

Greetings from

Dear Linda,

Windyhill Cottage

I hope this letter finds you well and happy.

For Donnie and me life has changed a lot since I last wrote to you – for the better, as Donnie insists. You may remember that we purchased the plot of land next to our garden because Donnie wanted to start his own business with free-range eggs. He thought this would be easy money and wouldn't be too much of a challenge as we didn't know an awful lot about country life when we moved out here.

So Donnie bought 40 hens very cheaply at an auction. Well, they turned out to be free-range in the literal meaning of the word. As soon as Donnie released them on our fifty acres of land they were all over the place and nowhere to be seen. So Donnie built a wire pen and spent days combing the field and making clucking noises. Eventually he shoed twenty-seven of the hens into the pen. The other thirteen went missing for good. Maybe the fox got them or they just went feral.

Anyway, weeks passed and there were no eggs. Then the hens started crowing and growing cock's combs. It turned out, that Donnie had bought a batch of cockerel chickens. Nobody wanted them because they were already unsuitable for being sold as poultry. So Donnie slaughtered them himself. I will never forget the bloodbath inside the pen. Have you ever tried to pluck twenty-seven chickens? What a mess it was! We also had to buy an extra freezer. All in all it was a financial disaster.

But Donnie came up with another brilliant idea. He had found this website about selling electricity from your own windmill. To cut along story short, we got a handsome government grant and over the next twenty years we will have a steady income from the electricity we feed into the grid from our wind turbine. The developer guys were just brilliant. Of course it was a bit of an upheaval with all the coming and going of workers and technicians. The developer provided three caravans as accommodation for some of the workmen. We fed them with chicken from our freezer.

Everything was fine, basically, but some of our neighbours complained because they first thought, that we had allowed travellers on our field. When they learned, that the men were there to build a 400 foot wind turbine, they really turned nasty. They didn't need to be notified, you see, because their houses are too far away from the windmill, even if only a few yards. Nevertheless, they started a campaign. The "monstrosity" would blight the landscape, they said, there would be noise pollution, the turning blades would cause a flicker and so on. The most ridiculous argument was, that these turbines are inefficient. What a short-sighted way of thinking! After all, we get our money, regardless how much electricity we actually produce. If there is no wind or if we have to switch the turbine off, because the wind is too strong or the grid is already at capacity, we get compensation. I mean, it can't be any more efficient than that, can it? Besides, turbines are everywhere now. One more or less in the landscape doesn't really matter, does it? As for the noise – during the day Donnie and I play music at top volume and at night we plug our MP3 players in, so we don't really hear it. And we easily keep the flicker out with our new curtains – we keep them drawn all day and with their lovely Farquharson scene they even give us a nice view.

I must go now. The cock-a-leekie soup is nearly ready.



Your loving sister Heather