

'Wind farm noise is driving us out of our house'

By Johann Tasker

A Lincolnshire farming couple fear they may be forced out of their home because they can't stand the noise from a nearby wind farm.

Established last summer, the wind farm at Deeping St Nicholas consists of eight turbines with a combined capacity of 16MW – enough to supply the domestic electricity requirements of 8400 homes.

But Julian and Jane Davis, who live 900m from the turbines, claim the wind farm suffers from amplitude modulation – a phenomenon that causes a "whooshing" noise when the wind blows from a southerly direction.

The couple claim they cannot sleep because the noise is unbearable. They have already spent more than 60 nights away from their home. Mrs Davis said: "It sounds like a train coming towards you that never arrives, or a toy stuck in a tumble drier."

Although rare, concern over turbine noise is not limited to the wind farm at Deeping St Nicholas. A government working group has been appointed to investigate the phenomenon (see right).

Trevor Gait, operations manager for Fenland Windfarms, which owns the Deeping St Nicholas site, said the company regarded the noise issue extremely seriously and was sympathetic to Mr and Mrs Davis's situation.

"We truly are doing everything we can to find or even record this noise, short of shutting the wind

farm down. In fact, our monitoring programme included shutting the site down for long periods to determine any change in noise level."

Mr Gait said the company had an obligation to the local rural community and South Holland District Council to ensure that the wind farm was compliant with noise regulations, and would act accordingly.

"The results of extensive noise monitoring carried were currently being analysed in an effort to determine the nature and source of the reported phenomena. We are confident that we are doing everything possible at this stage."

Nigel Payne, South Holland's community services manager, confirmed that the council had recorded the noise. But he said:



Turbulence from turbines has been unbearable for Julian and Jane Davies, who have spent 60 nights away from home since last September.

"On the basis of this evidence alone, the noise does not equate to statutory nuisance at this time."

A detailed investigation into the problem had been undertaken and the council was now awaiting a report by independent experts. An informed decision as to what further action was necessary, if any, would then be made. fwnews@rbi.co.uk

WINDOW ON THE WEB

*** Blazing blades** Love them or hate them, wind turbines are dramatic-looking things. But have you ever seen one on fire?

Wind turbines rotate at 60-80rpm and that creates a lot of heat in the gearbox behind the blades. Add to that an oil leak and you have a rather large firework.

To see a video of a turbine ablaze, visit www.tiny.cc/turbine

HUNT IS ON FOR THE SOURCE OF THE ELUSIVE 'WHOOSH'



Do wind turbines whoosh? 'Yes', say those living nearby.

*** A panel of experts** brought together by the government to investigate noise from wind turbines is set to report its findings later this year.

The Wind Turbine Noise Working Group has been asked by the DTI to provide expert advice and guidance on issues surrounding what has become known as Amplitude Modulation of Aerodynamic Noise.

This is a low-frequency whooshing sound caused by the passage of air over turbine blades under certain atmospheric conditions. So far, little is known about the phenomenon or how it might be controlled.

Because amplitude modulation is difficult to predict, it is often not until a turbine is erected and fully working that the noise becomes evident. An acoustics expert, who asked not to be named, said that,

although rare, it was becoming more common.

"The concern is that bigger, more modern turbines may be more prone to this problem," he told *Farmers Weekly*. "Unless it can be solved, farmers could find that it becomes more difficult to get permission to site wind farms on their land."

Because of the nature of sites required for wind farms, turbines are often in areas of low background noise which makes the noise of the blades all the more noticeable – especially for rural residents used to peace and quiet.

Last month, noise worries contributed to the withdrawal of an application to build three turbines at Weston, Hertfordshire. Noise has also been an issue for residents living near wind farms at Bears Down, North Cornwall and Askham, Cumbria.

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