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Issue 200: July 22, 2011
Fortnightly - 25p

Formal plans for renewable energy scheme submitted

THE University of Nottingham submitted formal plans to build three wind turbines on its land at Grove Farm, Nottingham, on Wednesday, July 20.

The University is applying for planning permission to build the turbines on land next to the River Trent at Clifton Bridge.

Permission is being sought from Nottingham City Council and Broxtowe Borough Council, as the site earmarked crosses the boundary between the two authorities.

It is estimated that the turbines, 126 metres tall to the highest point of the rotor, would reduce the university's carbon emissions by 7,000 tonnes per year. If approved, the turbines will generate enough 'green' electricity to meet a third of the power required on the University Park campus. The plans for the scheme were first announced in October 2010 and a public meeting was held in Beeston Rylands in November 2010, when residents were able to direct questions at senior university staff.

More public meetings and exhibitions were held in April 2011. These included a summary of progress to date and work to meet the stringent requirements in terms of environmental impact, wildlife, noise and other considerations.

The plans are expected to go before Broxtowe's Development Control Committee at the beginning of October 2011 if there are no unexpected delays.

Toton trees appeal is dismissed but restocking notice is amended

THE Forestry Commission has dismissed the appeal lodged by the landowner against the Restocking Notice it issued last summer after the landowner had unlawfully used a bulldozer to fell a large and popular area of woodland at Toton Sidings.

The Forestry Commission declared that the felling, carried out by the new landowner in January 2010, was unlawful and issued a restocking notice. The landowner lodged an appeal against the Forestry Commission's decision. Now the commission has announced that it is dismissing the appeal, but has declared that the restocking order would be changed.

Instead of insisting that the landowner replants the area with more than 2,000 silver birch trees, the commission is "satisfied" that the lost trees can be replaced naturally. Nature will be allowed to take its course over the next four years, until June 2015.

Toton resident Steve Bakewell of Toton Environmental Protection Society (TEPS), the group set up to campaign for the trees to be replaced, said he was pleased with the announcement that the

developer's appeal had been unsuccessful, but remained concerned that more time had been granted for the required restocking.

Restocking Order

The Restocking Order calls for the area to be restocked with trees by natural regeneration of locally native species that achieves a stocking density of no less than 1,100 trees per hectare.

The order states that, if natural regeneration does not achieve the required stocking density by June 2015, then the areas subjected to the illegal felling must be replanted with native birch trees. The trees, whether established by natural regeneration or replanting, must be protected against damage for a period of 10 years.

However, if planning permission were to be granted for the site, this would override the restocking requirement.

Neil Riddle, Regional Director of the Forestry Commission, commented: "Our understanding is that any redevelopment of the site, or the removal of ballast and other material, will require planning permission and an application could

be made at any time. The decision to allow development is for the local planning authority who, I am sure, will be fully aware of the history of the site."

In response to Steve Bakewell's concerns, Mr Riddle said: "If you do not want to see any development on the site, then this is something that you should take up with the planning authority. The Forestry Commission will continue to monitor compliance with the Notice, which will remain in force unless planning permission is granted."

Mr Bakewell said: "I can't help but feel that the caveat that 'any future development approval will override the requirement to replant' will allow the developer to make his profit without having received justice for having illegally felled the Toton Siding trees. I shall be writing to Broxtowe Borough Council's Development Control committee to seek assurance that no planning permission will be granted for development of the Sidings."

Anna Soubry MP gave a cautious welcome to the announcement about the restocking of trees. She said: "The original restocking

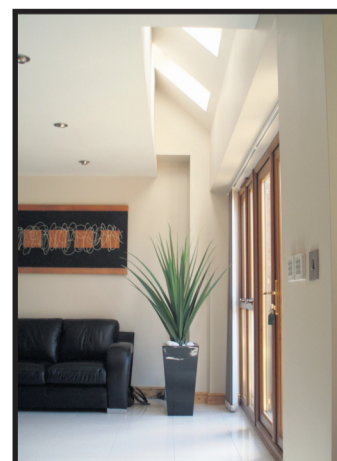
notice has been somewhat watered down but the landowner must now protect and maintain the trees which are already growing back.

"If the full density isn't reached by 2015 then the landowner will have to re-plant."

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