

Walking into an environmental disaster at Fullabrook

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FOR my sins, any respect I once had for those political activists who support the money grabbing power companies to destroy North Devon and its whole way of life — is rapidly disappearing.

I refer to the front page article (August 28) and the article in the *Journal*, October 16 edition, regarding so called 'goodwill payments' relating to Fullabrook turbines which are seen by myself — and I believe many others — as merely "bribery outside the planning system".

Public faith in the planning process is being seriously undermined and I believe the Government should stamp out this practice by the power companies which can so easily be seen as simply buying planning permission.

Normally (apart from wind turbines proposals), community benefits which arise in new developments are addressed through the Section 106 process — for very good reasons. This ensures that a reasonable share of development profits goes to the public good, such as affordable housing. However, 'goodwill payments' are unsatisfactory when compared to Section 106 agreements in all respects. Turbine companies offer these payments to whoever they feel like offering them to (often the nearest parish council and local residents closest to the proposed development) — rather than openly considered and channelled through the established consultation processes of the planning system run by local authorities. Attempts by the power companies to focus on particular parish councils and other groups is unfair, extremely divisive and undermines our established democratic planning process — and most of all, in my opinion, is a complete financial rip off!

I believe the residents in the Fullabrook area are most definitely being short changed! What is even more outrageous is that we are all supposed to be grateful for these handouts — when it's our money via obscene subsidies which is enabling these power companies to make something like £380 million over the next 20 years out of Fullabrook's countryside and local communities.

The Green Party candidate states in the *Journal* "The area all around Fullabrook will benefit enormously from this (£3 million) financial input."

I disagree with him. I call it selling North Devon, its landscapes and its precious wildlife down the river — and for a pittance!

I would like to ask the Green Party Parliamentary Candidate whether he feels these goodwill payments could influence decisions on planning applications? Could they have a "behind the scenes" influence on council members sitting on planning committees as to how they vote and does he consider this is a fair and democratic process which should be encouraged in the future?

How does he equate his support for these multi-national power companies with his comments in the *Journal* (August 28) when he states that: "He is keen to support local farmers and businesses against the dominance of large corporations"?

I honestly feel that many do not fully appreciate what is about to happen to North Devon. Instead of holidaying in all the beautiful, far away places, try visiting Wales, Spain or the horrendous Altamont Pass in California and see what happens to an area or country covered in these notorious turbine factories.

I believe we are being misled by Green Party propaganda and even if we turned Britain into one giant wind factory (and lived in mud huts) we would still not meet unachievable carbon targets. We are sleepwalking into one of the world's biggest environmental disasters, and sadly, I will never forgive The Green Party for the part I feel they have played. My heart mourns for what is coming to the North Devon I love.

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