly visible from the Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) of Caer-din Ring, a small enclosed Iron Age or Romano British settlement, an adjacent ancient field boundary, Bronze Age round barrow and cultivation remains, National monument UID 1021280, which lies some 600m to the south at 323966,285020 at a height of 430m AOD. The cumulative impact of two turbines in such close proximity to these nationally significant heritage elements will imp act significantly upon their setting. English Heritage in their letter of 17 December object to the proposal stating that, ***“the proposal will have a negative impact on the significance of the designated assets...”*** and concluding ***“the application should be refused”***. The AONB Partnership strongly supports this objection.

Paragraph 15 of the 2013 Planning practice guidance for renewable and low carbon energy states: ***“great care should be taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including the impacts of proposals on views important to their setting.”*** (Planning practice guidance for renewable and low cost energy, Department for Communities and Local Government, July 2013, para. 15, clause 4).

This second turbine, close to the road, would be very prominent to any passage along the road by vehicle or pedestrians and would be a potential hazard to any equine use of the road. The British Horse Society suggests a separation distance of a minimum of 200m from a public route bridleway or road to avoid a turbine scaring passing horses and potentially causing a riding accident.

In summary while the AONB Partnership supports the concept of renewable energies, a balance between the advantages accrued and the negative impact of such infrastructure upon the landscape of the AONB is considered of paramount importance. This second substantial turbine, in a prominent position, effectively creates a small windfarm complex which will have a negative cumulative impact damaging both the protected landscape of the Shropshire Hills AONB and the setting of a nationally important complex of ancient monuments. Therefore the AONB Partnership strongly objects to this development.

Yours sincerely

G Barratt  
Planning & Landscape Officer  
On behalf of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership