



DEVICE: The microphone measuring noise levels at the Cottonfarm windfarm in Cambridgeshire

Noise data new

Turbines: Activists to monitor levels

BY IAIN RAMAGE

Protesters in the north are warning windfarm operators that some schemes could be shut down for breaching noise limits.

Highland activists are preparing to follow the lead of counterparts in England and Ireland who have collated extensive data they say proves that planning conditions have been flouted at a number of windfarms.

Campaigners in the north believe similar gauging of the industry in Scot-

land could open the floodgates for legal action against offending operators.

Sound estimates are usually carried out by developers as part of the groundwork for planning applications to give an indication of anticipated noise levels.

But there is currently no obligation to carry out monitoring once a scheme is built - at which stage councils merely respond to individual complaints about noise.

Residents living near a

turbine development in Cambridgeshire have compiled what is thought to be the most comprehensive sound history of any UK windfarm.

Monitoring has taken place over two-and-a-half years, using industry-standard recording equipment to reveal what they claim have been regular breaches at the Cottonfarm scheme at Gravelley.

Highland campaigners have seen the equipment operate and now plan to instal similar devices in the north. Bev Gray, 71, who

WEATHER

GENERAL SITUATION

It will be a mostly cloudy and cool day over Scotland with a northerly breeze. Eastern Scotland will have patchy rain and a few localised showers in western areas before it turns dry and somewhat brighter later on.

OUTLOOK FOR THE WEEK AHEAD

After a sunny start, tomorrow will be dry but with a build-up of cloud away from western coasts which will stay sunnier. Cloudier at times on Wednesday and Thursday with a chance of showers.

HILLWALKERS' 48-HOUR FORECAST

East Highlands, West Highlands, Cairngorms, Skye: Often cloudy and cool today with occasional drizzle. Moderate visibility and fresh northerly winds. After a sunny start, tomorrow will be dry but cloudy at times. Good visibility. Freezing level staying above peaks.

HIGHEST & LOWEST

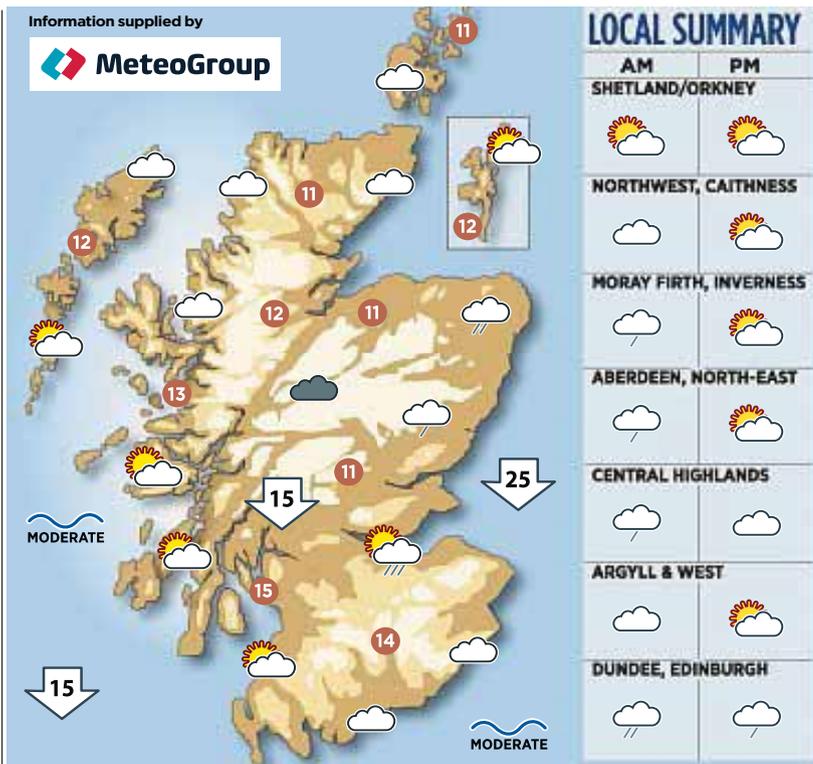
In Britain yesterday
Warmest (day): Kew Gardens (Greater London) 21°C (70°F)
Colest (day): Lerwick (Shetland) 10°C (50°F)
Wettest: High Kirkwall (Orkney) 1.10 inches
Sunniest: Shoreham (West Sussex) 9.5 hours

LIGHT-UP TIMES

Moving vehicles should display dipped headlights from sunset to sunrise and during times of poor visibility. Times shown are GMT.

	Sunrise	Sunset	M/rise	M/set	Light-ups
ABERDEEN	04.11	22.10	11.06	00.15	22.10 - 04.12
INVERNESS	04.14	22.21	11.13	00.22	22.21 - 04.14
LERWICK	03.39	22.35	10.57	00.16	22.35 - 03.39
STORNOWAY	04.19	22.36	11.22	00.33	22.36 - 04.19

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HIGH TIDES

All tide times are BST

	18.26	06.31	19.15
Aberdeen	18.26	06.31	19.15
Arbroath	19.03	07.08	19.52
Banff	17.03	05.07	17.43
Buckie	17.36	05.47	18.22
Fraserburgh	17.09	05.14	17.58
Invergordon	17.10	05.22	17.52
Lerwick	15.51	03.59	16.35
Macduff	17.03	05.07	17.43
Mallaig	22.34	11.17	23.23
Montrose	19.11	07.16	20.00
Oban	22.17	11.00	23.06
Peterhead	17.42	05.47	18.31
Scrabster	13.20	01.30	14.12
Ullapool	23.51	-	12.36
Wick	16.10	04.19	16.56

AROUND SCOTLAND

2-day forecast

	Today	Tomorrow
	TEMP (°C)	TEMP (°C)
	Max min	Max min
Aberdeen	12 9 rain	12 8 cloudy
Arbroath	12 8 rain	12 8 cloudy
Aviemore	12 6 drizzle	15 7 cloudy
Banff	12 8 rain	12 7 cloudy
Buckie	12 8 rain	12 7 cloudy
Fraserburgh	12 9 rain	12 8 cloudy
Invergordon	13 8 rain	14 8 cloudy
Inverness	14 7 drizzle	15 7 cloudy
Kinloss	13 8 rain	14 8 cloudy
Lerwick	11 8 cloudy	10 7 cloudy
Macduff	12 8 rain	12 7 cloudy
Mallaig	14 6 cloudy	15 7 fair
Oban	14 6 cloudy	15 7 fair
Peterhead	12 9 rain	12 8 cloudy
Stornoway	12 8 cloudy	12 7 cloudy
Wick	12 8 cloudy	12 7 cloudy

AROUND THE UK

2-day forecast

	Today	Tomorrow
	TEMP (°C)	TEMP (°C)
	Max min	Max min
Belfast	16 8 fair	19 10 fair
Birmingham	15 9 fair	21 10 fair
Bristol	15 11 rain	18 12 fair
Cardiff	18 9 fair	20 11 sun
Darlington	15 10 drizzle	17 8 cloudy
Exeter	17 8 rain	21 8 sun
Hull	15 10 drizzle	16 8 cloudy
Ipswich	16 10 showers	17 10 cloudy
Leeds	13 8 cloudy	17 9 fair
Leicester	16 9 cloudy	20 9 fair
London	18 10 showers	22 13 fair
Manchester	15 8 rain	19 9 sun
Norwich	16 10 showers	16 9 cloudy
Plymouth	15 10 rain	19 11 fair
Rotherham	15 10 fair	20 10 fair
Swansea	16 11 rain	18 12 fair

ABROAD

Weather at noon local time yesterday except *denotes readings from the day before

	(°C)	(°F)
Amsterdam	18 64	showers
Athens	27 81	fair
Auckland	14 57	fair
Balearics	28 82	sunny
Barbados	30 86	sunny
Barcelona	25 77	sunny
Beijing	31 88	fair
Berlin	16 61	fair
Bermuda*	28 82	fair
Brussels	20 68	cloudy
Budapest	19 66	fair
Cairo	29 84	fair
Canaries	25 77	sunny
Chicago*	22 72	cloudy
Copenhagen	16 61	cloudy
Corfu	24 75	fair
Costa del Sol	30 86	fair
Crete	24 75	sunny
Cyprus	28 82	sunny
Dublin	14 57	cloudy
Faro	26 79	sunny
Frankfurt	14 57	cloudy
French Riviera	25 77	fair
Geneva	21 70	fair
Helsinki	18 64	cloudy
Houston	29 84	showers
Istanbul	27 81	sunny
Johannesburg	15 59	sunny
Lisbon	25 77	sunny
London	18 64	fair
Los Angeles*	23 73	sunny
Madeira	22 72	fair
Madrid	31 88	sunny
Majorca	28 82	sunny
Malta	26 79	sunny
Miami*	32 90	fair
Montreal*	22 72	fair
Moscow	18 64	cloudy
Naples	26 79	sunny
New York*	19 66	rain
Oslo	16 61	showers
Paris	20 68	cloudy
Prague	14 57	showers
Rhodes	26 79	sunny
Rome	26 79	sunny
San Francisco*	20 68	fair
Singapore	31 88	cloudy
Stockholm	16 61	cloudy
Sydney	12 54	rain
Toronto	21 70	fair
Vancouver*	19 66	sunny
Vienna	19 66	fair
Warsaw	18 64	fair

Puzzles

Double crossword

Letters to the editor

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THE POUND ABROAD

1.33 EURO

Major EU countries which have not yet adopted the Euro (all figures are indicative):

Czech Republic	34.98 KORUNAS
Denmark	9.92 KRONE
Hungary	391.67 FORINTS
Poland	5.13 ZLOTYS
Sweden	12.32 KRONA

REST OF THE WORLD

Australia	1.94 DOLLARS
Canada	1.85 DOLLARS
Egypt	10.72 POUNDS
Hong Kong	11.67 DOLLARS
Israel	5.47 SHEKELS
Japan	185.88 YEN
Mexico	21.66 PESOS
New Zealand	2.14 DOLLARS
Norway	11.78 KRONE
Saudi Arabia	5.56 RIYALS
Singapore	1.97 DOLLARS
South Africa	18.22 RAND
Switzerland	1.39 FRANCS
Thailand	47.74 BAHT
Turkey	4.06 NEW LIRA
USA	1.51 DOLLARS

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Weapon in war on windfarms

worked in renewable energy before retiring, stopped holidaying in Scotland due to the spread of windfarms.

As an adviser to a residents' group, he claims his local wind scheme - Cottonfarm - is "one of the noisiest in the world", based on data he gleaned by installing a £16,000 machine to measure the decibel output.

Residents there now want the equipment installed at every windfarm, at the owners' expense, as part of planning conditions.

Mr Gray said: "Developer data is never tested because it's always taken as being accurate."

"From a month's worth of monitoring they take a minute's worth of the lowest noise level to produce a figure."

"It's part of the smoke and mirrors of an illusion that allows them to build windfarms close to homes."

The Cottonfarm scheme

"The smoke and mirrors that allows them to build close to homes"

was taken over by a City of London investment group.

Spokesman Tom Rayner said: "Greencoat UK Wind has worked with the local environmental health officer to monitor noise levels and will continue to do so as required."

Mr Gray said his data had been taken on board by the local authorities in south Cambridgeshire and would allow people to use "accurate information" as a basis for legal action.

"We're gradually bringing the wind industry to account," he said.

"At the moment they can do what the hell they like.



AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE: Whitelee Windfarm on Eaglesham Moor, near East Kilbride, is the UK's largest onshore windfarm

Nobody can prove them wrong because the authorities aren't monitoring things."

Prominent Highland anti-windfarm campaigner Lyndsey Ward, from Beaulieu near Inverness, has visited Cambridge and Ireland to witness communities' monitoring of various

schemes. She said the move was prompted by plans tabled by ABO Wind for a turbine scheme at Allt Carach, south-west of Beaulieu.

She said: "The potential devastation on our lives from ABO Wind's proposed 25-turbine development has forced us to research

the noise issue in more depth.

"Our home would have the prevailing wind in direct line from the turbines. This is not just for us, but for others across Scotland."

"Sleep deprivation can lead to more serious illnesses. Why there's no legislation to compel develop-

ers to constantly monitor their operations beggars belief."

Tom Harrison, project manager with Inverness-based ABO Wind UK, said: "Allt Carach is still under investigation, therefore its planning submission is uncertain. We would always comply with any noise leg-

islation or planning condition set by the relevant planning authority.

"Should a community have concerns over noise, after consultation with that relevant community, a decision as to whether noise monitoring equipment is required would be considered."

On the plus side: Complaints 'will be investigated' and projects get 'rigorous' checks

Highland Council said last night it would investigate any complaints about noise levels at turbine developments.

An industry body insisted all projects were subjected to "rigorous" examination at the planning stage. A

spokesman for the local authority said: "We seek to ensure that noise levels at a particular house nearby any turbine does not exceed minimum levels."

"Where there is a complaint this is investigated and, if necessary, a resolution

sought to any breach of planning condition."

Joss Blamire, of trade body Scottish Renewables, said: "All wind energy projects in Scotland go through a rigorous planning process that assesses the noise impacts of developments. Only those with

acceptable impacts will be consented."

Huntingdon District Council in Cambridgeshire plans to measure noise levels at Cottonfarm Windfarm after receiving a flood of complaints from residents in surrounding villages. The decision

was prompted by evidence recorded by equipment installed by residents.

Locals argue the 413ft tall turbines were built too close to homes.

The sound of the turbines has been likened to that of an aircraft or helicopter in flight.

Pylon line project is 'crime against environment'

ELECTRICITY BY IAIN RAMAGE

Campaigners have claimed the controversial Beaulieu-Denny power line upgrade has destroyed some of Scotland's most beautiful scenery - to accommodate "green" electricity which does not exist.

They spoke out after En-

ergy Minister Fergus Ewing admitted SSE's 137-mile transmission line would not be at maximum capacity when fully on-stream in November.

Opponents claim it will be in less demand



Fergus Ewing

from next April now the UK Government has decided to end the system of subsidies to windfarms.

Prominent Highland anti-windfarm campaigner Lyndsey Ward said: "The pylon line is a

crime against the environment. If it is proven to be unnecessary, the Scottish Government need to stand up and admit they got the whole green energy thing catastrophically wrong."

The bill for the 600-kylon transmission line was initially estimated to be £330million, but has since almost doubled.

At Holyrood last week,

Mr Ewing said in a written answer to Liberal Democrat MSP Liam McArthur that the line was on track to become "fully energised" by November.

But he added: "It will not operate at its full capacity initially, as other circuits on the east coast will reach their full capacity before Beaulieu to Denny."

The Scottish Govern-

ment maintains that the power line upgrade was "essential for improved energy security and to facilitate the flow of renewable power from north to south".

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon is currently trying to convince the Westminster government that onshore windfarm subsidies should continue.

AVIATION

New planes set for lift-off

Two new planes will be used from this week to provide services from Glasgow to Campbelltown, Tiree and Barra.

The routes fall under the Scottish Government's public service obligation.

The Canadian-made 19-seater Twin Otter DHC6-400s arrived in Glasgow last month.

The aircraft was chosen because it is suited to a beach landing at Barra's iconic runway.

Transport minister Derek Mackay said: "I'm pleased to see that the aircraft are now ready to be deployed and start serving the communities that depend on them."

"The flights play a crucial role transporting people and goods, providing vital support for the service industries, fisheries and agriculture."

"I have no doubt the new aircraft will be welcomed"

"They will also help boost local tourism by enabling visitors to reach the islands and ensuring our public service obligation routes continue to be reliable and attractive to travellers."

He added: "The purchase of our own aircraft will encourage more competition for the next contract to operate the public service obligation routes."

"That contract has been enhanced, with more flights and better timings to offer local residents and businesses, as well as tourists, an improved service."

"The first set of enhancements comes into effect on the Tiree route at the start of next month."

"I have no doubt the new aircraft will be welcomed by the remote communities that rely on these services to keep them connected."