

East Brent Village Hall and Broadview Energy Donation to Solar Panels

The NoPilrow Campaign against the Rooksbridge Wind Farm wish to point out that one of our objects is to accept and encourage the use of appropriate renewable energy. In that sense we are pleased that the Village Hall Committee have erected solar panels on the roof of the Hall and will be making a profit through **Feed In Tariffs**, albeit at the expense of consumers through subsidies paid by them. In this case however the money paid out by these subsidies and the profit to the Village Hall is put straight back in for the community's benefit. This is in direct contrast to the proposal by Broadview Energy where the profit made by that company, again at consumers' expense, will go into the pockets of individual and corporate financiers.

We understand that the request for this donation was made by the Hall Committee last year. It is clearly no coincidence that funds have been given to the project just a few weeks prior to Broadview's expressed intention of putting forward a Planning Application for the Pilrow Wind Farm. In addition it has been publicised at the same time as the completion of the installation and within days of Broadview putting on an exhibition at the Hall to support their Pilrow project. Broadview's reasons and timings for making this payment could not be more obvious.

The Chairman of the Hall Committee has said that the donation was sought on the understanding that it did not represent support for the Pilrow project. This we feel has now been shown to be a somewhat naïve assessment of Broadview's intentions in making the donation. Nowhere have we seen the company make this point in their publicity – nor would we have expected them to do so.

The language of the Press Release issued by Broadview makes it clear they are attempting to give the impression that their primary aim is altruistic by making a donation for community benefit. The inference is that there will be more benefit to come if the Wind Farm is developed. Unfortunately as we know the vast majority of benefit from this and other wind farms accrue only to companies and their backers.

This is nothing more than a blatant public relations exercise to try and make their image more acceptable to local residents. Fortunately such residents are well aware of exactly why Broadview have made this donation.

None of the other major donors to the solar panel scheme have felt it necessary to draw attention to their donations by a press release, circulation to local media, publishing their actions on a web-site, or sending e mails to all their supporters.

The Village Hall Trustees own the Village Hall on charitable trusts created in 1977 by East Brent Parish Council **for the benefit of the community** and have independently managed and maintained the Village Hall since then on the basis of that trust. There can be no doubt that in this they have done the village a great service. It has to asked however whether giving tacit support to Broadview, however unwittingly, can be accepted as being “for the benefit of the community”.

We would urge the Hall Committee to think again on this and return the donation to Broadview immediately.