

Was horrified to see that Natural England, of all organisations, is working closely with Renewables promoting the industrialisation of the loveliest, most tranquil and unspoilt parts of the natural environment and selling their line that wind energy is actually going to contribute anything towards climate change.

I hope you are also telling the children that:

1. The carbon cost of these giant turbines is considerable, the most recent research (RES) giving in the region of 6 years pay back time, more if the turbines are fixed into enough concrete to fill several Olympic swimming pools in peat or dark soils.
2. The efficiency of turbines in the last year in UK was less than 21% and the contribution on many of the coldest days of the year made some 0.1% contribution to energy needs
3. Rare metals are essential to the gear boxes of turbines. The extraction of these is only carried out in China, no other country will touch it because of the high level of toxicity. The towns where extraction is carried out are so polluted by the fumes that residents wear face masks permanently when out of doors and the residue is a radioactive material many hundreds of times more toxic than any waste from nuclear power stations
4. Wind turbines only begin to work at wind speeds of over 12mph, work optimally at around 26 mph (pretty blustery weather) and have to be switched off over 56 mph to avoid damage. Electrical energy is very difficult to store and there is virtually no capacity in the UK (or elsewhere) to do this other than a couple of relatively tiny hydro facilities (e.g. Dinorwig)
5. That no company would touch wind energy without ROCs which are paid by all electricity consumers in UK. We are making a few companies very rich whilst creating fuel poverty for the many
6. That wind turbines kill many hundreds of thousands of bats, raptors and passerines across the world each year (knowing children's innate love of animals and birds this may interest them)
7. That placing turbines on upland areas affects the delicate ecosystem balance and also rain absorption and run off. As even bigger 'farms' are built this will cause downstream flooding, a good example being for towns such as Tewkesbury, Shrewsbury, Ludlow that are on the Severn which rises in upland Powys where massive wind developments are planned (hundreds of turbines).
8. That in their lifetimes the beautiful British countryside will become increasingly industrialised with ever bigger turbines. Some upland areas will enjoy a 360 degree view of turbines on surrounding hills. This is to say nothing of the massive tide of huge pylons that will have to sprawl our remote places alongside acres of transformer stations in formerly unspoilt flatter locations. They will have lost for ever the profound peace and beauty of the countryside because of the shortsighted policies and breathtaking capitalism of the early 2000s
9. The only green electrical power unit is NO unit and what all responsible people should be doing is REDUCING their carbon footprint. Help encourage children to walk and cycle safely, to understand how to use local food and grow their own, to conserve water, to reduce waste, to choose items with less packaging and not to be driven by consumerism. This is where the only hope for the world lies - tread lightly on the earth children
10. That if they ride they must avoid going anywhere near turbines. Horse riders have been very seriously injured when horses are spooked by turbines and many near misses have been reported. (Trekking businesses have had to close in parts of Wales as a result)
11. That for every wind farm the equivalent capacity has to be available on 'spinning reserve' for when the wind is not blowing. That means more power stations, and very expensive ones at that since it is less economical to run on this basis. The station has to be gas or coal as nuclear cannot supply this instant need when the wind drops.
12. 2,000 turbines produce (intermittently) the same amount of power as one conventional power station
13. That there are many other forms of renewable energy and several of them have far greater potential, are less damaging to the natural environment, are predictable and consistent
14. That Denmark and Spain have lots of wind turbines and they have both pulled out of any further construction because they are not providing the expected power, are very expensive in subsidies and have caused serious economic harm to their countries (especially Spain where 3 jobs in conventional industry and tourism have been lost for every 1 created in the wind industry)
15. That France had a wind development policy but has now removed all subsidies because of grave concerns over efficiency, loss of mountain landscapes and the astronomical cost

16. Wind farm companies are only interested in building the things, they are not altruistic or in anyway concerned for climate change. After construction they usually sell on the farm at a vast profit or trade the ROCs on the finance futures markets to make the biggest profit possible for shareholders (not the poor old consumer who foots the whole bill and suffers the devastation of their countryside). Most of these companies are non-UK so there is no advantage to UK economy
17. Wind does not create British jobs. We manufacture few turbine components and this is currently decreasing. There are no local jobs to be had beyond the possibility of a bit of concrete pouring. Construction teams are bussed in virtually everywhere. Maintenance is mainly carried out remotely (mostly from Danish computers) with small teams of one or two engineers who drive around the country looking after turbines
18. Wind turbines are not only inefficient they have many technical problems which means a considerable proportion are idle or useless at any one time. The gear boxes are notorious amongst engineers and have a very short life span (like most gearing systems they are also extremely expensive to replace)
19. The turbines are supposed to come down after 25 years. In the USA, where some farms have been operational for this long, they have simply been abandoned (usually they are too inefficient to bother with any more) and left in situ in perpetuity - 'flapping uselessly in the wind' as one commentator put it.
20. That many of the Cornish children's parents will depend on the tourism industry directly or indirectly. They could well face reduced incomes or unemployment with less tourism as turbines make the area a less attractive destination; the despoliation of the very landscape that people are visiting. This has been demonstrated in Wales, Scotland and North Yorkshire.

Finally, I hope every child is given a copy of John Etherington's 'The Wind Scam' to read to balance what they hear from the, far from disinterested, wind industry. They should be allowed to make up their own minds as to the benefits or otherwise of wind energy with both sides of the argument in front of them. There is indeed much of value here to the teacher as every subject can potentially be covered from maths and statistics to geography, biology, economy, politics and much more..

Shame on you Natural England. Your remit is the preservation of the glorious countryside of the country and you should above all be impartial and not paying court to a commercial racket of one of the worst kinds. If we cannot look to organisations such as yours to have a strong lobbying voice to PROTECT our most precious asset, who can we look to ?

Yours in despair  
Passionate about our countryside