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## **Environmental scientist exposes wind farm scam**

In *The Wind Farm Scam*, to be released on 30th September 2009, Dr. John Etherington argues that wind farm technology is a wholly counter-productive and undesirable response to the problems of climate change and electricity generation. Dr. Etherington is a former Reader in Ecology, Thomas Huxley Medallist at the Royal College of Science and former co-editor of the *Journal of Ecology*.

*The Wind Farm Scam* explains that the intermittent nature of wind power cannot generate a steady output, a fact that necessitates back-up systems from coal and gas-powered plants that significantly negate any reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition, there are the ecological drawbacks, including damage to habitats and wildlife, and the far from insignificant aesthetic drawback of the assault upon natural beauty which wind turbines entail.

Moreover, wind power is being excessively financed at the cost of consumers who have been neither consulted nor informed that this subsidy is being paid from their bills to support an industry that cannot be cost-efficient.

With the recent proliferation of local groups opposing wind farm planning applications (now over 300), and the increasingly frequent and challenging discussions on wind farms in all the media – including a round condemnation by James Lovelock on the BBC's *Hard Talk* programme – this meticulously researched and compellingly-argued book could not be more timely.

As Christopher Booker says in his introduction:

“Eventually the obsession of our politicians with tower blocks was seen to be one of the greatest follies of the age. In time to come – it may be sooner than we think – the obsession with wind power will likewise come to be seen as an even greater folly”

*The Wind Farm Scam*: Isbn 9781905299836, £9.99, published 30th September 2009 by Stacey International

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### **Notes for Editors**

Publication of *The Wind Farm Scam* comes at a crucial time, as our government appears determined to confront public opposition to deployment of wind power. Just a few months ago Energy Secretary Ed Miliband publicly stated “It is socially unacceptable to be against wind turbines.” And more recently Huw Irranca-Davies, DEFRA minister for marine and natural environment, supported the fast-tracking of wind power through the planning system by allowing developers to finance local projects. Such action is contrary to the government's own 2007 policy set out in “*Delivering Community Benefits from Wind Energy Development: A Toolkit*” which contained the categorical statement that: “To put it simply, planning permission cannot be ‘bought’.”

Despite the government's statement that 81% of people are in favour of wind power and that 62% would be happy to live within 5 km of a wind power development, media polls have recently shown a consistent 70% to 90% of people opposing local wind farm development. For example, whilst this book was in press, the Scottish "Lochaber News" asked if councilors should approve a plan for wind turbines, to which question the poll gave a resounding "No – 90%". We are not alone. In Germany, usually presented as a showcase for wind power, the response to the State of Brandenburg's decision to increase the already large areas covered by wind farms, was a local petition of 27,000 signatures opposing the decision.

Proponents of wind power repeatedly stress that opposition is based primarily on the impact on landscape, but justify this by the need to "tackle climate change" through reduction of carbon dioxide emission. **As this book shows, the saving of CO2 proposed by government's own 2010 target for electricity generated by renewables is a minute 0.04% of the global total** and, by 2020 this will not have grown in any way comparably with the huge increases of emission from the developing world. To achieve the target, installed capacity of wind will have grown to near 50 gigawatts which according to predictions by wind farm operators E.ON UK and Iberdrola, **will necessitate up to 90% of this 50 GW being backed-up by conventional power stations. Paradoxically then, we need to build more CO2-emitting power stations to allow deployment of hugely subsidized wind farms.**

The title of this book expresses the author's belief that wind power is an institutional confidence trick – succinctly summed-up by Lord David Howell, former Secretary of State for Energy in Mrs. Thatcher's government: "Extensive wind farm developments will be seen in due course to have taken public opinion for a colossal ride." It is indeed colossal – electricity compulsorily priced at two or three times its real value, saving a derisory amount of CO2 emission and, as conceded last year by the British Wind Energy Association, mitigating only half the amount of CO2 emission which was claimed for most wind farms already installed.

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