

Readers' Views

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WIND TURBINE

Essence of democracy

In his letter headline Witch-hunt Democracy (Letters, May 15) Mr Paton from Wilden seems to think that democracy is only useful if it supports his own prejudices.

Active opposition is the very essence of democracy.

At the time of writing, the total number of comments on the application shown on the Bedford Borough Council planning website is 174.

That is the number of households who have commented, not the number of people – it is the council's practice to bundle the separate comments of people in a household together when giving a total.

The total number of comments is in excess of 200, not 155 as Mr Paton states.

Five of that 200+ are in favour of the application, any reasonable person must see that the vast majority of local residents are against the proposal to build this monstrous 78m turbine in this totally inappropriate place.

At the very well-attended meeting held at Ravensden Village Hall on Friday, May 16, one lady spoke politely in support of renewable energy, simply asking that we support renewable energy schemes even if against this particular proposal.

One gentleman from outside our area treated us to a diatribe relating to his love of wind turbines, implying that we should be grateful to have one foisted on us.

Everyone else remained implacably opposed to the proposal.

I suggest that the only green aspect of this proposal is the colour of the money which will flow to the applicant and the landowner.

Your readers have only to drive to a point from which our Ravensden Water Tower is visible, to readily see what the affect of a turbine 2.5 times the height of the Water Tower will be on the precious landscape.

Mr Paton's reference to the Marston Vale development

ignores the fact that it is in a valley and not, as ours would be, on top of the tallest hill in the area.

Mike Hudson,
Church End,
Ravensden

PROTEST MEETING

Realise the urgency

I write regarding the wind turbine protest meeting at Ravensden on Friday.

I have attended two wind turbine protest meetings recently and each time village halls were packed with residents who were stirred up to protect beauty and prevent change in their corner of rural England.

But we can't pretend we do not know that extreme weather and rising sea levels caused by burning fossil fuels are destroying lives and livelihoods across the world.

The 'worst in 120 years' flooding in Serbia and Bosnia is but the latest of these events.

People are only just recovering from the winter floods in Somerset three months on.

Above all it was heartbreaking to see tiny children shivering in the rain, their homes washed away and families drowned by typhoon Haiyan, the deadliest on record last November in the Philippines.

Scientists have been warning us of this for 20 odd years.

What would it take to make people here realise the urgency of the situation?

It would be wonderful to see the community spirit in these villages focussed on doing something positive, not just negative, about carbon emissions and climate change – even perhaps follow the example of nearby Gamlingay with its ecohub and community wind turbine?

Heather Mitchell,
Lely Close,
Bedford

WOMEN PRIESTS

Error of believers

Mr Wade from Cranfield objects to the ordination of wom-

Name and shame anti-social cyclists

I write regarding the continuing debate about anti-social cyclists, following the consultation which has been held recently.

All cyclists who ride on the footpath or pedestrian-only areas should be apprehended, fined, named and shamed.

They ride on the footpath

even when there is no traffic on the road or if there is a cycle path.

The majority do not wear reflective clothing or use lights.

They cycle listening to their music, making phone calls or sending texts.

They ride as if they are in

training for the next Olympics or Tour de France or a stunt riding event, and they swear at pedestrians who happen to be in their way or who protest about being almost run over.

If cyclists are too frightened to ride on the road, then they should use the available cycle paths.

If there is no cycle path they should walk.

Footpaths are for pedestrians, not cyclists!

The police do very little to solve this serious problem, mostly they just um and ah, occasionally warning cyclists.

Linda Owen,
Bedford Road, Kempston

en because St Paul – a bachelor) forbade it and of course Christ's apostles were all male (Letters, May 15).

Presumably Mr Wade is an evangelical Christian. I am an Anglican and suggest that Christ, living in the culture of his time, could have done nothing else.

No woman then would have been able to travel alone, let alone preach.

However, there is a good wall drawing in a Rome catacomb of a female Christian priest before a Roman Emperor took over Christianity and mixed it with imperial politics.

Indeed, if another Messiah appeared today in what is left of England's green and pleasant land she might well appoint apostles of both sexes and use social media.

It is an error of some believers of several religions to freeze the practices of their originators and fail to interpret their beliefs in a modern setting.

Michael Collis,
Manor Farm Way,
Sharnbrook

THANK YOU

Free trim to my saviour

My daughter sent me to buy her some muffins on Wednesday, May 14.

I obliged since she completed her last university exams today, apparently successfully.

I thought that was a small price for me to fork out after her efforts of three years at uni.

I set off on my bike from the High Street in Clapham towards Sainsbury for the muffins.

I had put in my tracksuit pocket an envelope with my debit card to shop, and a £1,700 cheque for a car that I was going to collect, secretly, for my daughter.

When I got home in Clapham, I could not find that envelope with the cheque, so I start to telephone my bank to report the loss, when the house phone rang.

It was the Bedfordshire Police, asking me if I had lost a card and a cheque. I answered it was me.

When I went to the Bedford Police Station, I said to the police lady that I wished to thank the man who found my card and cheque, since without hesitation he took it to the police.

This very pleasant police lady explained to me that it was an elegant well spoken gentleman who handed it in, but he would not leave his details.

I am not sure why because if I could contact him I would like to thank him personally.

I would also like to offer him a free haircut, and try and

make him look even more elegant if he would come to see me in the Lounge Hairdressing Salon at 8 St Mary's Street.

If you are that man then please contact me on 01234 350356.

My gratitude and thanks also go to the police who were so quick and clever in finding my telephone number, even before I managed to report the loss to my bank.

We are often quick at condemning others when something appears to go wrong.

But we are less forthcoming when we notice such kindness, honesty and considerations towards others, like that elegant gentleman who went out of his way to go and hand in my valuables at the police station.

Giorgio Garofalo
High Street, Clapham

EMPLOYMENT

Zero hours jobs issues

I was pleased by Phil Filsell's reply which emphasises why we need to end the widespread abuse of zero-hour contracts (Letter, May 8).

Hopefully, Phil and other readers will agree that these employment contracts must be the exception and not the norm.

Remember, these unfair contracts are used not only by

small businesses but also by large organisations who could afford to offer their employees more stable contracts upon which people can build a future.

Phil's story of relatives who established a small business that was 'saved' by zero-hours contracts demonstrates why they are regrettable for both small businesses and employees.

Firstly, it highlights the way businesses are sometimes forced to turn to these contracts in desperation.

Secondly it also illustrates that many young people think they have no choice but to accept these terms and conditions because 'that is how it has to be'.

What the government needs to do is work with small businesses like the one Phil mentions to ensure reform of maternity pay is implemented so as not to leave business owners out of pocket.

To discriminate and punish workers for bureaucratic inaction only adds insult to injury.

Yes, these contracts could, in some circumstances, be the contract of choice, but they must be negotiated and agreed by both sides.

Yes, some small businesses may need to use them on occasion, but they must be exception rather than the rule.

Luigi Reale
Labour Party candidate for
Castle Ward



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