

## **YDS POLICY STATEMENT ON WIND FARMS etc**

*(Based on papers by Colin Speakman, Hugh Thornton and Norman Wordsworth)*

The core objective of the Yorkshire Dales Society is the protection and enhancement of the distinctive landscape of the Yorkshire Dales.

The Society recognises the nation's need for adequate and secure sources of energy into the future, and the threat posed by global warming, but regrets that wind power has hitherto dominated the debate on new and alternative means of energy generation. It acknowledges the scope for wind turbines sited off-shore and perhaps in industrialised estuaries and other despoiled and/or featureless landscapes where they might add a gaunt visual interest. But not in the priceless landscape heritage of the Yorkshire Dales where large, tall, turbines represent a major 'urban' intrusion. Moreover, since they cannot operate in either calm or stormy conditions and lose energy through transmission, the Society considers that their claimed energy outputs are questionable. The Society maintains that 'green' energy policies must not require the sacrifice of our finest landscapes.

The Society totally agrees with the Government's current clear stand against new major wind farms in designated National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and trusts that a new Infrastructure Planning Commission will maintain this stand when determining future proposals to build new generating stations and associated pylons.

Such developments threaten not only the special landscape of the Yorkshire Dales National Park but also an increasingly important component of the local economy. The Society notes that independent research by *Visit England* has demonstrated that tourists are deterred by large wind turbines, preferring to visit places where the landscape remains unspoiled.

The Society's concern extends also to those areas of fine landscape that surround and provide the setting for National Parks and AONBs. Developments in these areas must not be allowed to impact on outward views from the designated areas.

Several applications have already been made to establish wind farms close to the boundary of the Yorkshire Dales National Park and others may well be in preparation. The Society is not opposed in principle to new sources of 'green' energy being sought in the Dales. There are several potential means of energy generation which could prove acceptable if suitably small in scale and duly respectful of the special qualities of the area. Those meriting careful consideration include:

- 1) Hydro Electric - utilising the fast-flowing rivers and streams of the Dales
- 2) Ground Heat Pumps - to provide domestic heating for remote buildings
- 3) Solar - utilising relatively unobtrusive photo-voltaic cell technology
- 4) Bio Mass - providing carbon-neutral energy for domestic use
- 5) Micro Generation - by means of individual, small turbines (eg to serve farms)

The Society will continue to press government and local authorities to encourage small renewable energy schemes, some or all of which might make a modest contribution to local energy needs. It does not, however, envisage that such developments within the Dales could make any meaningful contribution to meeting the nation's increasing energy needs. These will have to be met in other ways.

In recent decades Britain has enjoyed a massive cheap energy consuming bonanza, increasingly reliant on imported fuels and manufactured products, a situation that cannot continue for much longer. The Society believes that energy conservation, including insulation of buildings and changing our hyper mobile and energy-hungry lifestyles, probably provides the best value-for-money solution. But even if this was to save as much as 40% of our energy consumption, much more will need to be done.

The Society believes that the long term answer to the nation's energy problem is most likely to come from the development of tidal power and deep underground heat sources. But these are truly long term solutions and unlikely to come on stream by the time the existing power stations start to run down. Breathing space is therefore needed whilst these and perhaps others as yet unknown sources can be developed.

Building more oil or gas stations would be short-sighted because of the uncertainty and insecurity of supplies and any new coal-fired stations must be of the lean-burn type. The Society therefore considers that the rebuilding of ageing power stations must begin as soon as possible. This would reduce our dependence on imported fuel; create new construction jobs; provide continued employment for existing skilled workers and, by utilising existing sites and transmission routes, avoid even greater visual intrusion.

But even so, the Society acknowledges that, despite long-term safety fears, nuclear stations cannot be ruled out if the nation's energy requirements are to be met.

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