Dear Mr Lang

We are the Jackson Family (Aileen, William, Andrew and Brian) We have lived here for 28 years and always enjoyed excellent relations with our immediate neighbours and other landowners in the area until March 2010 when a Proven 35-2 (15m hub height, 15kw) turbine, the first of three granted planning permission, was erected by our neighbour 300m from our house, 600m from his own property.

Within days we realised we had a problem with noise every time the prevailing wind turned the turbine to face our house (depending on wind speed, it could sound like anything from a diesel engine ticking over to a helicopter or a washing machine on spin). The noise was clearly audible with the windows shut, particularly in two of our bedrooms, conservatory and bathroom. We were unable to sleep, causing us to move to other rooms in the house to gain respite from the noise. In warm weather, forced to keep our windows shut, we overheated. We informed our neighbours who agreed the noise was much worse than they had anticipated but unfortunately no help from them was forthcoming and in desperation we contacted Environmental Health which led to a deterioration in our previous excellent relationship.

Environmental Health were very sympathetic. Our EHO installed a **Matron to record the noise in our bedroom, made frequent visits to our home and confirmed the noise was audible in our house with our double glazed windows firmly shut. Unfortunately EH did not have the equipment or the expertise to confirm whether it was breaking the planning condition of 35dB or background +5db (whichever is the greater) but they were certain that it was.

East Renfrewshire Council put pressure on the Agents to commission noise testing, by refusing to accept any further applications for that particular type of turbine and 7 months after installation we were visited by a consultancy of noise experts (allegedly) on behalf of the turbine manufacturer. They tested for only 2 hours in the wrong location at the wrong time of day and tied a plastic carrier bag around the noise testing equipment. This rustled in the wind raising background noise levels and as a result they arrived at the conclusion that “the turbine made little or no noise”. Having taken pictures of the aforementioned “plastic bag” and consulted our own acoustician Dick Bowler regarding their methodology, he prepared a report which was sent to Environmental Health who refused to accept the outcome of the test. It took a further 4 months for the manufacturers of the turbine to commission another company to monitor the noise at our property. The consultant was only available to attend on four occasions, none of which being when the noise was at its worst. He concluded in his report that the noise was 4.4dB above background, 0.6dB below the condition (9 dB above background at low wind speeds when it did not quite reach the 35dB limit) and therefore although the two other turbines with planning consent could not be erected, this one would be allowed to remain.

We were distraught. Two members of the family were on medication and one moved out. As planning applications were resubmitted, there was a great increase in the number of objections as many local residents were now aware of the noise from this one erected turbine. It was at this time we began to experience some disturbing incidents ranging from vandalism to threats. We discovered that other objectors were suffering the same kind of treatment and as a result a number reluctantly gave up submitting objections as they feared for their family’s safety as well as the effect on their businesses/careers/friendships.

The flurry of applications were all refused again on noise grounds but after further resubmission with different, quieter models of turbines, repositioning and appeals, most were eventually consented. An appeal by neighbours against the refusal of planning permission
for three P35-2s, 500m from our house, which was refused by Councillors on noise grounds was allowed by a Reporter after a public hearing, despite us already suffering a noise nuisance, neighbours giving evidence that the one already erected beside our house could be heard at up to 1250m and the acoustic consultant who assessed the noise at our house admitting that the Matron in our bedroom failed to record, the data had been flawed by the noise from the cows in our neighbour’s cow sheds, he had not managed to attend to test the noise by turning the turbine on/off when the noise was at its worst despite my emails and texts and there was no accurate assessment of background noise at our property on which to base his conclusions! None of this had been mentioned in his report which had already been accepted by the Council. The Reporter informed us that he wished to hear the noise in our bedroom himself and that he would return on a day when the wind direction was favourable. He failed to return despite my phone call to DPEA. He concluded in his Decision that a further 2.5dB from the proposed development would not have a further adverse effect on our residential amenity.

We were left in a desperate situation where greatly against our will, we had no option but to take our neighbours to court to force the removal of the turbine which was causing us most problems. After seeking legal advice, we first of all approached our neighbours in an attempt to come to a compromise. After seeking advice themselves, they are cooperating with us and we are in the process of identifying an alternative site for the turbine which will be of benefit to us noise wise and not too costly for both ourselves and our neighbours.

Since the outcome of the appeal, landowners in the area have grown in confidence, with the certainty that even if their applications are refused by POs and Councillors, they will be allowed at Appeal. The number of applications has increased so dramatically that the local authority cannot cope. Landowners, not happy with one turbine are submitting applications for up to three at a time and singularly thereafter as this increases their chance of approval and lessens the likelihood of needing a full EIA assessment. With those already consented, there is no window in our house which will not have a view of turbines. More applications arrive on a weekly basis and shortly it will not just be Uplawmoor which disappears under turbines but the whole of East Renfrewshire as ERC has outlined 34.7% of ER's greenbelt for windfarm development. The rest of the greenbelt appears to be earmarked for vast housing developments in Newton Mearns.

Our once peaceful and happy family life has been destroyed, our health and financial situation has deteriorated and good neighbourly relationships are a thing of the past. It has split the community apart, putting strain on once firm friendships and dividing families and I see no respite from the misery inflicted upon us and other communities in similar positions.

Yours Sincerely

Aileen Jackson

** A matron is a noise nuisance measuring instrument that records sound but does not measure noise levels in decibels. It is used by Environmental Health to establish if there is a justified complaint.