

ACRA

Alliance of Christchurch Residents Associations

Representing over 10,000 local homes

The Planning Inspectorate

navitusbay@infrastructure.gsi.gov.uk

Written Representation Regarding Navitus Bay Wind Park

The Alliance of Christchurch Residents Association (ACRA) is an umbrella organisation that represents various Christchurch Residents Associations (Christchurch Citizens; Friars Cliff; Grange; Highcliffe; Somerford; Stanpit and Mundeford; West Christchurch) with a combined membership of around 10,000 households or approximately 16,000 local residents.

Most of our members are either house owners or are leasing high value properties. They are aged over 35 with a preponderance towards the over 50s. In some areas such as Friars Cliff and Highcliffe most of the membership is retired. In other areas such as Stanpit-Mundeford and West Christchurch there is a greater spread of ages.

A Mixed Picture

The majority of our membership was opposed to Navitus Bay from outset for familiar reasons: impact upon the Jurassic coast; adverse effect upon local economy; adverse effect upon birds and other wild life; etc.

One of the most heartfelt objections related to potential damage to our micro-climate. We understand that the proposed development is in breach of Government guidelines which state that turbines should be in any event at least 12 nautical miles off shore and for sensitive areas, even further. We can see no justification for the developer flouting this important requirement.

However, a significant minority of members was in favour and their views are best summarised by a message sent to West Christchurch by a local senior engineer for inclusion in their monthly e-mail newsletter:

Generally I feel we should look at the big picture; every type of technological development has had its teething problems from the internal combustion engine this time last century to mobile phones more recently (plus a hundred more such examples). Everything needs the chance to be developed fully - and wind power has not had that yet; even so its capabilities and efficiencies are much better than they used to be.

Some people like the look of wind turbines; some hate them - as I daresay windmills were hated centuries ago by some. They are part of the technology that allows us to have cushy lives - and be in no doubt that we currently do. But fossil fuel sources cannot be relied upon in future so we have to be brave and work out other ways;

Navitus Bay is one such opportunity. I believe that, even if people don't flock here to see our latest tourist attraction, it will do nothing to the Jurassic coast protection status; that is to do with cliff geology; not what may or may not be out to sea.

In the end I doubt whether our views will matter anyway; this will be a political decision; but personally I am happy to trust my fellow engineers working on this amazing technology and be proud that our region has been chosen to host what, I am sure, will become a common sight in future (as it is elsewhere in the world).

The Trench Effect

Two events have changed the views of the minority. The first was the UNESCO letter addressing the issues surrounding the Jurassic Coast. The second was the publication of the full specification for the motorway sized "trench" to be built from the landfall point to Mannington. This provoked the same senior engineer to write a second note:

Just to advise you that I have changed my opinion on Navitus Bay. Whereas I do still believe that wind power can eventually be made to work economically I am really concerned about what happens to the electricity when it comes on land. The swathe of channel required all along its journey from Barton to Mannington will be an environmental blight for the residents and for the wildlife. If such things are needed they should only be in sparsely populated areas that are not SNCI or SSSI designated.

And another resident who had previously been in favour chipped in with:

What is the point of building a wind farm that creates less carbon dioxide than fossil fuel and then destroying thousands of trees and other plants that convert carbon dioxide into oxygen in order to make the electricity usable?

In Summary

We can now say that local public opinion is firmly against this proposed development and is particularly opposed to the desecration of our habitat that the massive trench will create. The years of disruption as the monstrosity is built; the permanent scar upon the landscape; the unknown damage to such sensitive environments that are recognised by SNCI and SSSI designations; the felling of thousands of trees; these all appal us – and we sincerely hope they will also appal you.

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Secretary

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Christchurch Citizens; Friars Cliff; Grange; Highcliffe; Somerford;

Stanpit and Mundeford; West Christchurch