Wind Politics Timeline (full)

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There are a number of different strands in this story. It serves as the source document for the blog ‘Killing the Wind of England’ (see also slides at the blog and the doc Some Political Actors in the Anti-wind Campaign).

* state of the wind industry
* Conservative-UKIP politics
* activities of the political anti-wind players (Chris Heaton-Harris et al)
* the state of public opinion
* government renewable energy policies
* activities of pro and anti wind groups

1988

20 September

Margaret Thatcher UK Prime Minister delivers a speech in Bruges in which she speaks against the possible development of the EEC (later = EU) as a “European Super-state exercising a new dominance from Brussels”. Although intended not to facilitate Britain’s exit from the EU but to limit EU ambitions, her speech becomes the template for a generation of UK Eurosceptic Conservatives.

27 September

UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher gives a speech to the Royal Society in London in which she declared “it is possible that with all these enormous changes (population, agricultural, use of fossil fuels) concentrated into such a short period of time, we have unwittingly begun a massive experiment with the system of this planet itself”.

Thatcher warns of “a global heat trap which could lead to climatic instability” and says “it is noteworthy that the five warmest years in a century of records have all been in the 1980s”.

1989

November 8

Thatcher addresses the UN General Assembly in New York and calls for ‘a framework convention on climate change’ with ‘binding protocols’ modelled on the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol on protection of the ozone layer. ‘ready by the time the World Conference on Environment and Development meets in 1992’. She says the task is “pressing”, we are “adding greenhouse gases to the air at an unprecedented rate” from fossil fuels and forest destruction. We need “new technologies to clean up the environment” and “non-fossil fuel sources” of energy.

1990

The Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research is opened in Exeter by Margaret Thatcher.
The UK government introduces the NFFO the ‘Non Fossil Fuel Obligation’, funded by a by the Fossil Fuel Levy, in effect a tax on non-renewable electricity production, transferred to fund renewables (originally only intended to subsidise nuclear, favoured by Thatcher).

28 November

Thatcher resigns after pressure from within her Cabinet, partly over her opposition to monetary ties with Europe, and is replaced by John Major.

1991

The first commercial onshore UK wind farm is built at Dellabole in Cornwall.

1992

June

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is agreed at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro

John Major’s Conservative government announces a ‘Fuel Price Escalator’, explicitly in response to climate change.

1993

March

In his Budget, Chancellor Norman Lamont states the intention of the Fuel Price Escalator is to cut CO2 emissions from road transport and incentivize motorists to buy fuel efficient cars. He pledges to raise the duty (tax on fuel) by 3% above inflation every year in real terms.

1996

The EU Council of Ministers adopt a target to limit climate change to 2°C [which for Britain is calculated in 2000 to require a 60% cut in greenhouse gases by 2050].

1997

May 1

Tony Blair wins the General Election for Labour, deafeating John Major.

1999

May 1

In the European Elections, Chris Heaton-Harris becomes a MEP for the East Midlands. It is the first EP election in the UK to use Proportional Representation and UKIP and the Greens win their first seats.
Martin Callanan, Roger Helmer and Daniel Hannan are also elected. All are Eurosceptic Conservatives. Helmer and Heaton-Harris shared an office in the East Midlands and employed Sally McNamara as a press officer. She moves with them to Brussels and then to the US to work for the right-wing lobby group ALEC, at whose conferences subsequently attended by all four MEPs. McNamara becomes ALEC’s International Relations Project Director, as well as a columnist for The Bruges Group.

2000

January

Labour Trade and Industry Minister Helen Lidell sets Britain’s first targets for renewable energy: 5% of by the end of 2003 and 10% by 2010 ‘subject to the cost to consumers being acceptable’.

2001


Chris Heaton-Harris MEP meets climate sceptic Bjørn Lomborg [date unknown] – he will recall in 2016 “I was a bit of a “greenie” when I was first elected to the European Parliament back in 1999 … In 2001, though, I met a young gentleman called Bjørn Lomborg [professional climate sceptic], and my journey to the light side has continued since then”

2002

The Renewable Obligation and Renewable Obligation Certificates (ROCs) replace the NFFO. The RO will require suppliers of electricity to end consumers to meet a set amount from eligible renewables sources, a proportion that will increase each year until 2015 from a 3% requirement in 2002-2003, via 10.4% in 2010-2012 up to 15.4% by 2015-2016.

2003

February the Energy Review White Paper ups the renewables target to 10% of electricity generation by 2010 and 20% by 2020

2004

During 2004, the UK becomes a net importer of gas.

August 10

The government publishes Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy, providing guidance to planning authorities on assessing renewable energy potential, setting regional targets and formulating policy.

September

Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) are introduced to replace Structure Plans and Regional Planning Guidance, and to inform Local Development Frameworks. These will impact wind energy because
they are used to identify ‘capacity’ for renewable energy projects such as wind farms. They bridge the gap between national priorities and local planning decisions on issues such as housing provision. Regional planning bodies and local planning authorities are asked to identify minimum capacities for renewable energy, and not to make assumptions about the technical and commercial feasibility (eg on wind speeds), and review and revise them upwards. In reality it becomes accepted practice to set targets at 20% of its own electrical consumption. [RSS will be abolished by the Coalition Conservative-LibDem government in 2010].

November

[dead link to November 2004 ALEC Newsletter from VLTP - ALEC and the Tories: A History (Part 1) – ALEC in Great Britain]

‘2004 – Senator William G. Hewes III, ALEC National Chairman

Just as the White House and Congress gear up for their new electoral cycles, Europe is also at the start of a new 5 year phase. The new enlarged European Parliament is just finding its feet following June’s Europe-wide elections and she has already shown signs that she will fully flex her institutional muscles when needed. Soon the new European Commission of 25 will also take up a fresh term, with a new set of priorities and challenges.

One of the biggest challenges facing Europe is surely its very direction. The new Constitutional Treaty currently undergoing ratification in Member States is by no means a shoe-in and the EU will spend much of the next 18 months trying to establish its exact place on the world stage. Perhaps this is why EU-US relations have become schizophrenic of late. At times Europe and America have acted in complete harmony and presented a united front; At other times, our relationship has been overtly fractious. That is where legislators have a key role to play – in bringing forward a relationship based on co-operation and trust.

ALEC’s EU project is now well under way and we’ve found friends in the conservative delegations of Britain, Hungary and the Czech Republic. We hope to extend this further and establish an on-going dialogue with conservatives across the European Union.

Indeed, the new European Commission is also showing very welcome signs of pragmatism and collaboration. The EU’s incoming Commissioner for External Relations, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, says she wants a determined and decisive multilateral effort to fight international terrorism. She has also stressed that the EU must now show support for the broader political process in Iraq. This common-sense approach to the international scene is to be welcomed as a positive sign of things to come.

ALEC will welcome three MEPs to its States and Nations Policy Summit in Washington D.C. this December to discuss the latest aspects of the transatlantic relationship. We also hope to build a firm bridge across the Atlantic for our shared conservative ideas and I know that everyone at ALEC will do their best to welcome our European guests.’

VLTP comments: ‘Note this phrase: ‘a firm bridge across the Atlantic’. In a future article the ‘Atlantic bridge’ will be discussed further’.

December 1
Subsequent VLTP research shows that Roger Helmer is one of three Conservative MEPs invited [with Chris Heaton-Harris and Martin Callanan] to Washington DC to address a ‘Summit’ of the right-wing lobby group the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), as part of its ‘EU Program’.

Helmer gives a speech which makes clear he has previous involvement with ALEC and urges US-MEP collaboration to prevent ratification of the EU Constitution. (Such ALEC conferences are not public access events).

‘Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As always, it’s a huge pleasure for me, and my colleagues Chris Heaton-Harris and Martin Callanan, to be here with you at another ALEC Conference. I’d like especially to thank Duane Parde, and his fellow officers at ALEC, for the invitation, and I’d also like to thank ALEC staffer Sally McNamara for organising our programme. Sally previously spent five years working for Chris Heaton-Harris and me in the UK and Brussels, before coming to Washington ....

... it is crucial to maintain and strengthen links between conservative politicians and thinkers on both sides of the water. I believe that ALEC has a vital role to play in this dialogue, and this is why it is such a great pleasure, and privilege, for me and my colleagues to be here with you today....

... we always look forward to events organised by the American Chamber, which has a high reputation over there. Indeed I sometimes think they know more about what’s going on in the EU institutions than we do!

On Nov 17th we were guests at the American Chamber dinner in Strasbourg, where David Cote, the CEO of Honeywell, was the keynote speaker ....

My advice, which I have offered whenever I have been this side of the water, is that the US should know its friends in Europe, and work with them country-by-country, rather than seeking to deal with the EU as a single entity. I am delighted to see that this view is catching on in Washington, and I particularly commend the Heritage Foundation briefing paper of October 2004 by John C. Hulsman and Nile Gardiner, entitled “A Conservative Vision for US Policy Toward Europe”, which takes exactly this position.

I and my colleagues are convinced that the EU Constitution is a profound threat to the prosperity, the democracy and increasingly to the security of our country. But we also to believe that an assertive, unified, Constitution-based EU is not in America’s best interest either.

Our great task for the next couple of years is to campaign in the UK against ratification of the EU Constitution. We think we can win this battle, and we would be hugely encouraged to have your moral support in our campaign. Thank you’

December 3

It is Chris Heaton-Harris’s turn to give a speech to ALEC, (2004 States and Nation Policy Summit, Washington DC) in which he pronounces himself a ‘true believer’, scorns regulation such as smoking bans and declares that Europe needs an organisation modelled on ALEC.

‘Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Before I start may I just say thank you to ALEC for inviting me to this excellent conference. It is a great privilege for me to be here...

...Now, I can’t claim to be an ALEC member or alumni; in fact it was only a couple of years ago that I was introduced to this organisation and Jeffersonian principles. In the UK I’m pretty well known for my Conservative views – it seems to me that no matter where you are true Conservative will always stand for the same things:

- To limit government
- For lower taxes
- For free trade and open markets
- Individual freedom
- Showing respect and taking personal responsibility.

But I didn’t know these core values as Jeffersonian principles – to me these were Thatcherisms...

...And there’s worse yet to come... many of you will have heard of the European Constitution – and just by its name you might think, well this is a good thing.

But whereas your Constitution is a truly enduring historical document based on life, liberty and limiting government; ours is a socialist manifesto.

Let me list some things it calls “fundamental rights”:

- The freedom to form trade unions.
- The right to collective bargaining and action.
- The freedom to choose an occupation. (I want to be an astronaut and I’ll sue you if you don’t let me be one!)
- The right to have fair and just working conditions.
- The right to reconcile family and professional life.

And these rights will all be interpreted by our version of your Supreme Court – the EU’s Court of Justice....

... But why should you all care about what’s happening over in Europe? Surely, if Europe’s economy goes downhill it won’t effect America.

Well do remember that the EU is one of the biggest markets for American produced goods.

And also remember what Ronald Reagan once said in one of his radio commentaries back in the 70’s: “we should always be wary and watch out for government’s communications grapevine. When one set of jungle drums is pounded by a group of bureaucrats” he said “another group of bureaucrats will be listening.”
That’s how regulation spreads: from you to us, like smoking bans, or from us to you! And trust me – those jungle drums are beating hard and fast in Europe.

To me the solution to all these problems I’ve outlined seems obvious – Europe needs Jeffersonian principles/Thatcherisms.

In fact we must really start by helping Europe’s Conservatives remember what being a Conservative is all about – and to do that I believe we need a role model.

And actually I think we have a ready-made role model here today in ALEC and all of you.

You understand what Jeffersonian principles are all about and you deliver policy that makes them work and improves peoples’ lives.

But alas, in Europe, we have no organisation like ALEC – and we really need one.

That is why I am so glad you have started your international program – that will help us true believers out there fight the good fight.

Over the past couple of years it has been really tough being a Conservative in Europe. Coming here this week has been like taking a bottle of political Viagra – I feel completely re-energised! ...

[from VLTP – dead link at ALEC – December 2004 newsletter]

ALEC’s 2005 National Chairman Representative Earl Ehrhart writes:

‘Having been recently appointed ALEC National Chairman, I am delighted to see our international relations project now moving full steam ahead. I have asked my immediate predecessor as National Chairman, Senator Billy Hewes, to Chair the ALEC Board of Director’s Committee on International Relations, while Ken Lane of DIAGEO will co-chair in a private sector capacity ... we have a strong a team to lead from the front & move forward with our international coalition-building.

Anyone who attended our States and Nation Policy Summit in Washington this month knows just how important it is to have friends across the Atlantic. Chris Heaton-Harris MEP delivered a remarkable speech, which directly addressed our principles. He asked for our help and mutual support – and ALEC is delighted to offer it. Not least because the threats posed by the European Constitution can easily be transported over here – the threats to free trade, free markets and individual liberty.

These debates about the future of Europe & its international status are increasingly relevant to America and to our companies who operate inside the EU. That is why I am so happy to see ALEC taking the lead in shaping the policy debate for the future of transatlantic relations.’

2005

January 31

The Government publishes ‘Delivering Sustainable Development - Planning Policy Statement 1’ (PPS1) which sets out its overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system (including regarding wind energy). A supplement on climate change follows in 2007.
February 1 - 3

An international conference at the Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research Exeter
*Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change* concludes more drastic action is needed to cut emissions.

March 1

The FT diary *Observer-US* writes:

... ‘the Tory H-Block, Roger Helmer and Chris Heaton-Harris. They and honorary member Martin Callanan were spied recently at Grover Norqvist’s Wednesday morning neocon love-in at the Club for Growth by the political monthly Prospect’.

Also from 2005 about ALEC’s European activities (see):

LA State Senator Noble Ellington, ALEC Board of Directors writes:

*Brussels has previously been marked by its very lack of free market think tanks, and its proliferation of EU funded “groups” … [mostly] leftist organizations … But it seems that the conservatives are fighting back. On my recent trip to Brussels with ALEC, I attended a conference entitled Does the West Know Best, organized by The Stockholm Network. SN is a network of 120 market-oriented think tanks, working with Europe’s brightest policymakers and thinkers. Does the West Know Best examined the new EU member states’ more radical approaches to social and economic reform, such as flat taxation, the privatization of social security and moves towards more market-oriented health systems … [references Poland, Croatia and Estonia]*

‘Free market think tanks are now converging on Brussels, either directly or indirectly. The Center for New Europe, a non-profit, pro-market research foundation is headquartered in Brussels, popping up everywhere with its well-researched publications and arguments; SN’s Europe-wide network is rapidly developing into a formal arrangement of academics, policy practitioners, journalists and business people, exchanging market-oriented policy ideas and reform strategies right across the EU. The conservatives are seemingly back in Brussels. Lets hope for good.’

In ‘ALEC NEWS’ ‘Sally McNamara has been invited as a regular columnist for the London-based think tank, The Bruges Group. The Bruges Group is an independent all-party [exclusively Conservative Party] think tank, founded in February 1989 with the vision of a free trading, decentralized, deregulated and democratic Europe of nation-states’.

‘ALEC was privileged to host five conservative legislators from the European Parliament at a roundtable discussion on June 27th. Martin Callanan, Chris Heaton-Harris, Roger Helmer, Dan Hannan and Michal Tomasz Kaminski MEPs briefed ALEC members on a range of topics, including REACH, the draft European Constitution and the precautionary principle’.

‘ALEC’s Executive Director, Duane Parde, was invited to visit London last month in order to attend a gala dinner in honor of former Prime Minister, Lady Margaret Thatcher. At the personal invitation of British Conservative MEP Chris Heaton-Harris, Mr. Parde met Mrs. Thatcher’.

‘ALEC’s International Relations Project Director, Sally McNamara, attended the Heritage Foundation’s conference “Is the European Union in the Interests of the United States?” Speakers included Christopher Booker (journalist and editor, UK Daily Telegraph), Judge Robert H. Bork
(Distinguished Fellow, Hudson Institute and The Rt. Hon David Heathcoat-Amory MP (British parliamentarian). [Conservative Party, naturally])

‘ALEC’s Adam Smith Scholar Roger Helmer MEP produces a monthly e-update on his parliamentary activities, entitled Straight Talking on Europe’.

ALEC was delighted to welcome Czech Republic MEP, Dr. Ivo Strejcek to its 32nd Annual Meeting in Grapevine, Texas ... Dr. Strejcek spoke about the importance of the Transatlantic Relationship ... Christopher Horner, of the European Enterprise Institute, then spoke about the precautionary principle and the EU’s attempts to make it the international standard’.

As part of its International Relations Project, ALEC took a group of legislators and private sector members to Strasbourg and Prague ... we were hosted at both the European Parliament and the U.S. Consulate General; In Prague, we were hosted at the Czech Parliament, Senate and the American Embassy’...

‘ALEC was privileged to attend the Autumn Strategy Meeting of the Transatlantic Policy Network in Washington D.C. this month. Entitled “The United States and the European Union: Working Together to Solve Global challenges”, TPN is a non-governmental, public-private network working for a stable, strong transatlantic partnership. Hosted at the Capitol, successful sessions were held on financial services, the digital economy and intellectual property rights’.

SALLY MCNAMARA, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PROJECT DIRECTOR

‘As part of its annual exchange visits with European legislators, a bi-partisan, high-level ALEC delegation visited Strasbourg, France and Prague, Czech Republic last month.

‘Meeting in Strasbourg during the plenary session of the European Parliament, ALEC met with 20 European legislators, from several EU Member States and, in keeping with our non partisan philosophy, from differing Parliamentary parties. During this session, we were particularly proud to welcome Roger Helmer MEP as the first member of our new for international legislators membership program’.

‘ALEC’s Prague program was equally as exciting. It began with a series of meetings with representatives from the ODS Party, the Czech Republic’s conservative party and major opposition to the current left-wing government ...’

... The ultimate mission of the international relations project is: “To foster a policy-based program for the promotion, exchange, and implementation of Jeffersonian principles at the international level.” ... ALEC’s international visit successfully continues ... establishing new working relationships throughout the international policy community’.

DUANE PARDE – ALEC’s Executive Director

‘... I visited London for the second time this June, to meet with conservative legislators from both Westminster and Brussels. Newly elected Conservative Party MPs Robert Goodwill and Peter Bone both talked about the domestic policy scene in England ... in the absence of any sort of ALEC model, they often have trouble benchmarking conservative policies or sharing information. Chris Heaton-Harris MEP, who stood for local election several times before entering the European Parliament, believes that ALEC’s formula of sharing model legislation and meeting on a consistent basis to share best practice is one that British Conservatives should now start to imitate.’
‘I also met with several British MEPs in London, including Michal Tomasz Kaminski (Poland) and Roger Helmer (UK and ALEC’s Adam Smith Scholar) ... Michal Kaminski talked extensively about how well organized the left is ... he too is keen to use the ALEC model to bring international leadership to the conservative movement’.

‘The highlight of the trip though had to be a gala dinner hosted in honor of former Prime Minister, Lady Margaret Thatcher. Despite turning 80 this October, [13 October 2005]’

‘My visit to London highlighted to me that this alliance is one that we conservatives must fight to preserve. ALEC’s model of sharing information and promoting policies rooted firmly in our Jeffersonian principles is surely the best place to start then.’

April

Friends of the Earth (FoE) launch a campaign ‘The Big Ask’, calling for a new law binding government to make annual cuts in ‘carbon’ emissions causing climate change.

412 MPs sign an Early Day Motion calling for a Climate Change Bill to be introduced, including a requirement for 3% annual cuts in carbon emissions.

April 20

The Guardian reports that a proposed Lake District wind farm at Winash between Borrowdale and Bretherdale and close to the M6 had ‘split the green lobby’, with Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace supporting it and opposition from landscape preservation groups like the Campaign To Protect Rural England (CPRE) and the Council For National Parks, together with No Whinash Wind Farm protest group, three local councils and the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales national park authorities.

May 5

Labour’s Tony Blair wins his third General Election.

October 18

In a Conservative leadership election campaign, all candidates vye to attract votes of Eurosceptic MPs. In hustings, David Cameron agrees ‘with Eurosceptic calls to withdraw Tory MEPs from the “federalist” European People's Party [EPP] grouping in Strasbourg - a symbolic issue for the Right’.

December 6

David Cameron becomes the new Conservative leader. He takes the party in a more socially liberal direction, and courting NGOs such as Oxfam and FoE. The party’s logo is changed to a green tree.

2006

January 25

David Hanley, professor of European studies at the University of Cardiff writes in POLITICO that ‘Tories of all shades remain very frightened of UKIP, especially younger candidates who have confronted it
and had to explain why Tory policy on Europe is less red-blooded’ but he questions why Cameron promised in the Conservative leadership election campaign to pull the party out of the European Parliament EPP-ED group of mainstream conservative politicians, the dominant group in the EP.

He says ‘Certainly the Tory right has to be appeased with some symbolic gesture’ ... ‘But one can make a point without leaving the EPP. Rational choice theory sees political actors as single-minded pursuers of their interests above all else. But this pre-supposes that the actors know what their interests are’.

February 4

*The Economist* reports that Conservative right-winger Norman Tebbit as saying David Cameron is "intent on purging even the memory of Thatcherism before building a New Modern Compassionate Green Globally Aware Party".

March 3

The proposed 27-turbine Winash Wind Farm in the Lake District is rejected by Kendal Council. Supported by Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace, the BBC reports it was opposed by ‘Cumbria Tourist Board, all the local councils and several organisations representing local people - groups like the No Whinash Windfarm committee and the Friends of Bretherdale’. The Conservative MP David MacLean argued that such 'industrialisation' of the landscape would damage tourism and ‘turn away nearly four-million visitors and cost more than 6,000 jobs’.

April 18

David Cameron uses the slogan “vote blue, go green” in his Local Election campaign. He says "We've got to have green growth" and reveals he is having a wind turbine installed on his London house roof.

April 20

David Cameron visits the Arctic island of Svalbard with a husky dog sled, to inspect a glacier affected by climate change. The trip is arranged by WWF.

September 1

David Cameron (in opposition) joins a FoE platform to call for a Climate Change Bill to be included in the Queens Speech.

September 15

The Conservatives replace their traditional red white and blue ‘torch of freedom’ logo with a green tree. "It’s a strong image, and of course the green in it reinforces what David Cameron is trying to communicate in terms of a more environmentally-friendly party," Tim Montgomerie says on BBC Radio 4’s Today programme.

October

David Miliband, Labour Environment Secretary signals that the government will include a Climate Change Bill in the Queens Speech.
Roger Helmer (then a Conservative MEP) writes in an article in the ‘European Journal’ published by the Eurosceptic European Foundation: ‘Several years ago I was privileged to meet Bjorn Lomborg, who came to the world’s attention as ‘The Sceptical Environmentalist’ (His website is www.lomborg.com). Starting out as a green, he set out to debunk the work of climate change sceptics – and managed to convince himself that he’d been wrong, and that they were right’. Asking ‘Is global warming all bad?’ he says ‘We could be growing grapes in Scotland again’ and ‘If sea level rises, it would certainly be cheaper to relocate the population of the Maldives than to implement the sort of emissions reductions that are proposed’.

[Chris Heaton-Harris also says (2016) his climate scepticism began with meeting Lomborg (in 2001).]

The Desmog website states (2019): The European Foundation is a high-profile Eurosceptic think tank. The group is known for publishing a 2009 report entitled “100 reasons why global warming is natural” which argues there is no proof that human influence has anything to do with climate change. The report was published around the time of the Copenhagen climate summit. Members of the group’s advisory board include Richard Smith, owner of 55 Tufton Street, Matthew Elliott, Owen Paterson, former environment secretary and Chairman of UK2020, another organisation based at 55 Tufton Street.

March

The IPCC Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change publishes the fourth report of its Working Group 1 on the physical basis of climate change. It states that “warming of the climate system is unequivocal”, and "most of the observed increase in global average temperatures since the mid-20th century is very likely due to the observed increase in anthropogenic greenhouse gas concentrations."

March 21

A wind turbine is installed on the roof of David Cameron’s home in London.

August 8

George Jones, Political editor of the Daily Telegraph reports that ‘The Tories green oak tree logo has turned a more traditional shade of blue as an embattled David Cameron seeks to reassure Conservative activists that he is not abandoning the party's core values ... The blue-sky version of the logo was unveiled earlier this week when William Hague, the party's foreign affairs spokesman, published a "plain English guide" to the new EU treaty [Lisbon Treaty – opposed over sovereignty issues] and promised that the Tories would mount a vigorous campaign for a referendum’.

He adds ‘the colour change comes after Mr Cameron has endured the worst spell of his 20-month leadership, with a series of attacks by traditionalists on his leadership style, polls showing him falling behind Labour and setbacks in two recent by-elections. The "vote blue, go green" oak tree logo has been one of the most visible demonstrations of Mr Cameron's attempts to move the party back to the centre ground and show voters that it is no longer the "nasty party"’.

October 24
**A press release by ALEC announces:**

“Washington, DC-The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) is pleased to announce the launch of The Atlantic Bridge Project as the latest component of its International Relations Program. The project aims to foster positive relationships between conservatives on both sides of the Atlantic, so that they may further the ideals exemplified by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. ALEC is proud to launch this project in conjunction with the Atlantic Bridge Group, a non-profit organization chaired by the British Conservative Shadow Minister for Defense, Liam Fox MP”.

**December 10**

The BBC reports plans by Labour Government of Gordon Brown for a major expansion of offshore wind farms. Business Secretary John Hutton says ‘the government hopes that it could provide around 33 gigawatts by 2020, which would mean introducing some 7,000 turbines’. The BBC says wind ‘could power all UK homes’ by 2020. ‘Greenpeace executive director John Sauven said the plans amount to a "wind energy revolution" but stressed that premium prices needed to be guaranteed for clean electricity.’

**2008**

**January**

The EU publishes the ‘20 20 2020’ package. *This includes proposals* for reducing the EU’s greenhouse gas emissions by 20% and increasing its proportion of final energy consumption from renewable sources to 20%. Both of these targets are to be achieved by 2020. In order to meet the EU renewable energy target each Member State will be given a national target to meet based on their existing renewable generation, their GDP and a flat-rate increase for all. The UK’s proposed target is 15%.

**Feed in Tariffs** (FiTs) are introduced and give payments to smaller scale renewable electricity generation

**February**

Energy company Eon proposes building a wind farm near the villages of Kelmarsh, Maidwell and Naseby in Northamptonshire. [Chris Heaton Harris later publishes a book *Fighting the Kelmarsh Wind Farm* Bretwalda Books, 2012.]

**August 28**

Chris Heaton-Harris MEP publishes a ‘Rough Guide’ to the 2009 EU budget. Among his many targets are NGOs. Funding of NGOs by the EU Commission is ‘dodgy’: ‘It consults, amongst others, with NGOs it funds and has a relationship with. The Commission takes the advice of the NGOs and then decides to run a project that it puts out to tender. The NGOs the Commission consulted with bid and perhaps win the contract.’

The problematic organisations include ‘CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK EUROPE, environmental policy lobbyists’ and ‘EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU, environmental lobbyists’, along with ‘COALITION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT, a lobby group whose aim is to persuade world governments (particularly the USA) to recognise the ICC’.
June 8

At the Second Reading of the Climate Change Bill just four MPs vote against it, one of whom is Peter Lilley.

June 26

The Government’s draft Renewable Energy Strategy is published for consultation. It seeks views on how to drive up the use of renewable energy in the UK, as part of its overall strategy for tackling climate change and to meeting the UK’s share of the EU target to source 20% of the EU’s energy from renewable sources by 2020. It suggests extending and raising the level of the renewables obligation to encourage up to 30-35% of our electricity to come from renewable sources by 2020.

September 18

The Northampton Chronicle and Echo and Brixworth Bulletin report on a proposed Wind Farm at Lodge Farm: ‘East Midlands MEP, Chris Heaton-Harris urged the audience to write to their MP, the Lodge Farm land owners and Bolsterstone to register their opposition against the scheme’.

October 24

A House of Lords Committee considering the EU’s 20% target for renewables recommends that ‘the Government should apply the provisions of the Electricity Act 1989 to all renewable generation projects with a capacity above 20MW to give planning consent power to the Government’ because ‘a significant barrier to achieving the UK’s renewables target is the planning system’. The Committee heard that ‘95% of applications were initially rejected by planning committees’.

November 26

The 2008 Climate Change Act receives the Royal Assent and becomes law. It mandate an 80% cut overall in six greenhouse gases by 2050 on 1990 levels, and sets up the Committee on Climate Change. The Committee is an independent non departmental public body which advises the government on setting carbon reduction budgets and reports to devolved Parliaments on progress. On the advice of the Committee the 2050 target is later raised to 80%. The Act is welcomed by the Confederation of British Industries and has huge support from NGOs and church groups. UKIP opposes the Act which otherwise has cross party support.

2009

June 3

During the campaign for the European Elections to be held in the UK on June 4, the “Taxpayers’ Alliance” publishes its analysis of the performance of MEPs. Chris Heaton-Harris is named as being the MEP on mainland UK that was the most “hard-working, committed to transparency and accountability” (later recorded at Chris Heaton-Harris’s party website).

Full Taxpayers Alliance report here. Heaton Harris ranks 2nd overall followed by Daniel Hannan 3rd and Roger Helmer 4th. The rankings derive from votes and participation in EP activities which the ‘Taxpayers Alliance’ regard as ‘in the interests of taxpayers’ and have a strongly Euro-sceptic slant. They include rewarding MEPs for voting against spending funds on educating school children about the EU.
June 4

The UK European Elections see UKIP make a significant advance. Wikipedia records that: it came ‘second in a major election for the first time in its history, level with Labour in terms of seats but ahead of them in terms of votes. This was the first time in British electoral history that a party in government had been outpolled in a national election by a party with no representation in the House of Commons’.

The UK introduces proportional representation for these elections, and elects 72 MEPs in twelve multi-member constituencies under a closed-list party list system with Single Transferable Vote in Northern Ireland.

The Conservative vote increased 1% and UKIP 0.4% while Labour’s falls 6.6% but UKIP’s seat allocation equals Labour’s (down 5) at 13 MEPs.

[UKIP won one seat in the EP in the 1999 elections, 3 in 1999, 12 in 2004, and after winning 13 in 2009 went on to win 24 in 2014 (with 27.5% of the vote). In domestic UK elections under first-past-the-post, it only ever won a single seat (in 2015 when it had 12.6% of the vote).]

June 22

The ECR – European Conservatives and Reformists – group is set up in the European Parliament as promised by David Cameron in 2005. This takes the British Conservatives out of the mainstream EPP-ED. It is Eurosceptic and anti-federalist. It is the third largest group, becoming fourth largest after the 2014 EP Elections.

July

An Arup report for DCLG ‘Renewable Energy Capacity in Regional Spatial Strategies’ confirms that growth in renewable generation capacity will need to be increased tenfold if the UK is to meet its EU target. To achieve an all England 20% (or even 35%) result, some regions will need to do more than that because others are constrained (eg by landscape planning restrictions).

October 3

Blogger Stephen Newton posts about how arrangements between Atlantic Bridge Inc initiated by ALEC and the UK Atlantic Bridge charity started by Liam Fox are being used to enable senior Conservatives to fund flights to meetings across the Atlantic, exploiting opportunities on tax.

‘When events occur in America, expenses are paid by the Atlantic Bridge Inc (US), run by Scott Syfert. If a British citizen wishes to attend an event in the US... the UK charity will accept the donations on behalf of Atlantic Bridge Inc.’

– Atlantic Bridge Trustees Report & Financial Statement

In a later post Newton suggests this is the ‘confidence trick’ described an aside to the Sunday Telegraph as a ‘shell-game’ by Atlantic Bridge CEO Amanda Bowman as a ‘shell game’.

July 15

The government publishes its Low Carbon Transition Plan (arising from the Climate Change Act) on how it will meet its binding carbon budget of an 18% cut in emissions on 2008 levels by 2020 (34%
Along with numerous other measures, it envisages renewables supplying about 30% of electricity by 2020 through an increased requirement for electricity suppliers to use renewably generated power. This requires about a five fold increase in capacity.

November 2

New Energy Update reports that Peter Luff, the Conservative MP for Mid-Worcestershire introduce an ‘Onshore Wind Turbines (Proximity of Habitation) Bill in the House of Commons, which receives a first reading. According to New Energy Update Luff ‘has been working with residents on the proposed Lenches/Bishampton wind farm in his constituency’ and Luff ‘says the objective is to raise the aesthetic and environmental concerns associated with large wind turbines when they are located too close to homes’.

Update adds that Luff ‘states that the Government policy on this issue is vague, giving little protection to local communities who have legitimate objections to the building of these turbines in their area. The companies appear to comply with a voluntary 500m “buffer zone” but this has no legal force’.

Luff had originally suggested a 1km buffer zone but ‘following engagement with local residents’ proposes ‘smaller turbines should be at least 0.5 of a mile from residential areas; medium sized turbines a mile; and large turbines 1.5 miles from inhabited areas’.

November 3

Luff’s Bill is introduced under Standing Order No. 23 – Ten Minute Rule Bill - as Onshore Wind Turbines (Proximity of Habitation). He stresses (Hansard) ‘that this is a bipartisan proposal’ and that ‘at this late stage in the Session the Bill has no chance of becoming law. I introduce it simply to stimulate an important debate, plus ‘the Bill is deliberately modest and ‘settling the issue would help local communities, planning authorities and, paradoxically, the wind energy industry itself’.

Luff describes how his Bill began life when he visited the home of two of his constituents in the vale of Evesham where Scottish Power Renewables planned to erect a 125-metre turbine 508m from their home and “I realised that I would not like that done to me”.

The MP says such turbines “would not be allowed in a similar location in Germany, or in large areas of Spain and Italy. Denmark is one of the most successful countries in the development of onshore wind power—and I understand that if Danish rules applied, the turbines in my constituency could be built, but many householders would become liable for compensation for loss of property value’.

He adds: ‘My Bill has extraordinary levels of support around the country. Communities from the west country to Cumbria, from Gloucestershire to Derbyshire, from County Durham to East Anglia, and of course from Worcestershire, have bombarded me, and their own MPs, with e-mails’.

Luff tells the ‘Commons that ‘the Bill is not a covert attack on any renewable energy technology, nor does it have its roots in any doubts about the causes and consequences of global warming. I am convinced by the consensus that human activity has at least added significantly to the scale of climate change, and has been the major driver of it’.

‘We must now invest in every available renewable technology and see which will work best for us in the future. That includes onshore wind turbines, but only in the right places.”
He goes on to talk about noise and ‘flicker’. He suggests “specifying set-back distances from turbines in proportion to their total height”. He says:

“I have heard the simplistic objection that my Bill is intended to kill onshore wind development in England. That argument is an Aunt Sally, and is simply untrue. Indeed, by being much clearer about an important aspect of planning requirements, my Bill would enable developers to bring forward proposals for more appropriate locations with much greater confidence ... arguments about distance and local acceptability could be dealt with more objectively and speedily ... Currently, only around a quarter of all onshore wind farm applications succeed. That proportion could increase significantly if there were clear guidelines”.

Martin Horwood (Cheltenham) (LD) opposes the Bill in a personal capacity as an environmentalist as is the requirement with ten-minute Bills and argues that it “would in fact achieve the perverse result of increasing the pressure on rural areas, including areas of outstanding natural beauty and national parks, to accept wind turbines that local people oppose”. He gives the example of a small turbine about to be built at Springfield park, “in the Springbank area of my constituency” which will follow the good example of Danish wind energy by being owned by a community organisation”. It will support regeneration and cut the electricity bill of the community group.

The argues that “because it is about 60 metres from the nearest dwelling ... the Bill would kill that project”. He continues “No part of Springfield park is less than 800 metres from a dwelling; in fact, I think that we would be pushed to find any part of my constituency that is”.

**November 4**

To an outcry from angry Eurosceptics, David Cameron announces that his ‘campaign’ in Europe for a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty is over, as the other 27 countries have ratified it. Patrick O’Flynn MEP (UKIP then SDP) subsequently writes that this was the moment when the Conservative party lost ‘its effective monopoly over Eurosceptic politics’, and Cameron realised he must ‘refresh’ the political mandate for being in the EU.

**November 18**

Roger Helmer MEP convenes a conference of well-known climate-sceptics at the European Parliament, including Fred Singer and James Delingpole.

**2010**

**April 29**

The Conservatives promote onshore wind and aim to form ‘the greenest government ever’.

Nicholas Schoon, editor of ENDS the environmental intelligence magazine, analyses the manifestoes of the parties for the forthcoming general election. He writes: ‘The media and most voters may not notice, but in this election the main political parties are making more green promises than ever. Never has the environment featured so strongly ... Whole chapters are devoted to it’.

As part of the move to ‘de-toxify’ the Conservative brand, which also included replacing the old logo with a green tree, the Conservative manifesto promises to ‘unleash the power of green enterprise and promote resource efficiency to generate thousands of green jobs’, adding: ‘This is how we will
live up to our responsibility to be the greenest government in our history’. Its vision is for Britain to be "the world’s first low-carbon economy".

Schoon points out that the words "green", "environment", "climate" and "carbon" appeared roughly once in every thousand words in their 2001 and 2005 manifestos. But in 2010 the Conservative document uses those four key words 4.4 times in every 1,000 words.

‘All three parties promise the huge changes required to start seriously decarbonising the UK economy’.

The campaigns and polling responses feature economy, race and immigration, crime and unemployment but the main parties remain committed to climate action in government.

Schoon says: ‘all back the new system of carbon budgets under the Climate Change Act. All see the low-carbon transition playing a lead role in reviving the economy and driving the needed growth in non-financial-sector exports’.

Only ‘the UK Independence Party [UKIP] and the BNP [British National Party] are left to condemn man-made climate change as dangerous eco-propaganda’.

‘All [the main parties] would retain the newish Department of Energy and Climate Change’ and major infrastructure spending the a Green Investment Bank.

Schoon adds: ‘The Tory manifesto says ‘people will be encouraged to support onshore wind farms and other renewable energy plants near their homes because local communities will retain the additional business rates they generate for six years..

May 6

General Election: no party secures the 326 seats necessary to form a government. David Cameron’s Conservatives form a coalition government with Nick Clegg’s Liberal Democrats. Chris Heaton Harris is elected to Parliament as Conservative Member for Daventry.

May 9

Roger Helmer MEP and Chris Heaton-Harris Prospective Parliamentary Candidate (both Conservatives) spend election night together at the count in Daventry. Helmer posts a photo on his blog on May 9th.

He writes: ‘I am pleased that Cameron has drawn clear red lines on Europe, immigration and defence. ... I am much less happy about the green agenda, but I suppose we have to make concessions somewhere, and the green agenda may well fall apart as the global warming “consensus” continues to disintegrate. Certainly it is way down the public’s priority list’.

He also attacks the Cameron campaign for failing to focus on immigration, ‘the Number One issue on the doorstep’, support for gay marriage ‘in order to appease a strident minority’ ‘as part of] ‘the Party’s new Notting Hill orthodoxy’, and ‘the outrageous treatment of a Conservative candidate’, his friend Philip Lardner ‘also, as it happens, the Freedom Association’s point man for Scotland’ who was ‘dumped by the Party ‘... it appears because ‘as a Christian teacher [he] was not prepared to teach homosexuality’.
May 14

Speaking at DECC, David Cameron reiterates his manifesto pledge: ‘I want us to be the greenest government ever - a very simple ambition and one that I’m absolutely committed to achieving’. He also says: ‘nowhere are long-term decisions more needed than actually in the fields of energy and climate change and environment ... We’ve got a real opportunity to drive the green economy - to have green jobs, green growth, and make sure that we have our share of the industries of the future.’

May 27

Chris Heaton-Harris MP uses his Maiden speech to criticise onshore wind:

“This debate is about energy, and I must mention the folly that is onshore wind energy. Not only does it dramatically change the nature of the landscape for ever-and as we have very little beautiful English countryside left, so we should try to treasure the bit we have-but it does little to help us in our battle to reduce carbon emissions. Leaving aside the damage these turbines do visually, I believe that science is not on the side of this sort of wind power. We still need to have the ability to produce 100% of our energy requirements by other means for those times when the wind is not blowing, and when the wind does stop, there is plenty of research suggesting that firing up gas and coal power stations quickly to take the slack created by the wind stopping burns those fuels so inefficiently that much of the good that has just been done is undone. I also hope Ministers will give better planning guidance to local councils that have to deal with these matters. That guidance should perhaps borrow an idea from our European friends: a 2 km exclusion zone, meaning that no turbine can be constructed within 2 km of any dwelling”.

“I am a great believer in renewable, sustainable and locally produced solutions to our energy problems of the future. Plenty of miscanthus grass is grown as a true biofuel across my constituency. I also believe we have to face up to the fact that nuclear energy must play a part in the medium and long term”.

July 6

Regional Spatial Strategies are abolished by the new coalition government.

October 6

The Conservative green tree logo which first went blue and then (2009) blue/Union-Jack is now replaced by a full colour Union Jack at the Party Conference in Birmingham.

November 17

Chris Heaton-Harris introduces the Onshore Wind Turbines (Proximity of Habitation) Bill (started by Peter Luff), as a Private Members' Bill under the Ten Minute Rule. After its First Reading the Bill fails to complete its passage through Parliament before the end of the session.

‘The Bill would give powers to local authorities to specify in their neighbourhood development plans (defined as in the Localism Bill) a 'recommended best practice set-back distance' between onshore wind turbines and habitations. It includes recommendations for this set-back distance, calculated as a multiple of the turbine rotor diameter’.
He is supported by Andrew Percy, Sarah Newton, Natascha Engel, Matthew Hancock, Nigel Adams, Karen Lumley, Alec Shelbrooke, Andrea Leadsom, Mark Pawsey, Mr Richard Bacon and Andrew Griffiths

I am proud to be a Back-Bench Member of a Government who truly believe in localism and removing the top-down, centre-knows-best approach to government that grew out of hand in the past 13 years ...

“... My Bill would simply give local people and communities in areas where there are such wind farm proposals a real say on whether they take such developments. Numerous communities up and down the UK will be happy to take on such development, and I strongly believe that this Government's approach of much more carrot, compared with the previous Government's stick, will ensure that more proposals are passed.”

“If hon. Members consider that alongside the problems associated with flicker and noise from turbines, they will understand why local planning authorities are best placed to judge whether areas within their boundaries are suitable for such large-scale developments. Wind turbine operators say that if there is a minimum distance between turbines and dwellings-a distance of 2 km, say-there would be very few areas in the United Kingdom where turbines could be sited. That might be the case, but my Bill does not state what the minimum distance should be; it simply gives local planning authorities the opportunity to determine such distances”

Opposing the Bill Martin Horwood (Cheltenham) (LD) says “I agree with the commitment to localism shown by the Member for Daventry (Chris Heaton-Harris) However, I rise to oppose the Bill on the grounds that it is unnecessary, unwise and very unlikely to encourage the shift that we need in this country towards renewable energy. Instead, it runs the risk of feeding the irrational objections of a minority who have decided that wind power is bad and who will use almost any excuse to oppose it”.

“Interestingly, support for wind power increases with proximity to wind farms. One piece of research showed that among people living near existing wind farms, support rose as high as 94% ... I am sad to say that I suspect that the real purpose behind the Bill is probably to appeal to the anti-renewable lobby, which seems to be growing .... We are intending to be the greenest Government ever, and the Bill would sit badly with that ambition”

December 5

Chris Heaton-Harris blogs about Australian opposition to wind farms

December 8

In The Guardian, Leo Hickman reports on posters put up in Derby, Leicester, Northampton, Lincoln and Nottingham by Roger Helmer MEP, attacking wind turbines. The poster campaign is timed to coincide with climate talks being held in Cancún, which Helmer is attending. He has also paid for a banner at the Conservative Home website. Hickman finds that the £9,000 cost of the campaign has been met by the Information Fund of the European Parliament’s ECRG Group of which Helmer is a member. A Conservative party spokesperson tells Hickman "This does not represent the view of the Conservative Party" and one for the ECR says: "Mr Helmer does not represent the ECR Group on environmental issues".

December 20
Minister for Decentralization and Planning, Greg Clark MP, announces a review of planning policy, designed to consolidate all policy statements, circulars and guidance documents into a single, simpler National Planning Policy Framework (Wikipedia)

2011

March

The all-party Commons Communities and Local Government Committee publishes a report on the implications of the abolition of the RSS system. It states: "... abolition of regional spatial planning strategies leaves a vacuum at the heart of the English planning system which could have profound social, economic and environmental consequences set to last for many years." Committee chair Clive Betts says:

"Regional Spatial Strategies bridged the gap between those planning issues determined by local policy or concern, and those subject to policy goals defined at a national level – such as those for housing or renewable energy. We...are concerned about the hiatus created by their intended abolition. This is giving rise to an inertia that is likely to hinder development - making it much harder to deliver necessary but controversial or emotive 'larger than local' facilities ... It will also make it more difficult to ensure that our national need for new housing is met."

May 13

Roger Helmer MEP posts ‘Former staffer rains on EU’s parade’ about Sally McNamara, former press officer for the Conservative’s East Midlands euro-candidate team [Chris Heaton-Harris and Bill Newton Dunn] in 1999. He says he assumed ‘we’d keep her on to work for us as MEPs’ but ‘I’d reckoned without Newton Dunn, who in his supercilious and patronising way insisted that Sally was much too young and inexperienced’. McNamara ‘stayed on as Press Officer for Chris and me until 2002, when she came across to Brux to work in my office. At the end of the 1999/04 parliament, Sally decided it was time to move on, and asked if I would sponsor her for a summer sabbatical in Washington with ALEC, the American Legislative Exchange Council (which was later to honour me as its first Adam Smith Scholar). Sally obviously hit the spot with ALEC, as they offered her a full time job. Then in 2006 she was hired away from ALEC by the Heritage Foundation, and she’s now a Senior Policy Analyst in their Margaret Thatcher Centre’. [Subsequently with US defence contractor Raytheon].

May 23

Chris Heaton-Harris posts ‘Wind Farms - How to beat the developers...!’ offering to send anti-wind groups his ‘short "best practice" guide called: "Fighting Wind Farms Locally - a Guide".’

June 15

Roger Helmer posts about the launch of his book Sceptic At Large in London. He writes: ‘The room was packed ... the assembled throng included MPs — Christopher Chope, Heather Wheeler, Robert Goodwill ... and of course my old comrade-in-arms Chris Heaton-Harris, to whom the book is dedicated. The Upper House was represented, as was the European parliament (Nigel Farage MEP). There was a good smattering of ECR staff (the have an office in the building), Tim Montgomerie and Jonathan Isaby from ConHome, Matthew Elliott from the Taxpayer’s Alliance, folk
from the European Foundation, a video team from the BBC, groups from the Freedom Association and my publisher Bretwalda Books (Rupert Matthews) …’

**July 1**

Chris Heaton-Harris blogs - *On Shore Wind doesn't work - Shock!!!* Well, I think we all knew this, so it is unsurprising news - but [here's a link](#) to a news item that proves how useless on-shore wind is, because of its intermittent nature. Time to change direction and invest in types of renewables that actually do work!

**July**

The government publishes its (first) *Renewable Energy Roadmap* saying it is on track to meet its generation targets.

**July 25**

With Parliament in recess, *the government publishes* its proposed NPPF National Planning Policy Framework. The CPRE sounds the alarm over the prospect of ‘urban sprawl’ and large scale house building on ‘green fields’. Two days later the CPRE are joined by Friends of the Earth, the RSPB, the National Trust, the Wildlife Trusts and the Woodland Trust in criticising the new policy.

**1 September**

The Daily Telegraph launches a campaign “Hands Off our Land” calling on Ministers not to rush through implementation of the NPPF, after ‘23 former presidents of the Royal Town Planning Institute write to the newspaper to call for a calm discussion of the plans and for them not to be introduced with undue “haste”’.

**September 23**

Chris Heaton-Harris blogs - *Presumption in favour of sustainable development - Developers BEWARE!!!*

‘The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - currently out for consultation, means that they should be granted planning as it contains a “presumption in favour of sustainable development.”

These developers should beware. Yes, in the absence of an up-to-date local plan, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies … [but] ... any developer would be wise to take the local community with him in proposing development and … if you are a developer looking to push unwanted homes of wind farms into Daventry District, please bear in mind that if you cite the NPPF, together with local residents I’ll ensure that you have to prove that the benefits of the development outweigh any "adverse impacts" on the local area and community.’

**September 30**

*The Atlantic Bridge is removed* from the UK charity register after the trustees wind it up on 23 September following a negative investigation by the charity Commission. Its work to promote Thatcher-Reagans in the UK-US ‘special relationship’ was found to be political not educational and charitable. The Atlantic Bridge was set up in 1997 by right-wing UK politician Liam Fox and had close links to other US right-wing groups. Fox became Defence Secretary in 2010 and stood down as a
‘Members of its advisory board have included the Chancellor George Osborne, the Foreign Secretary William Hague, employment minister Chris Grayling and five US Republican senators and congressmen’.

In subsequent article on ‘dark money’ funding George Monbiot points out that the charity’s main funder was revealed to be George Hintze, an American hedge fund manager. ‘Hintze is one of the Conservative party’s biggest donors. In 2012 he was revealed as a funder of the Global Warming Policy Foundation, which casts doubt on the science of climate change’. According to the FT, Hintze provided a desk in his London fund office to Adam Werrity, a friend of Fox’s who ran the Atlantic Bridge in the UK, and acted as a special adviser to Fox.

On the winding up of the UK Atlantic Bridge, Hintze bailed out the UK ‘charity’ with a £60,000 loan when an investigation by HMRC resulted in a tax bill it could not pay. This money was passed from another company first to Atlantic Bridge Inc in the US. Monbiot writes:

‘To run the US arm of Atlantic Bridge, Alec brought in its director of international relations, Catherine Bray. She is a British woman who had previously worked for the Conservative MEP Richard Ashworth and the Ukip MEP Roger Helmer. Bray has subsequently worked for Conservative MEP and Brexit campaigner Daniel Hannan. Her husband is Wells Griffith, the battleground states director for Trump’s presidential campaign’.

October 3

At the Conservative Party Conference in Manchester Chancellor George Osborne signals that expenditure on the NHS and schools are “Conservative priorities” but he has discovered that environmental expenditure is “piling costs” on householders. He says

“Now we know that a decade of environmental laws and regulations are piling costs on the energy bills of households and companies. Yes, climate change is a man made disaster. Yes, we need international agreement to stop it. Yes, we must have investment in greener energy. And that’s why I gave the go ahead to the world’s first Green Investment Bank. But Britain makes up less than 2% of the world’s carbon emissions to China and America’s 40%. We’re not going to save the planet by putting our country out of business.

So let’s at the very least resolve that we’re going to cut our carbon emissions no slower but also no faster than our fellow countries in Europe. That’s what I’ve insisted on in the recent carbon budget.

And there is one more thing I can tell you. We’ve had to make difficult decisions about public spending and careful choices about what to protect. So by relentlessly eliminating waste, we could afford to protect funding for Conservative priorities like the NHS and schools.”

October 11

Liam Fox resigns as defence secretary following scandal over his breaking of the Ministerial Code by allowing lobbyist Adam Werrity into defence meetings.

October 12

Roger Helmer MEP issues a letter to the Chairman of the East Midlands Conservatives announcing his forthcoming resignation from the European Parliament. Helmer’s letter says:
“I am especially grateful to Chris Heaton-Harris, who for ten years in the European parliament was the best colleague I could have hoped to have – and to the other members of “the H-Block”. And I should thank all those former staffers who have passed through my office, especially Sally McNamara and Cat Bray (both now in political roles in Washington) and Lydia Smith, just starting work in Westminster with Mark Lancaster MP”.

[Catherine Bray went to work for ALEC and then the Atlantic Bridge on leaving Brussels]

“It is my understanding that my place will be taken automatically by Rupert Matthews, who was next-in-line on the 2009 Conservative list. Rupert is a very sound man indeed, and well known in the region, and I have absolute confidence that he will serve the voters of the East Midlands with great skill and diligence. He has been a good friend and colleague both to me and to Chris Heaton-Harris for many years, and we have worked together on a number of projects. Most recently, Rupert has edited and published my latest book “Sceptic at Large”.”

[Helmer does not in fact resign]

October 25

In a vote on a referendum on European Union membership, David Cameron suffers the ‘biggest ever’ rebellion by Tory MPs: 81 defy three-line whip while 17 others abstain. Only support from the opposition prevents the government being defeated – Daily Mail.

October 28

LSE Blogger Pete Radford writes ‘The EU Referendum rebellion has left David Cameron with little room to manoeuvre and is picking apart his liberal conservative project’. Of the 81 Conservative rebels, ‘a massive 49 were new MPs, elected in 2010’. He adds: ‘The party is no longer split between sceptics and non-sceptics but rather hard sceptics and soft sceptics’. He notes: ‘since May 2010, there have already been 22 Conservative rebellions over the issue of Europe’.

December 15

Roger Helmer posts ECR Elections: A Clean Sweep, about the internal elections of the European Conservatives and Reformists, a Eurosceptic group in the European Parliament. He writes: ‘My good colleague Martin Callanan MEP (NE) has been elected as Chairman of the ECR Group. Martin, of course, is a very sound man indeed, and was associated with “The H-Block” in the good old days — Hannan, Heaton-Harris, myself — even despite his name beginning with “C” … ’There were only two candidates for Group Chairman — Martin, and Struan Stevenson MEP (Scotland). Struan himself is no mean candidate. He’s done fine work on fisheries, and on the campaign against wind turbines’.

[Struan Stevenson Conservative Member of the European Parliament (MEP) for Scotland from 1999-2014 – later speaks at the Anti Wind Farm Conference in Cumbria]

December 30

Roger Helmer posts a photograph of himself and Chris Heaton Harris with pints of beer in a post attacking David Cameron for planning minimum pricing of alcohol.
2012

January 14

Chris Heaton-Harris decides to reschedule Ten Minute Rule Bill to March, aiming to prompt a government review of wind ‘subsidies’. Questions why wind support was cut less than solar which could provide ‘a reliable source of energy’ eg on large warehouses. ‘Why not also encourage more local solutions, like small-scale biomass … why not insist on getting homes properly insulated’ using wind money?

‘I was hoping that Localism would sort out these problems. Following the planning inspector’s decision in Kelmarsh, I’m no longer sure this will be the case. So now we have to change the mindset of DECC....’

Invites all Conservative MPs to a meeting on Tuesday 24th January.

January 26

The Yorkshire Post reports ‘Tory MPs urge Cameron to cut subsidies for windfarms’. It says ‘dozens of Tory MPs are joining forces in a new group pressing for the Government to review funding for a technology they argue does “more harm than good”’. And ‘Selby and Ainsty MP Nigel Adams, one of those who attended the group’s first meeting, urged the Prime Minister to act in the House of Commons yesterday by focusing support on “cost-effective and reliable” technologies like biomass rather than “inefficient, costly, large-scale onshore wind farms”.

‘Mr Adams added: “When I was elected 20 months ago there was a small number of colleagues very concerned about the onward march of large scale wind farms. Given the number of people who turned up at the meeting and expressed their concern about this, it’s clear that the Government needs to listen.”’

‘Responding to Mr Adams, the Prime Minister said yesterday that the Government would target funding at “only the most cost-effective onshore wind farms” because it was “now one of the mature and cheaper technologies”. He said support should be increased “for an expansion in sustainable biomass generation, which is reliable and cost-effective”’.

January 30

Chris Heaton Harris’s letter signed by over 100 MPs is sent to David Cameron

January 31

In The Guardian Damian Carrington reports: ‘those who think climate change poses no threat’ are 70% men and ‘about twice as likely to be over 65 and to have voted Conservative in 2010 than the general population’

February 3
Liberal Democrat Chris Huhne resigns as Secretary of State for Energy in the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition government, following claims he got his wife to take speeding points for him. LibDem Ed Davey replaces him. The coalition parties start open warfare over support to wind power.

Deputy prime minister Nick Clegg says: “The race is on to lead the world in clean, green energy” … the UK could end up playing ‘catch up’ to emerging economies. The 100+ MP letter takes the opposite tack: "In these financially straightened times, we think it is unwise to make consumers pay, through taxpayer subsidy, for inefficient and intermittent energy production that typifies on-shore wind turbines”.

Guardian journalist Damian Carrington writes that onshore wind power is the cheapest renewable, and the ‘real reason’ so many MPs signed was ‘the shredding of 1000 pages of planning guidance and its replacement by 50 pages’ in the NPPF which ‘is, according to some rural Conservative MPs I have spoken to, the biggest issue for their constituents … supported by the scepticism on global warming that is more prevalent among Tories’.

February 5

Wind - the letter to the Prime Minister [sent 30th January] – Chris Heaton-Harris blogs:

‘In the on-going review of renewable energy subsidies, we ask the Government to the savings made between other types of reliable renewable energy production and energy efficiency measures dramatically cut the subsidy for on-shore wind and spread the savings made between other types of reliable renewable energy production and energy efficiency measures’.

Wants more ability for local communities to reject wind power through planning (Proposes National Policy Planning Framework amendments). 106 MPs sign CCH’s letter: 101 Conservative, two Labour, two Lib Dem and one DUP.

February [date?] – David Montagu-Smith, Chairman of West Northamptonshire CPRE writes to Chris Heaton-Harris: ‘we are very gratified’ at the letter. Montagu-Smith is also Chairman of Rathlin Energy, and oil and gas firm involved in fracking.

February 14

CCH blogs - ‘Crap lobbying at its very worst’ - about an unintended St Valentines Day gift, as pro wind lobbyist Robin Smith from House Of Sound Thinking invites him to support a counter-letter to his own 100+ MP letter.

February 15

Chris Heaton-Harris congratulates Welsh MPs for a follow up letter to David Cameron opposing onshore wind power.

February 21

David Cameron Prime Minister ‘defends windfarm plans to Tory MPs’ saying there are ‘hard-headed reasons’ for more onshore wind and repeats the government’s existing policy of cutting subsidies to on-shore wind by 10% in the near future in recognition that the building cost had fallen.
The Department of Energy and Climate Change had proposed a scheme for local communities to take a financial stake in new renewable energy and claim some of the profits. Chris Heaton-Harris says he also has the support of 10 Labour MPs and will seek a meeting with Cameron.

**February 22**

Chris Heaton-Harris posts that he is *slightly encouraged* by Cameron’s reply and ‘noises off’.

**February 25**

UKIP MEP Godfrey Bloom publishes a guide, *Fighting Wind Farms*

**February 27**

Chris Heaton-Harris *takes a delegation* of MPs to meet Cameron with Charles Hendry, Minister for Energy and Greg Clark Minister for Planning. ‘Just the start of this discussion’ but ‘heard about how local councils might be able to designate areas for renewable energy projects in the future (and thus zone out renewables from others)’. Argued for ‘drastic cuts’ in ‘subsidies’ to onshore wind. ‘Prime Minister is very much in listening mode’.

‘I would like to think that, with more evidence and political pressure, we might be able to prove to the Prime Minister that we are currently backing a loser and we should be incentivising elsewhere’

**March 1**

The Guardian reports that ‘local opposition to windfarms has tripled’ since 2010 following political and media attacks and focus on landscape impacts and subsidy costs, although overall 60% still support wind local to them. Onshore wind is also more popular than coal or nuclear and twice as many support as oppose wind subsidies.

But it states ‘the UK's leading expert on nimbyism, Prof Patrick Devine-Wright from the University of Exeter’ as finding advocates of windfarms ‘failing to win the public debate’. Devine-Wright says “the quite dramatic polarisation” with “attitudes hardening on both sides” which “suggests it will be hard to reach any kind of societal consensus.”

An ICM poll finds those over 65 ‘far more likely to oppose a new windfarm (43%) compared to 18 to 24-year-olds (16%)’, and Conservative voters ‘twice as likely as Labour voters to be opposed (41% versus 20%)’.

Devine-Wright says other countries had handled the issue much better: "There is a growing presumption in the UK that onshore wind is dodgy, but there is no reason why it should be that like that. The vast majority of the population are in favour of local renewables projects, so we are starting with goodwill but ending up in a mess." He adds that in Germany and Denmark there is ‘far greater community ownership’ whereas in Britain most projects ‘are owned by large energy companies’.

He reports that “When you talk to local objectors, they feel their sense of place is being violated [by outsiders] and you need to avoid that at all costs. You need to harness that emotion in a positive way and the government has to take a more proactive stance to address that." He warns “Nimbyism is not a particularly helpful concept in the debate: it is a simplification and it is pejorative."
March 8

Chris Heaton-Harris asks Ed Davey in the House of Commons: ‘Can the Secretary of State confirm that if we add the number of existing turbines to those going through the planning system, we have enough in place to hit his Department’s 2020 targets? If that is the case, does that not suggest that the level of subsidy for these things is too high?’ Davey responds that ‘most of the development that the country needs is indeed already on the table’.

March 27

The NPPF is published as a 65 page document replacing previous guidance of over 1300 pages (not just concerned with energy). This replaces PPS1 which together with PPS22 and the RSS provided the framework for renewable energy planning.

Planning lawyer Tina Douglass later writes (2012) that looking back ‘PPS22 worked quite well. Of course there was argument over how the policies applied to any particular site and how PPS22 and the PPS1 supplement worked together. There is always tension between local interests and national need particularly with wind energy which is stridently apparent in the landscape. LPA officers tended to recommend approval, Members tended to refuse, applicants almost invariably appealed. The success rate of those appeals ranged between 40-60% over the period it was in force, which suggests to me that the guidance was equally comprehensible to Members as it was to officers’.

April 15

In his blog, Chris Heaton-Harris announces ‘The Beginning of the End for Onshore Wind’ as the Sunday Times has a front page lead on a statement by Energy Minister Greg Barker of no “significant expansion in the number of turbines beyond those already in the pipeline” and "far from wanting thousands more, actually for most of the wind we need... they are either built, being developed, or in planning.”

Chris Heaton-Harris adds that ‘I … intend to focus on the growing costs of transmission of wind energy around the grid and how these costs, when added to all the others will actually drive thousands of people into fuel poverty … and ‘ensuring that Parliamentarians have a strong say in the forthcoming review of how the Planning Inspectorate works that I believe will commence at some point in the Summer’.

‘I know this blog is read by hundreds of people fighting wind farms across the country ... the number of MPs who support this cause has grown and ... I have received amazingly strong Parliamentary support from Select Committee Chairmen, like John Whittingdale MP, Ministers, PPSs and even from Whips - and not from just within the Conservative Party. Without a doubt though, they are comfortable supporting this campaign because you, their constituents, have asked them too [sic]. In the next few weeks your continuing support will be vital and if we continue to get the tone of our arguments right, I am convinced we will get somewhere’.

May 23

At ‘Conservative Home’ Tim Montgomerie writes about the threat posed by UKIP to the Conservatives and problems with the Conservative-LibDem coalition.

‘The biggest landscape-changing political event of the parliament so far has been the formation of the Coalition. The first impact was immediate. Approximately two million left-leaning supporters of
the Liberal Democrats **walked into the arms of Labour**. Some will return home but most won't ever embrace Clegg’s party again – for fear they'll put the Tories in power again. Labour gained 4% to 5% in the opinions polls as soon as Cameron and Clegg shook hands – gaining more in five days than the Tories achieved in thirteen years of opposition’.

‘The second impact has been more of a slow motion car crash than a big bang event. It's the splintering of the Right. Most Tories didn’t want Cameron to form a coalition … Slowly but surely, as the months have passed, our party's supporters in the press and in the public have peeled off. The most dangerous manifestation of this has been the rise of UKIP. UKIP doesn't need to get 10% to cause us damage. A 5% or 6% vote share will be enough to stop us winning many of the marginal seats that are necessary for a Conservative majority.’

‘In the latest edition of The Spectator (not yet online) the UKIP leader Nigel Farage talks to James Forsyth. He uses the interview to attack the PM:

“He's a committed warmist and he wants to build wind turbines all over Britain. He’s so committed to the EU that he doesn’t want to have a referendum in case we give the wrong answer and he sees no difficulties at all with mass immigration, it’s cheaper chauffeurs and gardeners and nannies. He completely has turned his back on the concept of grammar schools to give people from poorer backgrounds the opportunity to get on.”

In a bit of mischief-making Mr Farage also suggests that there could be UKIP-Tory candidates at the next election’

**May 27**

MEP Roger Helmer posts ‘When I got into politics in 1998, my first ever staffer was Sally McNamara ... she joined our euro-candidate team ahead of the 1999 election, and did a first-rate job as Press Officer. She then continued as Press Officer for me and Chris Heaton-Harris after the election for three years, then came to Brussels as my researcher until the next 2004 election. In the Summer of 2004 she went to Washington on a sabbatical with the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), who offered her a full-time job. She was later hired away from ALEC by the Heritage Foundation, and just recently left them to take a senior position in government relations with US defence contractor Raytheon.

**June 10**

Conservative Home reports that Lincolnshire County Council has adopted a planning policy that ‘no wind turbine should be constructed within 2km of a single residential property, and no wind farms should be constructed with 10km of a village with more than 10 properties’ and calls for other County Councils to follow suit

**June 19**

Benedict Brogan chief political commentator at the Daily Telegraph writes a blog ‘The wind of change will give Tories something to cheer’.

‘The omnishambles, the Budget U-turns, the sapping effect of Leveson, and most of all the ever-worsening economic crisis wiped out the gains. Mr Cameron is struggling again. Conservatives yearn for red meat policies to please the voters. They want a political Plan B for a Tory majority in 2015 to
replace the one based on the assumption of economic recovery and tax cuts that blew up in George Osborne’s hands …’

The Chancellor will shortly give them just that. In a few weeks, as part of the Energy Bill, ministers will announce a reduction of up to a quarter in the value of Renewable Obligation Certificates – or “Rocs”. Yes, I realise that’s hardly a sentence to set the pulse racing. But if one considers that Rocs are the means by which the taxpayer subsidises the wind farm industry, and that the Chancellor proposes to slash that giveaway by 25 per cent, then translated into plain English it means this: onshore wind farms will be killed stone dead.

A simple tweak of the financial incentives will halt the march of the turbines across the British landscape. ... Conservatives will be able to say: “We did that. We stopped the wind farm madness.” … No wonder some optimists on the backbenches speak of a defining moment that will give them something to cheer

**June 20**

National Opposition to Windfarms conference (NOW) is held in Cumbria. Organisers include Lord Carlyle of Berriew (Liberal Democrat). One attendee reports that CC ‘Has been opposed to wind farms for a long time initially because of his love for the English landscape. Whilst supporting opposition groups “planning” was a local issue until the Kelmarsh wind farm appeal decision said that National Policy trumped local planning policy’ and ‘The Treasury now see energy policies as harming our economic competitiveness – and is seeing shale gas reviving the USA’.

James Delingpole is also present.

**July 11**

The FT reports that Osborne and Davey are locked in argument over how much to cut onshore wind subsidies. Davey proposes 10%, Osborne wants more. John Cridland, head of the CBI tells the FT that Davey’s proposal “makes sense to me”.

**July 19**

FT reports: ‘George Osborne is blocking a new subsidy regime for renewable energy, as he fights a coalition battle with the Liberal Democrats to ensure gas remains central to Britain’s future power needs.

The chancellor fears overgenerous support for wind power and other renewable sources will deter investment in gas-fired power stations, which he believes offer businesses and consumers the prospect of lower bills in future.

John Cridland, head of the CBI says the “political row” is holding back investment in Britain’s energy infrastructure’.

[In an analysis video about multiple tensions in the coalition government, FT parliamentary journalist Kieran Stacey argues that Cameron “dragged” the Conservative Party onto the “centre ground, copying Tony Blair” as the way to win elections. This included the promises to be green and modern. A wing of the party never forgave him for abandoning the neo-Thatcherite/Neoliberal agenda of cutting tax and public expenditure. He then failed to win a majority in 2010 and they have been rallying around figures like Liam Fox]
After the letter to Cameron from more-than-100 Tory MPs about wind farms ‘the row has been referred to Mr Cameron and Nick Clegg, but the prime minister and deputy prime minister have been unable to strike a compromise’.

Osborne’s aides say ‘overgenerous renewable subsidies’ “reduce the viability” of gas.

In his March Budget, Osborne declared: “Gas is cheap, has much less carbon than coal and will be the largest single source of our electricity in the coming years.”

Davey has been holding back on issuing new shale gas licences in Britain, amid local community concerns.

“The government has a big decision to make: are we going to build a low-carbon power system or are we going to have a second dash for gas?” said David Kennedy, chief executive of the committee on climate change. “The economically sensible thing is to deliver a low carbon power system.”

**July 20**

At Conservative Home Paul Goodman reports ‘Osborne blocks Davey bid for wind power subsidies as Energy Permanent Secretary quits’.

‘The nub of the Osborne/Davey clash is that the Chancellor believes that in the balance between lower energy bills and lower carbon emissions the former should win out. He wants to link the renewables policy to decisions on gas so that there is “a credible and certain framework” for investment in both’.

‘His leadership ambitions will want to march in step with the instincts of Conservative MPs; a hundred of them recently signed a letter urging cuts in onshore wind farm subsidies.’

**September 4**

The Guardian reports that ‘Cameron takes (coalition) cabinet to the right in a reshuffle’ (first in two years). A senior Tory minister says: "Overall this is a serious lurch to the right."

The removal of Justine Greening as transport secretary, a fierce opponent of a third runway at Heathrow, and her replacement by the former chief whip Patrick McLoughlin also paves the way for a government shift on aviation expansion, probably though a cross-party commission on aviation policy.

[soon after the reshuffle that David Cameron apparently told Hayes to ‘deliver a win for our people on windfarms’]

**September 6 or 7**

Delingpole declares intention to stand in Corby by election

**September 12**

The BBC reports ‘Two more candidates have announced their intentions to contest the Corby and East Northants seat in the by-election due to take place in November. Independent candidate James
Delingpole, a Daily Telegraph journalist, has joined the race to campaign against wind farms in Northamptonshire.

**September 15**

In the Spectator James Forsyth writes ‘The people are making their choice on Cameron. So are Tory MPs’.

‘The next few weeks will contain a string of economic announcements. But among Tory MPs one thing is causing almost as much cheer as these. It is the word that David Cameron told John Hayes, the new Tory minister of state at the Department of Energy and Climate Change, that ‘I want you to deliver a win for our people on wind farms.’ I’m also told that Tory MPs will, according to one influential Cabinet minister, be fed ‘some pretty pink meat’ on Europe in the coming weeks.’

He continues ‘But this traditional Tory fare is to be accompanied by attempts to reach out to the kind of voters that Cameronism attracted to the party’. But this is not on clean energy. ‘Strategists are working on various campaigns to try to reassert Cameron’s party’s commitment to the NHS’. And: ‘For George Osborne, support for the NHS is the most important element of Tory modernisation. This means that he will leave the ring-fence around the health budget in place’.

‘a normally loyal PPS says that he is giving Cameron nine months to turn things round’.

One new Tory group (of MPs) is calling for an ‘end to the detoxification of the Tory brand’: in other words a values roll-back.

**September 20**

Leo Hickman of The Guardian notes that an ‘Anti-wind power fundraiser featuring Donald Trump’ has been ‘hit by poor ticket sales, forcing organiser Chris Heaton-Harris MP to cancel’. Hickman says Chris Heaton-Harris’s effort marked an attempt to ‘move anti-wind lobbying in the UK up a gear or two’. A ticket-pushing email sent out by Chris Heaton-Harris in August refers to Trump as one of his ‘bigger supporters’.

It explains: ‘I have garnered a great deal of support for the [anti wind farm] campaign and one of my bigger supporters has kindly said he would speak at a big dinner event for me to raise money for my continuing campaigning in this area. He is a famous and controversial businessman who is the "Boss" in the American version of "The Apprentice" and was a candidate to be Republican Nominee to be President of the United States. My speaker on the evening is Donald Trump.

If all goes to plan, the dinner will be on 6th October and tickets are £275 each with tables for ten available for £2,500’. The event was to have been at the Emirates Stadium in the Royal Oak Suite.

Hickman asks:

‘What does this tell us – if anything – about the real strength and depth of the highly vocal, media-supported anti-wind campaign in the UK? After all, when DECC published its latest public attitude tracker survey (pdf) this week, it showed that only 12% of those surveyed are against onshore wind power (with 4% "strongly opposed") compared to 66% who support it.’

**October 1**
The lobbying company Together Against Wind is Incorporated. Chris Heaton Harris is appointed as a Director. Thomas Pursglove will be appointed as a Director on 25 June 2013. Companies House records show it was dissolved through a ‘compulsory strike-off’ on 14 March 2017 and the accounts show net assets of £1214 in 2013, £523 in 2014 and £124 in 2015. Heaton Harris will resign on 26 June 2013 but appeared on the home page of the website www.togetheragainstwind.com until February 7th 2016. The site shows as disabled from March 2016.

[Subsequent examples of www.togetheragainstwind.com activities are taken from some of the archived pages at web.archive.org]

October 3

At the 10th Chilterns AONB Planning Conference planning lawyer Tina Douglass reviews the history of renewable energy and planning policy. She notes that the previous system had worked quite well but we had a change of government in May 2010 [and]

‘... In July 2010 the new government exercised its new broom to sweep away the RSS, inevitably taking with them the regional targets for RE but leaving as material the background papers which generally had involved no consultation and in many areas were very poor pieces of work. In November of the same year the High Court explained that legislation was necessary to achieve the revocation and so the RSS, and targets, came back. After argument that SEA and consultation were or were not required the government has just, 14/09/12, delayed the revocation again to permit further EIA and consultation ...

... A year later The Renewable Energy Roadmap was published. (July 2011). It set out various scenarios in an endeavour to ascertain whether the ambitious targets we had set ourselves could be achieved. It was confident that they could be and that the pipeline of proposals consented or coming through was healthy ...

... The NPPF revokes the whole PPS series including PPS22 but for some odd reason retains the Companion Guide which offered practical advice on implementing the policies contained within it. It has to be observed that the Companion Guide repeatedly refers back to the revoked PPS series so it is arguable the government actually anticipated that, particularly in regard to landscape and nature conservation, that the old constraints would apply. That does not appear to be the view of developers or Inspectors ...

Interestingly it replicates much of PPS5 including the almost incomprehensible distinction between “substantial harm or loss” and “less than substantial harm”. Commercial wind turbine development applications currently range in height between 110 and 137m. Their potential for impact on setting of heritage features is patent.

Significance (for heritage policy) is defined: The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting ....This is proving fruitful area for the fee earner. Days at inquiry are spent seeking to establish which category the harm falls into. More days are spent debating whether the harm is outweighed by the renewable energy benefit. Since the guidance is poor there is no certainty which view will prevail.’

October 18
According to a Daily Telegraph source George Osborne "has started referring to the green lobby in Government and Tory party as the environmental Taliban. It's meant as a joke but it shows where he's coming from."

He is also pushing for a cap on the total subsidy from taxpayers and energy customers going towards green power. It’s a move that would allow Mr Osborne to claim that he was helping to keep energy bills down, although critics believe it would result in a "dash for gas" and, in the long term, less green energy.

October 19

Nigel Farage appears on BBC Radio 4 Any Questions (21.30 mins in). He attacks David Cameron as pro-wind:

“Here you’ve got Cameron saying it’s outrageous that [energy] prices are going up, whilst at the same time he more than anybody else has supported this loopy idea that we can cover Britain in ugly disgusting ghastly windmills and that somehow our future energy needs will come from that and that already everyone of you in this room is paying a 12 percent surcharge on your energy bills to subsidise a wind turbine programme that simply won’t work....”

The presenter David Dimbleby points out that some members of the audience are shouting “that’s just not true”. Farage replies: “I can assure you Jonathan, 12 per cent is a conservative figure – it may be slightly higher ....”

Farage also seems to suggest that green charges are increasing gas prices and promotes shale gas as an energy source.

October 22

The website Carbon Brief fact-checks Farage’s statements on Question Time. It points out that Ofgem ‘says the main support measure for renewable energy, the Renewables Obligation, adds £21 to the average household consumer energy bill. Feed in Tariffs – the support measure for microgeneration – add “less than £1” to the bill’.

‘This means support measures for renewable energy accounted for just under two per cent of a total combined bill – not 12 per cent.’

It notes that industry group RenewableUK estimated that in 2010/11 that wind energy specifically, ‘added £7.74 to bills – or about 0.7% of a £1174 bill’.

Considering “environmental and social” contributions to the bill, ‘covering everything from support for all renewables to winter fuel payments to the elderly and energy efficiency, data from three of the ‘big six’ companies suggest ‘it’s not possible to arrive anywhere close to Farage’s 12 per cent figure’. Carbon Brief also questions his statements about gas and shale.

October 23

Mike Smithson (@MSmithsonPB) points out that a poll in Corby constituency by Lord Ashcroft finds that just two of 1503 people (0.13%) intend to vote for James Delingpole, the ‘anti wind farm’ candidate.
October 30

John Hayes, recently appointed Energy Minister, tells the Daily Mail that ‘enough is enough’ of onshore wind farms. The comments ‘spark a furious coalition row, with Lib Dem Energy Secretary Ed Davey insisting “I’m in charge”’ and that there has been no change in policy.

October 31

James Delingpole announces in an article in the Daily Telegraph that he is withdrawing from the Corby by election as the anti-wind farm candidate.

[31 October is the deadline for submission of a deposit – Delingpole does not do so].

He writes: ‘rumour has it’ that John Hayes ‘a robust, old-school, churchgoing Tory – had intended to go even further’ in his anti-wind comments. ‘At a conference in Glasgow staged by Renewable UK on Tuesday evening, Hayes had apparently intended to declare a moratorium on all future onshore wind farm projects – on the grounds that Britain has already met its wind energy targets. Unfortunately, his fervently green departmental boss, Lib Dem Ed Davey, got to see the speech beforehand and vetoed it’.

Delingpole adds: ‘In theory this ought to be a crushing blow for Hayes and his many sympathisers within the Conservative Party, among them the Chancellor George Osborne, Environment Secretary Owen Paterson, and MP Chris Heaton-Harris, who has been co-ordinating the Tories’ anti-wind resistance’ but Hayes has commissioned studies on noise and property values, which ‘are likely to strike a blow from which the wind industry can never recover’.

‘Copious evidence’ says Delingpole, shows that a wind farm knocks 10% off house prices and this wind blight has been confirmed by local council tax re-valuations. Linking this to Cameron he writes:

‘Naturally, this isn’t the kind of detail that plays well with David Cameron’s natural constituency in the shires. Their country home, they not unreasonably believe, is their castle and the very last thing they would have expected of a Tory-led government is to have their peace disturbed, their views ruined and a good chunk of their nest-egg confiscated – all so that a pesky, selfish neighbour and some rapacious, foreign-owned wind developer can get inordinately richer’.

‘Despite his vigorous protests, Davey may find it very hard to resist the multiple-pronged assault strategy Hayes has cunningly contrived. This embraces not only Paterson at Defra but also the new planning minister Nick Boles’

November 12

www.togetheragainstwind.com provides letters to email to your MP: ‘IMPORTANT: Click Here Now Support John Hayes MP & Request a Moratorium on Onshore Wind Farms. It is important that your MP is made aware of any concerns that you might have about wind energy. The quickest and easiest way for you to do this is to send an e-mail. We have made this even easier for you by providing you with all the information that you require to make a difference’.

It carries a message under a photo of Chris Heaton-Harris: ‘The sole purpose of “Together Against Wind” is to provide an effective link between the Houses of Parliament and both individuals and Groups campaigning against the proliferation of wind turbines ... [it is] set up to bring Collective strength to the many campaign groups fighting against wind farms in the UK ... get a strong clear
“Together Against Wind” is run by Chris Heaton-Harris MP and has a simple aim of changing government policy... It will:- set up campaigns to raise awareness among MP’s... provide information to campaign groups and individuals about activity within parliament... undertake research projects designed to provide information to assist in driving parliamentary campaigns and fighting wind farm proposals... [and] raise funds’ [plus] ‘we have got off to an excellent start thanks to a number of generous donations’.

‘Active Campaigns’ as of November 12th:

‘NO MEANS NO’ – ‘Nick Boles, Planning Minister, recently confirmed he was concerned that people felt they were “ridden over roughshod” when wind turbine planning decisions were made. Please write to Nick Boles and provide examples of local concerns being ignored. Together we have the opportunity to make changes to wind farm planning’. ‘Please Act Now’

‘ENOUGH IS ENOUGH’ - "We Cannot Pepper Turbines Across The Country - Enough is Enough", declares Energy Minister John Hayes. Campaigning for a moratorium on new onshore wind farms, the latest announcements by Mr Hayes MP are welcomed and we strongly encourage you to join our campaign & write to the PM now. Send PM Letter Here’

‘Closed Campaigns’ – ‘DECC Onshore Wind Call for Evidence’. ‘Many thanks to everyone that submitted evidence & comments to the Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC) consultation’ [DECC campaign deleted by 28 March 2013]

November 11

Reporting for the Daily Telegraph on the Cory by-election campaign, Andrew Gilligan finds that the unpopularity of out-going Conservative MP Louise Mensch looks likely to result in the Conservatives losing an otherwise winnable seat.

‘Almost everyone thinks that on November 15, at least, Corby will not choose the Tories. A poll by the party’s former treasurer, Lord Ashcroft, gives Labour’s Andy Sawford a 22-point lead. In more than 20 interviews, done entirely in the Conservative parts of the constituency, The Sunday Telegraph found only three voters who intended to vote Tory’.

The Conservative vote is being eroded from the right by UKIP. Gilligan writes:

‘Chris Woodford is another lifelong Tory voter jumping ship this week – to Ukip, in his case, along with one of his staff and his wife. “We have to do something about immigration and the EU,” he said. “We sell a lot of properties to people from Peterborough [the nearest large town.] They say they feel like the ethnic minority now.”

UKIP’s Margot Parker is using the campaign manager who managed to drive the Tories into third place in the Barnsley Central by-election last March. Coming third in Corby really would be catastrophic for the Conservatives, but still looks quite unlikely: they have a much bigger bedrock vote here than in Barnsley, and when it comes to elections Ukip have a long history of failing to get their act together.’

Still, Mrs Emmett is sufficiently worried about her starboard flank to stress her backing for Britain’s withdrawal from the EU. It is notable, too, that many of the MPs coming to help her are from the right of the party. Her campaign manager, Chris Heaton-Harris, says pointedly: “We are running a very Conservative campaign.”
November 12

John Hayes pronounces “job done” on windfarms on Channel 4 News (reported next day in The Daily Telegraph).

“In respect of the targets that we have for renewables when we take into account, what’s built, what’s consented, what’s in planning system now – it will certainly have achieved, it will be job done.”

November 13

A Greenpeace sting video interviewing Chris Heaton-Harris at the Conservative party conference [filmed ‘about a month ago’] is released on the website of The Guardian: Tory MP running Corby campaign ‘backed rival in anti-windfarm plot’.

The transcript is here

Thinking he is talking to an activist from a (fictitious) group called ‘Windefensible’ [in fact a Greenpeace researcher Chris Atkins], Chris Heaton-Harris discusses his role in James Delingpole’s appearance as an anti-wind candidate at the Corby by-election, in competition with the Conservative candidate for whom he is campaign manager.

"Please don't tell anybody ever" Chris Heaton-Harris says to the Greenpeace under-cover reporter as he explains his role in getting Delingpole to put his name forward as a candidate.

"write [the anti-wind agenda] into the DNA of the Tory party"

At Delingpole's campaign website, he declared himself an "independent anti-wind farm candidate for the Corby and East Northamptonshire constituency"

"There’s a bit of strategy behind what’s going on," Heaton-Harris told him. "I'm running the Corby byelection for the Tories ... And Delingpole, who is my constituent, and a very good friend [inaudible] put his head above the parapet, but won't put his deposit down ... It's just part of the plan."

Heaton-Harris appears to say he "suggested to [Delingpole] that he did it. Which puts me in a very awkward [inaudible]. Please don't tell anybody ever. But he will not be putting his deposit down. He just did it because it's a long campaign, it's six weeks to cause some hassle and get, and get people talking."

The undercover film also captures Heaton-Harris saying: "James Delingpole can go and endorse the Ukip candidate, don't give a toss about that. Maybe we've just moved the agenda on."

He added: "I've managed to provide [Delingpole] with a handful of people who will sort him out. So my deputy chairman, political, resigned from my local party and is running his campaign as his agent. So it's all professionally done. The whole point of that is to actually just put it on the agenda."

Asked if the plan was to get the anti-wind farm campaign on the agenda Chris Heaton-Harris says "Exactly ... and it will go through way past the Corby byelection stuff. I'm trying to write it into the DNA of the Tory party."
The former deputy chairman of Heaton-Harris's constituency party, Trevor Sherman, had indeed resigned his post on 15 August. He remained a member of the Tory party and was described by Delingpole as "a superb election agent".

The Conservative councillor who set up Delingpole's campaign website was Donna Edmonds. She said she did not believe there was a conflict of interest because she "knew all along" that Delingpole would pull out.

The Guardian reports:

Informing the undercover reporter that Delingpole was "pulling out" of the election, Heaton-Harris said the timing was "contrived". "So you have the speech [by Hayes], two front pages," the undercover reporter said. "And then Delingpole stands down and that's all sort of saying, 'My work is done'?" "Yeah, there's been a bit of leverage that he's given me," Heaton-Harris said. "I've been working on this since the ministerial teams changed."

Chris Heaton-Harris subsequently apologised for the impression he had given in the interview and was not disciplined by the Conservative Party.

November 14

Writing under the title 'Delingpolegate?' in The Spectator, David Blackburn declares that: 'This story doesn’t primarily concern Delingpole and the by-election; it’s really about a split within the coalition on wind farms and the Tories’ long-term electoral tactics'

‘Hayes’ supporters in Cabinet include the Chancellor, who is reported … to believe that halting onshore wind farm construction is a vote winner in marginal rural and semi-suburban constituencies like Corby. And … David Cameron apparently told Hayes to ‘deliver a win for our people on windfarms.’[Reshuffle September]

‘It is, therefore, not wholly surprising to discover that the Tories were courting independent campaigners like Delingpole (who UKIP were also after to mount an attack on the Tories from the right) at a time when they were refashioning their posture on the issue’.

November 14

James Kirkup and Hannah Furness report in the Daily Telegraph that: ‘Mr Delingpole, who writes a blog for the Telegraph, said he had been in regular contact with Mr Heaton-Harris but insisted there had been no plot, adding the timing of was "all a rather handy coincidence".’ Delingpole added: “ultimately it became absolutely nonsensical for me to continue standing in the election, when the Conservative and UKIP were becoming more aggressively anti-wind”.

A statement from Chris Heaton-Harris announced: "The implication that I choreographed any sort of ‘secret plan’ is simply not the case and I apologise if that is the impression given".

Theresa May says Chris Heaton-Harris has been guilty of “silly bragging”.

November 14

A piece in The Guardian states:
‘The decision not to discipline Heaton-Harris will be taken by opposition parties as a further sign that the mood against renewable energy is now so deep in the Tory party that Downing Street does not have the political strength, or will, to rein it in’

**November 14**

Another section of the Greenpeace video is released through Huffington Post.

In it right-wing Conservative politician Peter Lilley is filmed saying that Chancellor George Osborne "privately regrets all the [green] commitments that have been made" and "Basically I think Osborne wanted to get people into key positions who could begin to get the government off the hook from commitments they made very foolishly,"

Lilley foresees moves to make targets in the Climate Change Act advisory rather than mandatory:

“Well it depends of course what commitments are made in the manifesto. [inaudible]... but otherwise, we could well see, certainly amendments to the Climate Change Act, cease to make it legally binding, make it advisory, make it dependent on other people doing things in parallel with us, rather than setting an example to the rest of the world.”

He calls Tory energy minister Greg Barker and advocate for renewables and green jobs "barking" and "a complete nutter".

Chris Heaton-Harris says to Greenpeace that Barker is " away with the fairies but he is very close to David Cameron” having helped him with his election campaign.

Lilley says:

“It’s looking a lot better with [environment secretary] Owen Paterson and [energy minister] John Hayes. I’ve still got Ed Davey to dump on from a height from somewhere”.

“So Number 10 helped John Hayes, so actually Ed Davey’s got the ‘strategic' stuff, so he can go and talk bollocks around the world, where John Hayes is in charge of deployment.

“John Hayes who is energy minister is on my side. He was helping as a minister last time, but his portfolio didn’t match anything that was useful, but then when he got shuffled across he became really useful.”

**November 15**

Result of the Corby by-election is declared. Labour win with 48%, Conservatives second at 26.6% (a drop of 15.6%), while UKIP come third with 14.3%, their best by election result to date. The LibDems drop 9.5% and come fourth.

[At the 2015 General Election the Conservatives regain the seat (42.8%), Labour are second (38.5%) and UKIP come third (13.7%) and the LibDems fourth, falling to 2.6%.]

**November 26**

In a blog at energynetworks.org Tim Field relates that Ed Davey has asked lawyers to examine John Hayes’s powers and: ‘In a final jab at Hayes before introducing the Energy Bill and flying to Doha for
international climate change talks, Davey is set to approve the construction of a 22-turbine wind farm less than three miles from his Energy Minister’s constituency.

December

The government publishes an Update to its 2011 Renewable Energy Roadmap. It says it ‘is on track to meet the first interim target on the way to the ambitious target of 15% renewable energy consumption by 2020’. It adds: ‘We have undertaken a call for evidence on costs and onshore wind community engagement and benefits, looking at how communities can have more of a say over, and receive greater benefit from, hosting onshore wind in their area.’ Plus: ‘The current pipeline [of onshore wind] is likely to have the potential to provide the appropriate quantity of deployment to fulfil our ambition outlined last year’.

December 5

George Osborne ‘fires the starting gun’ on a new ‘dash for gas’ says The Guardian. "We are consulting on new tax incentives for shale gas and announcing the creation of a single office for unconventional gas so that regulation is safe but simple,” Osborne told the House of Commons. The government’s ‘Gas Generation Strategy’ foresees gas remaining the ‘dominant fuel’ for heating until 2030.

2013

January 8

In the Daily Telegraph, Jasper Copping writes, ‘A wind farm is to be built at the site of one of the most important battles ever fought on English soil, despite officials admitting that the scheme will “harm the setting” of the historic location. They say that the damage the project will cause is outweighed by the need to meet renewable energy targets’. The site overlooks that of the Battle of Naseby, ‘the decisive clash of the English Civil War’. He says: ‘campaigners have described it as a “disgrace” and are calling on Eric Pickles, the Communities Secretary, to overrule his inspector’. The wind farm is made up of four turbines and is ‘where the parliamentarians – or Roundheads – were drawn up into battle formation, and where they were first spotted by the royalists, or cavaliers’.

Simon Hunt, from Stop Kelmarsh Wind Farm group, says: “The inspector accepted all the heritage arguments but the energy arguments trumped everything, even though they are questionable. This shows that localism does not exist.”

Chris Heaton-Harris, Conservative MP for the area, says the council is to try to persuade ministers to overturn the decision, adding: “You could argue that Naseby is where our parliamentary democracy was born”... “Every level of local political representative is completely opposed to this and yet one man turns up and ignores all of that. It is anti-democratic.” The plan is supported by a trust running Kelmarsh Hall which stands to receive income from the wind farm for its upkeep.

January 10

The BBC reports that a plan to build a wind turbine at Wormslade Farm, Kelmarsh in Northamptonshire has been refused permission by the Council but then approved by a Planning Inspector on appeal by the developer EON. Council officers had backed the plan saying the "impact on the character of the locality" was outweighed by the benefit to the environment in "cutting greenhouse gas emissions".
January 23

David Cameron seeks to appease Conservative Eurosceptics by promising an in/out referendum on Britain’s membership of the EU, after he has renegotiated the current terms of Britain’s relationship with the EU.

February 23


The post also lists British Conservative MEPs ‘mostly’ in the ECR, including Richard Ashworth, Martin Callanan (Chair of ECR), Niranjan Deva, Daniel Hannan, Roger Helmer and Syed Kamall, who it says ‘are all members of ALEC and none of them declared this in their Register of Interests last year despite the Code of Conduct stating:

‘2. The declaration of financial interests shall contain the following information, which shall be provided in a precise manner:

(d) membership of any boards or committees of any companies, non-governmental organisations, associations or other bodies established in law, or any other relevant outside activity that the Member undertakes, whether the membership or activity in question is remunerated or unremunerated,

(g) any support, whether financial or in terms of staff or material, additional to that provided by Parliament and granted to the Member in connection with his or her political activities by third parties, whose identity shall be disclosed,

(h) any other financial interests which might influence the performance of the Member’s duties’.

It continues:

‘Due to their failure to register their membership of ALEC, a situation since remedied by some of them, a formal complaint was made to Martin Schulz the President of the Parliament. Several months on there has been no response to the complaint.

You must admit that having these ALEC members inside European Parliamentary Committees able to pass information to US colleagues within hours of meetings taking place and long before decisions are reached is potentially a pretty useful tool for lobbyists.

In addition to the MEPs listed there are two members of the British Parliament who are, or were, ALEC members.

Chris Heaton-Harris is the Member of Parliament for Daventry and was, prior to his election in 2010, an MEP and is a close colleague of Roger Helmer.
Liam Fox was a member of ALEC until at least June 2011 which overlaps his period as British Secretary of State for Defence, a position he held from May 2010 until October 2011.

It also features what seems to be an ALEC listing of the Young Britons Foundation (YBF) (President Daniel Hannah) ‘The Young Britons’ Foundation was entirely inspired by the success, drive and spirit of the American conservative movement ... First introduced to organisations such as the American Conservative Union, the Young America’s Foundation, the Leadership Institute, Collegiate Network and the Heritage Foundation at the annual Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), it was clear to co-founder Donal Blaney and Greg Smith that Britain was behind in the training and development of younger political activists’.

[The YBF later runs into controversy – see 2015 – Wikipedia entry, BBC report].

February 28

Eastleigh by-election. Following resignation of Liberal Democrat Energy Minister Chris Huhne, the Liberal Democrats retain his seat but with a 14.4% reduction in votes. UKIP come second with a 24.2% increase in vote.

Mar 4

The US-based VLTP (Voters Legislative Transparency Project) publishes Part I of a study of the British Conservatives and their involvement with ALEC, the American Legislative Exchange Council: ALEC and the Tories: A History (Part 1) – ALEC in Great Britain. It cites links between US right-wing lobbyists and their UK counterparts such as the IEA Institute for Economic Affairs, which it says is supported by the ‘American Friends of the IEA’ which exists to raise funds for the UK organisation.

It gives a history of ALEC-Conservative links. It reproduces extracts from an ALEC document: ‘ALEC is also working to promote closer working relations between America’s IFEX state political leaders and their foreign counterparts. The underlying purpose is to build a better understanding of America’s political process and maintain an ongoing dialogue of how free-market societies are prepared to meet future challenges and the emerging global economy’

‘In 2002, ALEC staff held discussions with several international delegations, including British Members of the European Parliament ... Future ALEC activities aim to bring emerging political leaders from other countries into this international freedom exchange’.

‘In 2003, a delegation of European Members of Parliament will be meeting with American state lawmakers at ALEC’s Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C.’

2004 - Senator William G. Hewes III, ALEC National Chairman: ‘Just as the White House and Congress gear up for their new electoral cycles, Europe is also at the start of a new 5 year phase. The new enlarged European Parliament is just finding its feet following June’s Europe-wide elections and she has already shown signs that she will fully flex her institutional muscles when needed. Soon the new European Commission of 25 will also take up a fresh term, with a new set of priorities and challenges.’

‘One of the biggest challenges facing Europe is surely its very direction. The new Constitutional Treaty currently undergoing ratification in Member States is by no means a shoe-in and the EU will spend much of the next 18 months trying to establish its exact place on the world stage. ... That is
where legislators have a key role to play – in bringing forward a relationship based on co-operation and trust.’

‘ALEC’s EU project is now well under way and we’ve found friends in the conservative delegations of Britain, Hungary and the Czech Republic. We hope to extend this further and establish an on-going dialogue with conservatives across the European Union’.

‘ALEC will welcome three MEPs to its States and Nations Policy Summit in Washington D.C. this December to discuss the latest aspects of the transatlantic relationship. We also hope to build a firm bridge across the Atlantic for our shared conservative ideas and I know that everyone at ALEC will do their best to welcome our European guests’. [Helmer, Heaton Harris and Callanan – see 2004].

A collection of articles ‘2004- 2005 Articles, Publications and News’ from ALEC’s ‘Atlantic Connection Monthly’ includes an article by Sally McNamara who is described as ‘EU Project Director’, and others by Dan Hannan MEP, Roger Helmer and Chris Heaton-Harris.

In 2005 [see 2005 on timeline] the National Chairman sees the ‘international relations project’ is ‘moving full steam ahead’ and praises a ‘remarkable’ [2005?] speech in Washington by Chris Heaton-Harris.

March 4

In The Guardian Bob Ward writes:

‘The morning after the Eastleigh result, Ukip’s leader, Nigel Farage, was interviewed on BBC Radio 4's Today programme, and listed all the issues on which he felt Conservative voters were disenchanted with the prime minister: "The Conservatives failed here because traditional Tory voters look at Cameron and ask themselves: is he a Conservative? And they conclude, no, he is not. He is talking about gay marriage, wind turbines, unlimited immigration from India, he wants Turkey to join the EU."

... Farage’s comments only echoed Ukip’s official energy policy, which conveys not just opposition to UK’s participation in the European Union, but also an incoherent mixture of anti-environmentalism and a disregard for scientific evidence.’

‘The party’s official energy policy document, which was published last September, draws attention to the EU’s target for generating 15% of energy from renewable sources by 2020, and attacks the government for promoting wind turbines to meet it because "the net reductions in CO2 emissions are trivial or zero". However, this claim is based on a pamphlet published by Lord Lawson’s lobby group for climate change sceptics, the Global Warming Policy Foundation, even though it was found by researchers at Imperial College to contain fundamental flaws, including serious underestimates about the level of emissions cuts.’

‘The policy document also complains that the UK has been "a vocal supporter" of the EU emissions trading scheme, which caps the level of greenhouse gases from industrial sources across all member states. But, conversely, it also criticises the “unilateral action” of the Climate Change Act which sets emissions targets for the UK.’

UKIP denies climate science findings and ‘suggests that carbon dioxide is not "a pollutant", but is instead "a natural trace gas in the atmosphere which is essential to plant growth and life on earth". 
Ukip's policy document was launched by Roger Helmer, the party's energy spokesman, but even he struggles to cover up the inconsistencies. The document states that "Ukip strongly supports a clean environment and clean air, stressing that "coal-fired power stations must use clean technology to remove sulphur and nitrogen oxides, particulates and other pollutants". But last month, Helmer used his website to rail against the European Union's large combustion plant directive, which is forcing the closure of many coal-fired power stations, on the grounds that it "will make not a scrap of difference" to global emissions of greenhouse gases. Yet the directive is actually designed to reduce pollution from sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and particulates because of their harmful effects on human health and the environment."

‘Of course, Helmer is at the moderate end of the spectrum compared with Ukip's leader in Scotland, Christopher Monckton, who constantly embarrasses the party through his extreme rhetoric. Earlier this year, Monckton wrote an extraordinarily vitriolic article about President Obama, of which perhaps the least offensive parts were the suggestion that he "has been taken in, hook, line and sinker, by catastrophic anthropogenic climate alarm" and would "continue to inflict crippling taxes and regulations in the name of saving the planet from 'global warming'". In 2009, Monckton told an audience in the US that the aim of a proposed UN climate change treaty on climate change was to "impose a communist world government", and two years ago he was forced to apologise after comparing an Australian climate change adviser to the Nazis.'

‘With Cameron discussing in a newspaper article over the weekend the need to build more energy infrastructure, and emphasising that "this is not a popularity contest but a battle for Britain's future", we may find over the coming months that Conservative ministers start to put the spotlight on Ukip's incoherent and inconsistent proposals for "keeping the lights on".‘

March 18


May 7

Peter Stanford writes in the Daily Telegraph that 'Northamptonshire's uncrowded and gentle landscape is in danger of becoming the wind farm capital of England'. The term comes from Bill Driver 'the local spokesman for the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)'. He argues that as the area 'lacks the sort of national designations that bring with them special protection – National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Green Belt' it is seeing 'a rush of planning applications to site wind farms'. Stanford reports that 'there are applications for 53 turbines at various stages of the planning process in Northamptonshire ... out of a total of 94 that industry bodies estimate for the whole country'.

The National Trust has 'joined forces' with a local authority and English Heritage in a "landmark" challenge in the High Court over a windfarm less than a mile from Lyveden. Here there is 'the shell of an elaborate, cross-shaped banqueting hall-cum-summer house, started by Sir Thomas Tresham in the early 1600s but never completed, after his son and heir disgraced the family by his involvement in the Gunpowder Plot. It is Grade I listed, as are its extraordinary Elizabethan gardens of spiral mounts, terracing and canals, considered the best surviving examples of their kind in Britain'. Stanford notes that: 'writer Bill Bryson, president of CPRE, warned recently that inappropriate siting
of turbines risks turning people against wind energy’. The objectors argue that only high subsidy levels make the wind farm viable as the area is not that windy.

**June 6**

Eric Pickles, Secretary of State at DCLG, writes to all Local Authority leaders, informing them of changes to planning laws on wind farms, made in a written ministerial statement.

Pickles says:

‘We have set out clearly in the National Planning Policy Framework the importance of early and meaningful engagement with local communities. We will also amend secondary legislation to make pre-application consultation with local communities compulsory for the more significant onshore wind applications ... I have also written to Sir Michael Pitt Chief Executive of the Planning Inspectorate asking him to make planning inspectors aware’.

The written statement includes:

*the need for renewable energy does not automatically override environmental protections and the planning concerns of local communities;*

*decisions should take into account the cumulative impact of wind turbines and properly reflect the increasing impact on (a) the landscape and (b) local amenity as the number of turbines in the area increases;*

*local topography should be a factor in assessing whether wind turbines have a damaging impact on the landscape (i.e. recognise that the impact on predominantly flat landscapes can be as great or greater than as on hilly or mountainous ones); and*

*great care should be taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including the impact of proposals on views important to their setting.*

**June 6**


Pickles says "some local communities have genuine concerns that when it comes to wind farms insufficient weight is being given to environmental considerations like landscape, heritage and local amenity." For instance we need to "recognise that the impact on predominantly flat landscapes can be as great or greater than as on hilly or mountainous ones" and that "great care should be taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including the impact of proposals on views important to their setting."

Conservative Home writes: ‘Friends of the countryside will welcome this balanced approach. But Friends of the Earth have attacked it. They complain it is "rigging the planning system against onshore wind. " Already Friends of the Earth have proved themselves Friends of the Rat – in opposing weekly bin collections. Now they emerge as Friends of the Wind turbine – even if it ruins the landscape and local environment’. 

**June 20**
A ‘UK National Anti-Wind Conference’ is held at Welshpool. (Video) Speakers include Struan Stevenson MEP, Glyn Davies MP and Chris Heaton-Harris MP. Another is planned for Scotland.

June 25

Thomas Pursglove appointed as a Together Against Wind Director

June 26

Chris Heaton-Harris resigns as a Together Against Wind Director

June 26

The Voters Legislative Transparency Project publishes ‘ALEC: Pursuing Universal Stewardship – Part III: Connecting More Dots Between ALEC and International Politicians’

Part III –

‘In the previous article, we traced the relationship between two spiritual founders of the modern conservative movement(s) – former President Ronald Reagan and former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher – and explored the close linkages between the American fundraising mechanisms for the Margaret Thatcher Memorial Library and the indoctrination programs for the Young Britons Foundation’.

‘ALEC has more – and more convoluted – pathways to cover its tracks in the international arena. The United Kingdom isn’t the only country involved with ALEC’s machinations for the same reason that ALEC members are multi-national corporations …’.

‘One encounters the same names, again and again, on lists of Members of Parliament (British, European and other countries’), speakers at ALEC gatherings, graduates of ALEC-sponsored educational programs and boards of directors for NGO and/or lobbying efforts for various fundraising or legislative efforts for or against measures at the direction of ALEC’s corporate membership …’

[summarises previous Parts]

‘(Sally) McNamara is a Senior Policy Analyst with the Heritage Foundation and speaks at many events covering international topics: http://fora.tv/2006/12/12/Poland_on_the_Eve_of_Martial_Law’

‘2006: ALEC launched its international legislators’ membership program in Strasbourg, in October, to register local, regional, national and international legislative members’.

[photo] ‘2006 – Helmer along with other Int. members, holding ALEC Award [including Heaton-Harris]

‘ALEC attended its second States and Nation Policy Summit in Washington D.C. in December, with speeches and breakout discussions by Roger Helmer (Member of the European Parliament, UK), Dr. John K. Glenn (Director of Foreign Policy, German Marshall Fund of the United States) and Dr. Boguslaw Winid (Deputy Chief of Mission, Polish Embassy)’. 
‘ALEC was invited to the opening of the Heritage Foundation’s Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom (February 16). In his speech at the new Center, Dr. Liam Fox MP (UK), lectured on the special relationship between London and Washington’.

‘ALEC held an international relations seminar with Bill Cash, Member of Parliament (UK), in April. Bill Cash is President of the European Foundation, a London-based think-tank dedicated to Euro-realist policy analysis of European Union issues’.

‘2008 – 2011: ALEC claimed the “right” to be consulted by the United Nations, and to register as an NGO’.

‘ALEC International Relations Task Force inaugurated to attract membership among multinational corporations and trade organizations and to promote their international issues in regard to trade and taxation, the first of which to be addressed were: to urge the Obama Administration to open Free Trade negotiations with Taiwan; to urge the EU to repeal its ban on smokeless tobacco; to “reaffirm” open and reciprocal trade with Canada (by hampering the Buy American and Reinvestment and Recovery Acts); and to establish the ALEC Democracy and Governance Program to “encourage democracy” abroad’.

‘Roger Helmer, MEP, fingered climate change as “bad policy” in an interview with Inside ALEC for the November/December 2010 issue’.

‘ALEC held its International Relations Task Force and Federal Relations Working Group convention in Scottsdale AZ, in December, 2011’.

‘The so-called Atlantic Bridge began to fall apart in 2011, when British MEPs and a few others were investigated for expense irregularities stemming from all the travel back and forth on ALEC’s nickel. This, of course, made a much larger splash in Europe than it did in America. It is also important to note that ALEC’s international infrastructure, including the web of contacts, is intact’.

[Credits Liam Sean McKnight ‘for his tireless research of the European side of ALEC’s interference. Many of the facts used in this article were found at Liam’s site: http://na-saighneain.com/index.html. Readers researching ALEC’s foreign membership and international agenda should visit this important and document laden site’]

**July 28**

web.archive.org shows [www.togetheragainstwind.com](http://www.togetheragainstwind.com) providing letters to email:

‘REDUCE WIND FARM SUBSIDIES NOW’ – ‘Now is The Perfect Time To Write To The Rt. Hon Michael Fallon MP, Energy Minister, About Wind Energy Prices. The subsidy and payment system for wind energy is about to be changed. The Debate On This is Happening Now and we urge you to make your contribution & get your voice heard.by writing to the Minister concerned’ ‘Please Act Now’

‘STAND UP FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES’ – ‘Our understanding is SPDs can be introduced at any time in a process, much, much, quicker than inserting a Buffer Zone into any Local Plan. We would ask, therefore, that you support our Campaign and also contact Local Authorities in your area, urging both MPs & Councillors to put in place SPDs relating to Wind Turbine Development’. ‘Please Act Now’
[SPD = Supplementary Planning Document – see East Northamptonshire example here]

‘Closed Campaigns’ – ‘Excellent Campaign which generated really good figures, but it’s one step forward, than one back. Thanks for All Your Support’

‘NO’ MEANS ‘NO’ ‘Great Campaign helping to achieve the Recent Statements on Localism & Wind Farms from Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government. Well Done All’

**August 22**

The *Daily Telegraph* reports ‘Secret wind farm report into house price blight’, saying ‘The official report at the centre of the Coalition row over renewable energy will disclose for the first time the impact of wind farms on rural house prices’. Environment Secretary Owen Paterson has commissioned a consultancy Frontier Economics to investigate whether renewables lower house prices in the countryside. ‘Coalition sources said the report is being blocked by officials at the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), run by Ed Davey’. Paterson intends to make it public ‘as soon as it is completed’. Chris Heaton-Harris, the Conservative MP for Daventry, said: “Wind farms definitely affect house prices and it is highly likely that this report will come to that conclusion. “I would expect there to be billions of pounds of planning blight because of wind turbines close to properties.”

**October 20**

Heaton-Harris blogs: ‘Government’s Onshore Wind 2020 Target Hit’. In a written answer [170959] Energy Minister Michael Fallon says (stats) there are 6.8GW operational and 6.4GW consented with 6.4GW submitted. Chris Heaton-Harris says the government target for onshore wind is 13GW therefore the target is hit and this ‘proves that the subsidies for onshore wind are too high’.

**October 31**

Carbon Brief reports a confused situation following statements from Energy Minister John Hayes, DECC and the media: Untangling John Hayes on wind power

‘The Daily Mail and Daily Telegraph are today lauding the “end of the windfarm”, just as trade body RenewableUK and the Financial Times have issued positive reports on the industry’s prospects’.

‘Hayes praised the renewable industry at trade body RenewableUK’s conference in Glasgow yesterday. But in remarks the minister briefed to the Mail and Telegraph he implied that the government will allow no new onshore windfarms to be proposed, leading to front-page splashes in both papers’.

‘Hayes said the government supported “renewable energy of the right kind” in a Guardian column. At the RenewableUK conference later that evening, he said renewables need “the right kind of framework” to give investors certainty.’

But Hayes’s boss, Energy Secretary Ed Davey, ‘allegedly told Hayes to rewrite his planned remarks, which were apparently less-than-enthusiastic about wind’.

‘It appears the first draft of the speech provides the basis for front page articles in the *Mail* and *Telegraph* today. (The Mail ‘Minister signals end of the wind farm’; the *Daily Telegraph* ‘Death knell for wind farms’).
Hayes tells the Telegraph: “We can no longer have wind turbines imposed on communities”. Hayes says he has asked Planning Minister, Nick Boles to look into the effect of wind farms on “house prices, and other quality of life issues”.

Hayes argues that “even if a minority of [wind farms] in the [planning] system is built” the UK will reach its 13GW 2020 renewable energy targets.

But Carbon Brief says ‘in fact, there is no government target for the amount of power to be generated by onshore wind – there’s just the EU target that says renewables must provide 15 per cent of energy generation by 2020. To meet this, the government has projected that onshore wind “could contribute up to around 13GW” by that date.’

‘Figures from RenewableUK show that around 5GW of onshore wind power is already in operation, a further 2GW is under construction and around 4GW has been consented by the planning process. Together, that’s around 11GW.

Roughly 7.5GW is currently being considered by the planning process, and not all of these projects will necessarily get built. If they did, there would be around 18.5GW of onshore wind in total’.

So ‘Hayes appears to be right’ but CarbonBrief notes that Conservativehome believes Hayes “probably let his rhetoric run ahead of the situation”, while The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) says in a statement this morning that “there has been no change to government policy on renewable energy”.

DECC is conducting a review of how windfarm developers can ensure community benefit but is not looking into windfarms’ effect on property values or landscape.

CarbonBrief examines claims by Chris Heaton-Harris. (a) that wind power doesn’t reduce carbon dioxide emissions. This ‘probably assumes that gas turbines providing back-up’ will cancel out savings but academics at Imperial College say that’s based on illogical assumptions’.

(b) wind power puts up energy bills: the Committee on Climate Change estimates green policies will raise energy bills by about £110 by 2020. Of this, they estimate £50 will be due to wind power. ‘Over the past few years, renewables subsidies have been overshadowed by the rising cost of gas, which is the main reason bills have gone up’.

Plus as onshore wind is one of the cheapest forms of renewables ‘if building less onshore wind means building more offshore, or more of other renewable technologies, this may itself push bills up’.

(c) on fuel poverty – ‘when we examined the question, about half of the £18 of the average energy bill that directly subsidies renewable power went to wind – £9 per year. Heaton-Harris suggests this extra £9 pushes 50,000 people into fuel poverty each year. But bills are going up for a range of reasons, with the most significant being rising wholesale gas prices’.

November 21

The Sun has reported that David Cameron ordered aides to "get rid of all the green crap" from energy bills in a drive to bring down costs. Joss Garman at Greenpeace tells The Guardian that Cameron is pandering “to the extreme wing of his own party” and trying to “claw back support from Ukip”.
December 3

Chris Heaton-Harris republishes an article by three of his constituents on noise from wind farms. ‘They've also written a peer-reviewed paper on this subject and presented their findings to DECC. DECC have since gone remarkably quiet on this matter’.

December 4

The Guardian reports that cuts set out by the energy secretary, Ed Davey, ‘mean onshore windfarms will for the first time receive lower subsidies than future nuclear power stations, and ‘wind industry sources said the cuts meant small, community-owned windfarms were likely to be cancelled, harming the government’s own intention to overcome opposition to turbines in some places by giving local people a stake in the developments’.

Davey said 10GW of offshore wind capacity – enough to power about 6m homes – was achievable by 2020. But this represents a sharp drop in ambition according to RenewableUK, who said the aim had been 40GW in 2010.

Simon Bullock of Friends of the Earth said cuts to onshore wind and solar power subsidies reflected their success. "But ministers must now scrutinise the handouts given to support oil, gas and coal," he said. "George Osborne has given £2bn to support dirty energy in the past year alone."

December 18

The 2013 Energy Act comes into force. It leads to ‘electricity market reforms’, Contracts for a Difference (CfDs) and a Capacity Market to ‘provide backup for intermittent and inflexible low-carbon generation sources’, as well as an emission performance Standard and Carbon Floor Price. These replace the Renewables Obligation. Ed Davey says it will "attract investment to bring about a once-in-a-generation transformation of our electricity market". These are part of a ‘decarbonization’ strategy through setting market frameworks rather than a ‘command and control’ approach.

Wind 2014 timeline

February 23

web.archive.org shows www.togetheragainstwind.com ‘Active campaigns’ - 'Wind More Expensive Than Nuclear?' – ‘Currently nearly 40% of UK electricity is generated from Coal and costs £50/MWHr. What will the effect be on consumer bills when this is replaced by new forms of generation costing twice as much? Write to Your MP and Ask For A Fair Deal For Consumers’ ‘Please Act Now’

Plus 'STAND UP FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES'

March 3

Guardian – a survey finds wind power is the most popular source of energy in the UK.

(48%) said an onshore windfarm would receive positive reception if it was developed within five miles of their home. 19% of said fracking development would receive a positive local reception.
Support for wind power was high among supporters of all parties but lowest with Conservatives at 39%, compared to among Labour voters and 45% for UKIP.

It notes ‘a sharp rise’ in rejection of onshore windfarm applications across the UK, from 25-29% in 2009-12 to 41% in 2013. Communities secretary Eric Pickles has told planners to give greater weight to local concerns over windfarm applications, claiming “current planning decisions on onshore wind are not always reflecting a locally-led planning system”. ‘Pickles has taken 35 wind power planning appeals out of the hands of the planning inspectorate since last June, refusing eight and approving two so far, and opening his party up to criticism of “heavy-handed intervention”.’

April 1

Rowena Mason, political correspondent writes in The Guardian that ‘Tories plan new attack on windfarms’ as ‘David Cameron considers 2015 manifesto commitment to curb onshore turbines’ although ‘Nick Clegg says Lib Dems will block it from coalition programme’.

She adds: ‘This would allow the Tories to go into next year’s election claiming the Lib Dems have blocked their efforts to restrict turbines and make a pitch to core Tory voters about cutting back support for windfarms if they win’.

Plus ‘There are more than 4,000 onshore wind turbines generating almost 5% of all of electricity, and 3,000 more have planning approval’. As well as restricting any more turbines a senior Tory source ‘said other options were further cuts to subsidies aimed at making it more economically difficult for current windfarms to operate and extra controls on planning permission’.

‘Surveys consistently show public support for windfarms and green energy, even among Tory and Ukip voters. But Cameron remains under pressure from backbenchers to reduce support for onshore windfarms over planning concerns and the level of subsidies on household bills’.

‘In November, the Sun and the Daily Mail said he ordered aides to ”get rid of all the green crap” from energy bills to bring down costs. According to the reports, Cameron used the direct language to dismiss green levies, which go towards paying for renewables and helping poor people cut energy use’.

April 2

In the run-up to European Parliament elections, Campaign Strategy blog ‘UK Politics and Values – Beyond Class’ reports values-survey data revealing that ‘Supporters of the Liberal Democrats and Conservatives are massively divided over their most powerful (and unconscious) values, even though the parties are in a governing coalition’. Presaging the result of Brexit in 2016, it notes that ‘UKIP has little support outside the Settler values area but eroding it would be difficult without a long bottom-up process because the UKIP vote is a result of sustained neglect by other parties’.

It notes:
‘Liberal Democrat support is concentrated in just two VMs [Values Modes], the TX Transcender and CE Concerned Ethical Pioneers. Values of LibDem supporters are almost the diametric opposite of the main Conservative supporter values, indicating the uneasy nature of their ‘marriage of convenience’ in the governing coalition. Any government politicians who have convinced themselves that they really share a common cause are deluding themselves: their supporters do not feel it.’

These values differences will underpin the coming split within the coalition and then the values divide exposed in the vote on the EU Referendum. Anticipating the voting pattern of the 2016 Referendum and the 2017 General Election it observes that: ‘UKIP and Conservative over-index amongst the over 65s but Labour has an advantage over the Conservatives in appealing to the under 34s’.

**April 4**

Reporting on the ‘Big Field Wind Farm’ row in North Cornwall, the Guardian observes ‘windfarms have the power to change communities and political allegiances’. The Good Energy proposal for 11 turbines ‘is dividing local opinion and may well influence voters in the general election’ says reporter Steven Morris.

Beef farmer Stuart May says "We don’t need them and we don’t want them, Cornwall has already done much more than its fair share when it comes to renewable energy. We’re absolutely pickled in solar panels and windfarms ... I’m not against green energy but there are better ways of doing it than plonking these monsters here. For me, it’s all about greed. The energy company wants to make money, the farmers who are giving them land want to get rich quick. I count one of the farmers involved as a good friend but the first I knew of all this was when a leaflet from the company dropped through the door. We haven't talked since; I feel so let down."

‘The scheme – called the Big Field Wind Farm – has divided the community. There have been fractious public meetings, rows in the local shop (plus one reported assault) and lifelong friends have fallen out. Insults, allegations of dirty tricks and wild conspiracy theories are flying around.’

‘Wind power is likely to be a key issue for the Tories and Liberal Democrats in the runup to next year’s general election as the coalition parties distance themselves from each other. This week it emerged the next Conservative manifesto may include new controls over onshore generation such as cuts to subsidies and planning restrictions while the Lib Dems reinforced their support for wind farms.’

"I think clamping down on developments like this will be a vote-winner for the Tories and for Ukip," said May. "I certainly wouldn't think of voting Lib Dem if they are for these things."

‘The PR campaign by Good Energy is sophisticated. It has produced a Facebook page, complete with attractive images of wildlife, and a Twitter feed @TheBigFieldWF that directs followers to interviews with children who speak about the benefits of wind power. More controversially, it has encouraged customers and shareholders to write to councillors to support the scheme even if they live nowhere near it.’

‘The campaign group set up to fight the plans, Communities Against Rural Exploitation (Care), is furious at the scale of the scheme and at what it sees as underhand tactics by Good Energy. Most emphasise that they are not against renewable energy but believe this scheme in this place is wrong.’
‘retired researcher, Nina Kamm, said she was concerned at the "industrial scale" of the turbines, which will dwarf local landmarks such as the beautiful old church at Week St Mary’. "We’re worried that tourism will be affected – visitors won’t want to come – and wildlife and plant life will be blighted."

‘painter and potter, Nicky May, argued that a rural area was being industrialised. "This is a beautiful, unspoiled spot. We’re going to have a development on an industrial scale but without the benefits that come from being in an urban area such as proximity to hospitals and other services. It seems unjust."

‘Teacher Pauline Smeeth said she was "shocked and horrified" at the size of the turbines, which will be up to 125 metres high. "They’ll be seen for 30 miles or more. Nobody here will have a chance of selling up and moving up. We’re stuck here."

"It’s unethical," said retired lecturer Stuart Mealing. Mealing, who has never voted Tory before, said he would consider doing so at next year’s general election if the party opposes schemes such as Big Field’

‘Such talk must worry the sitting Lib Dem MP (and environment minister), Dan Rogerson, who will defend a relatively slim majority next year’. [He lost his seat to the Conservatives on 8 May 2015]

‘Rogerson was not available for comment ... The Lib Dem local councillor, Nicky Chopak, was more forthcoming. She said she had supported turbine schemes in the past and backed the national party’s supportive stance. "Wind energy is very important for this country, our children and our children’s children. But this scheme is wrong for this place."

Rogerson’s Tory opponent ... postman Scott Mann ‘said he would be campaigning on the issue. "We have far too many wind turbines in north Cornwall. I think attitude to onshore wind turbines is going to be one of the big differences between the Conservatives and the Lib Dems."

‘The founder and CEO of Good Energy, Juliet Davenport, said: "Any move to block further onshore wind farms is pandering to a privileged vocal minority’.

‘There are, of course, local people who are supportive, including the farmers who will make money out of leasing their land. Farmers Ray and Val Griffin, who are involved in the scheme, said farmers had to find new ways of diversifying to make a living’.

‘An aerospace engineer, Bill Andrews, said he was an "INBY" (in my back yard) rather than an NIMBY. "The country that began the industrial revolution in the 18th century has to set an example to the rest of the world. This is a good scheme that makes sense here."

‘A retired theatre designer, John McMurray, added: "Everyone wants electricity. If they want that convenience, they have to put up with scheme like this."

‘Clergyman Rob Yeomans said he saw the turbines as a "stopgap". "They have a lifespan of 20-25 years. By then we’ll have found another way of generating power. For me this is about caring for the environment and caring for the Earth. I think we have a moral duty to support this scheme."

April 8
A LSE study finds large windfarms can cut as much as 12% from the value of homes within a 2km radius, and reduce property prices as far as 14km. The findings contrast sharply with a report by the Centre for Economics and Business Research in March, which found no negative impact on property prices within a 5km radius of a turbine. – Guardian.

‘For the average sized windfarm, the price reduction is around 5-6% for homes with a visible windfarm within 2km, falling to less than 2% between 2-4km, and to near zero between 8-14km, which is at the limit of likely visibility. In areas close to windfarms, but where the turbines are not visible, the report found there was a small increase (around 2%) in property prices’.

April date ? (10th?) Pickles extends extra call in powers until 2015 election

‘We have abolished regional strategies, and their top down renewable energy targets, and are encouraging local councils to work with their communities to set out in their Local Plan where developments for renewable energy should and should not take place. We have also been very clear that the views of local communities should be listened to

We have also introduced a new requirement for compulsory pre-application consultation with local communities for more significant onshore wind applications (i.e. of more than two turbines or where the hub height of any turbine exceeds 15 metres)

On 10 October 2013 I announced, Official Report, Column 30WS, a temporary change to the appeals recovery criteria, for a period of six months

I have decided to extend the temporary change to the appeals recovery criteria, and continue to consider for recovery, appeals for renewable energy developments, for a further 12 months.’

April 12

A report by the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change calls for “large-scale changes in the global energy system” (Daily Telegraph). ‘The central thrust of the report will be a call for “large-scale changes in the global energy system” and increased subsidy for green energy to help countries make the switch from fossil fuels ... That will take the total investment in low carbon energy sources to about £300 billion a year until 2030. Britain now spends about £6 billion a year, trying to cut greenhouse gas emissions through such measures as subsidies for wind farms and solar power. There will be pressure for that figure to rise sharply.’

‘Chris Heaton-Harris, a Conservative MP who led a successful back-bench campaign to cut the consumer subsidy to wind farms, said: “This IPCC report is backward looking. We can be a lot greener, emit less carbon and produce cheaper energy if we switch to shale gas rather than ploughing our money into wind farms that plunge the poorest people into fuel poverty.”’

April 22

Chris Heaton-Harris MP reports that he met with Kelmarsh Anti-Wind Farm Campaigners in the Stags Head at Maidwell.
April 24

The Conservatives pledge that if elected with an overall majority in 2015 they will axe public subsidies for any newly planned onshore wind turbines. ‘Existing windfarms and those already with planning permission would be protected from the change but’ says the energy minister Michael Fallon, ‘these would be enough to meet 2020 targets set by the EU – meaning any further developments should not be subsidised’ and ‘changes to planning rules will also give communities more power to reject onshore wind projects not already in place or planned when the policy comes into force’

Critics say the Conservatives are turning their back on the cheapest form of renewable energy, putting future jobs at risk and the move is designed to counter the threat from Ukip.

24 April

Karl Mathiesen starts an online debate in The Guardian with Will Tory plans kill onshore wind in the UK? He writes that [of a combination of funding cuts and planning restrictions]: What this is really about is votes in rural areas and an appeal to the NIMBYism that sways the Tory right towards Ukip. In the end, windfarms, like migrant workers and the EU, are seen as alien edifices being imposed on the British way of life. Renewable energy creates jobs, but it fails to create them in the areas where it changes the skyline. Thus locals feel the costs outweigh the benefits. The majority of Brits are for windfarms, but the Tories have decided that the votes they need are not only opposed, but they are so strongly opposed they will decide their vote on it.

He quotes Jennifer Webber, from RenewableUK: this policy "will kill the industry dead".

April 24

RenewableUK chief tells Alex Marshall of ENDS magazine: “We urge the Conservative Party to work with the industry on cost reduction, and stop making arbitrary comments which threaten investment in all energy types ... It's unfortunate that we seem to have reached a point where the Conservatives are allowing UKIP to dictate Tory energy policy."

May 22

UKIP has a breakthrough in the European Elections, winning more seats than any other party - 24 – and getting 27% of the popular vote. Labour comes second, Conservatives third.

June 29

web.archive.org shows www.togetheragainstwind.com ‘Latest Campaign’ – “Stop The Wind Farm Folly Now” – ‘Every new wind farm proposal is met by strong local opposition. People living in small villages raise thousands of pounds to fight proposals to build wind farms. There is no need for any more wind farms because the 13 GW target for 2020 is already secure. There is no need to destroy more of our countryside in a land grab driven by excessive subsidies. It is not sustainable to keep building wind farms and putting turbines ever closer to homes. Noise problems are getting worse as new wind farms put larger turbines ever closer to where people live. We need to bring an end to the wind farm folly. We need all political parties to recognise the problems and bring an end to onshore wind farm construction. Write to the Prime Minister and to your MP calling on them to stop the wind farm folly’ Please Act Now”
Plus ‘Wind More Expensive Than Nuclear?’

July 5

*Chris Heaton-Harris retweets:* RT @TimMontgomerie: Amazing: Fracking in America has cut CO2 more than all of the world’s wind turbines and solar panels

July 20

In a political reshuffle, Environment Secretary Owen Patterson loses his job. Writing in *The Telegraph* he accuses green NGOs, environmental officials and renewables companies of being ‘the Green Blob’: a ‘tangled triangle of unelected busybodies [which] claims to have the interests of the planet and the countryside at heart but is ‘focusing on the wrong issues and doing real harm while profiting handsomely’.

He contrasts ‘the highly paid globe-trotters’ with ‘local conservationists on the ground do wonderful work to protect and improve wild landscapes, as do farmers, rural businesses and ordinary people’, and claims (wrongly) ‘I was burnt in effigy by Greenpeace’.

Patterson says ‘I encouraged the search for affordable energy from shale gas to help grow the rural economy and lift people out of fuel poverty’ and ‘Yes, I’ve annoyed these people, but they don’t represent the real countryside of farmers and workers, of birds and butterflies ... it is the job of the elected politician to stand up [the blob] ... as Tony Abbott in Australia and Stephen Harper in Canada have done’.

Three days after leaving, Patterson announces that he will give a lecture for the climate-sceptic thinktank Global Warming Policy Foundation. He is replaced by replaced by Liz Truss.

At DECC the greener Conservative Minister Greg Barker loses his job along with Secretary of State Michael Fallon who is replaced by Matt Hancock, a signatory of the 2012 letter led by Chris Heaton-Harris that asked the government to “dramatically cut” subsidies for “inefficient and intermittent” onshore wind.

July 29

In an opinion piece in *ENDS* Simon Inglethorpe says the departure of Greg Barker ‘truly marks the end of an era’. He points out that. Barker was, after all, the man at Cameron’s side on that heady, halcyon trip to the arctic in 2006’. His departure ‘brings the Conservatives full circle from their decision eight years ago to detoxify the party’s brand by embracing all things green. The need to outflank UKIP at the general election means the environmental agenda is now perceived by many in the party as a vote-losing liability – as the likely Conservative manifesto pledge to end subsidies for new onshore wind farms demonstrates’.

May 15

*Simon Inglethorpe at ENDS magazine reports* that the government proposes ending ‘Renewables Obligation’ funding for larger solar projects from April 2015, because their rapid roll out could impact the ‘levy control framework’. Solar Trade Association (STA) rejects this as a “false excuse”. Lightsource Renewable Energy, call the cut “entirely political” with no economic basis. ENDS says Hive Energy’s Tim Purbrick sees the decision as ‘due to pressure from Tory rural MPs reacting to UKIP’s stance against solar farms’.
But consultant Charles Ogilvie, energy minister Greg Barker’s former chief of staff, tells ENDS the solar cut is “driven by the opposite political instincts” to the Conservative Party’s proposed onshore wind farm moratorium.

“Onshore wind was cut to cash in on anti-wind sentiment in the parliamentary Tory party and shires – whereas the curbing of large-scale solar aims to protect this success story from a similar populist backlash against the local impacts of solar farms,” said Ogilvie. “Was there an additional nudge from the Treasury about potential over-spend? You wouldn’t bet against it.”

The government wants to encourage medium-sized rooftop installations (eg on large farm sheds), which would be less visible than fields covered by large installations but Purbricks says as the deadline approaches it will cause a spike in completion of large projects: “there will be a worse rush for the door than in previous years”. He says: “DECC has messed up the recalibration of solar subsidy rates twice before. Now it’s three times.”

The move is accompanied by a proposed switch to ‘Contracts for a Difference’.

August 9

In The Spectator, Simon Jenkins chairman of the National Trust asks ‘Who are you calling a blob, Owen Paterson?’ He says that Patterson ‘ wore green wellies with panache, loathed Europe and wind turbines ... He was a sop to the shires and a bulwark against Ukip. Yet like his colleague Michael Gove, he was found to be ‘toxic’. ‘Paterson may claim to have been really fighting with the conservationists. We never saw him at the front’.

October 9

Chris Heaton-Harris tweets Yesterday I had an article about energy prices published on the Breitbart Blog. You can read it here:... http://t.co/TaQqez5Ddr

October 23

As David Cameron arrives in Brussels to discuss carbon targets for the 2015 Paris climate summit, The Guardian reports that MEPs warn ‘EU climate policy being ‘taken hostage’ by UKIP’. MEPs say the UK is trying to water down energy efficiency rules, UKIP energy spokesman Roger Helmer has intervened on kettles and vacuum cleaners, and said climate change is a “myth” and that “fossil fuels are the future” of British energy policy. British Labour and Liberal Democrat politicians want Cameron to ‘face down’ UKIP leaning Tories.

October 28

Energy Editor Paul Hatchwell writes in ENDS. ‘ here is undeniably more scepticism, even open hostility, towards environmental policies within the Conservative Party, perhaps hardened by rising influence from climate-sceptic UKIP’.

October 28

Guardian writer Polly Toynbee remarks ‘David Cameron once fixed a turbine to his roof. Now his government is blocking the cheapest clean energy’ She says ‘in his campaign to stamp out onshore wind power, communities and local government secretary Eric Pickles has just halted his 50th onshore wind project. Accused by Labour and Lib Dems of exceeding his powers, he overrides local
planning systems and inspectors, pulling 85% of wind energy capacity out of the standard process for purely political purposes’.

Toynbee visits the Somerset constituency of Conservative MP Ian Liddell-Grainger. She writes after the area flooded, he ‘blamed Chris Smith, chair of the Environment Agency – conveniently a former Labour minister – calling him “a little git” and a “coward” and said that he’d “stick his head down the loo and flush”’. She points out that Liddell-Grainger is ‘chair of the Commons energy committee and an anti-wind campaigner too’.

Toynbee adds:

‘In all of Somerset there is just one wind turbine, so you might think the proposal by Ecotricity to put up a modest four in the Parrett valley would have had a fair wind. It would power 6,769 homes. But no, it was opposed by a small local group – and Pickles “recovered” the application and turned it down. I went to look at the aptly named Black Ditch site, and this is no beauty spot: in fact it would be hard to find a duller patch of England’.

‘It sits beside the busy M5 motorway, by a demolished Royal Ordnance factory and a man-made river channel that used to service wartime munitions-making. This dreary strip of flat lands is crisscrossed in all directions by enormous pylons bestriding the countryside, carrying electricity from the nearby Hinkley Point nuclear power station across fields where shrink-wrapped black plastic hay bales litter the landscape’.

‘But pylons and plastic stir none of the deep politics of wind turbines which have become symbols in the warfare between climate preservers (left) and climate-change deniers (right). Beauty is in the eye of the beholder – so to the Ukip/Mail/Telegraph/Tory MP faction they are monstrosities. To many others, the sight of those great slow-turning white sails raises their spirits as a symbol of hope. But this is an unbridgeable divide, in politics and in aesthetics, the two closely allied’.

‘... the great game-changer has been the arrival of UKIP, with its three main aims – out of Europe, end immigration and, oddly, a ban onshore turbines, which put the wind up Cameron.’

However, 40% of Ukip voters support onshore wind and I doubt many votes in the recent Clacton byelection were moved by turbine phobia ... Pickles’ blocking of windfarms in the last year has lost over £500m in income and 2,000 scarce rural jobs, killing off investment in an industry providing the cheapest renewables’.

November 7

Chris Heaton-Harris tweets Can you help the “Independent Wind Farm Noise Working Group?” http://t.co/7Qxo9fjD5r

November 18

CCH blogs about ‘Wind Turbines, Noise, Amplitude Modulation and the Den Brook Planning Condition’. It relates to a legal planning tussle over conditions for a windfarm proposal at Den Brook in Devon. The ‘Den Brook Judicial Review Group’ says it is considering its position following a success for the developers, and ‘advises all householders within at least a 2.3km vicinity of Den Brook to be ready to take legal action against noise nuisance should it be required due to this apparent loss of planning-based noise control’. Chris Heaton-Harris and other MPs are pursuing new planning rules on noise and wind farms.
November 19

Chris Heaton-Harris tweets about Wind Turbines, Noise, Amplitude Modulation and the Den Brook Planning Condition. http://t.co/gGXp7rFw2M

November 20

Anti-wind Conservative MP Peter Bone writes in The Guardian ‘I remain a Tory, but Ukip is a good thing ... I am not defecting to Ukip, because I want an EU referendum – but Nigel Farage has filled the vacuum left by my own party’. Ukip ‘has been a good thing for British politics’ ... it has filled a vacuum on the right of British politics because the Conservatives have spent too much time worrying about the centre ground ... what Margaret Thatcher did with her strong right-wing message was to galvanise those voters who believe in traditional values so she was able to unify Conservative voters – those who did not normally vote – and Labour voters who liked her message. Unfortunately, the modern Conservative party has spent a lot of its time ignoring these voters, and on occasion deliberately antagonising them’.

‘The vacuum left by the Conservative party ignoring much of its traditional base was filled by Ukip. It has a number of very simple messages, such as control of immigration, leaving the EU, and ending the windfarm folly. All these policies resonate with traditional Tory voters, many non-voters, and increasingly Labour voters’.

‘I spend a lot of my time helping the excellent Eurosceptic Conservative candidate in Corby and East Northants, Tom Pursglove’

Voters are up in arms at the huge numbers of people coming into this country from the EU. They worry about the effect on public services – whether it’s being able to see a GP, the impact on hospital waiting times and school admissions, or housing opportunities.

In contrast, Cameron is listening and taking action. Who would have thought the prime minister would be guaranteeing an in-out referendum, controlling migration from the EU, and ending windfarm subsidies? He has done this because of pressure from within the party, but also because of the rise of Ukip. As I argued to the Cambridge Union, Ukip has changed the shape of British politics and made the established parties take more notice of the electorate’

‘In Corby ...The vote for Tom Pursglove and the Ukip candidate comes to 50%, so half the voters in this marginal seat want a centre-right MP. Yet at the moment, the intervention of Ukip splits ... So here we have Tom Pursglove, who wants to come out of the EU super state, wants to end the free movement of people from the EU, and is director of Together Against Wind (the National Anti-Wind Farm Campaign) being stopped from being elected by Ukip voters who want exactly the same thing. How can that make any sense at all?’

November 21

Chris Heaton-Harris retweets climate sceptic @BjornLomborg

November 21

The Daily Telegraph reports that the CPRE is “open” to fracking. Shaun Spiers, CPRE chief executive, says “Although we have serious concerns about the impact fracking could have on our countryside and rural communities, we are open to a debate”.

59
November 21

**ENDS Report describes how** the Farm Power project has called for ‘massive rural wind and solar expansion’. The group was set up in 2013 by Nottingham Trent University, sustainability consultancy Forum for the Future and Farmers Weekly, and includes the National Farmers Union, food producer George Thompson Ltd, National Grid, Business in the Community, United Utilities, Endurance Wind Power and Lightsource Renewable Energy. It proposes wind turbine installation on 2,100 farms, equivalent to about 5% of UK farms above 100ha.

But ENDS concludes: ‘Farm Power is unlikely to win government support for solar expansion on agricultural land and more onshore wind farms in rural areas. Environment secretary Liz Truss is strongly opposed to using farmland for solar energy and has moved to end agricultural subsidies for land occupied by solar installations’. DECC’s solar strategy ‘expects future growth to come instead from roof-mounted solar on commercial and public buildings’ and ‘The Conservatives are also likely to block the building of new onshore wind farms in England if they stay in power after the general election’.

December

The site ‘togetheragainstwind.com’ appears to have remained unchanged from June 2014 (and up until March 2016).

Wind timeline 2015

January 12

A study in Planning Magazine reported in ENDS finds ‘Communities secretary Eric Pickles blocked the development of 50 onshore wind farms last year by dismissing the advice of planning inspectors’. Pickles ‘decided 28 recovered planning appeals involving onshore wind in 2014 – compared with just four the previous year’.

Of the 28 wind appeals decided by Pickles in 2014, 25 were dismissed, according to Planning’s analysis, with the refused applications containing plans for 100 turbines. And eleven of the 25 dismissed appeals (44%) were refused against inspectors’ recommendations. He ‘refused permission for five wind turbines in South Northamptonshire and three in North Lincolnshire, rejecting his inspectors’ advice’.

Yana Bosseva, planning adviser at lobby group Renewable UK, said the secretary of state’s intervention in onshore wind energy appeals is sending "shockwaves" through the industry. "Before there were rules to the game and everyone knew what the rules were," she said. "These days, there are no rules."

David Bell, director at consultancy JLL, which advises wind energy developers, said the recovered appeals – and the high level of refusals against inspectors’ advice – represented an "extreme politicisation of the planning process in this sector”.

January 21

**Analysis by the Fabian Society** finds that almost 6 in 10 (57%) onshore windfarm applications in the UK were rejected in 2014. The Guardian reports that the ‘rejection rate now double that when coalition came to power, as onshore wind power becomes major area of political tension’. It is ‘a
result of tougher planning guidelines and more applications being called in for a personal decision by the communities secretary, Eric Pickles’. The 161 going ahead were ‘mostly smaller’. By September last year, ‘Pickles had intervened in at least 50 projects, only approving two of the 19 on which he had made a decision’.

Cameron Tait, Fabian researcher says the challenge of decarbonising the British economy should not “be made worse by heavy handed intervention from ministers in Whitehall” and “Ministers need to make it clear that if developers can win community consent and obey the laws of the land, they will get the go-ahead”.

Responding to the report, Kris Hopkins, a Conservative communities minister, said inappropriately sited wind turbines can be “a blight on the landscape, harming the local environment and damaging heritage for miles around”.

The Fabian report advocates involvement of communities in designing projects from the start and making them more than just an energy project. It gives six examples of where this was successfully done. However Pickles had intervened to overturn even some of these.

For example at Killington where Banks Renewables ‘consulted the local community not only on their energy needs, but on what other infrastructure they felt was needed in their community. The main priority for local residents was broadband access. A lack of access to broadband is a common complaint in rural areas, and Banks

Renewables went away and found a way to include broadband in their own infrastructure plans, and thereby planned to connect Killington to more than a new energy supply’. Residents ‘fell in behind the broadband proposals, which were
key to winning community consent and being approved by South Lakeland District Council’s planning committee in January 2014’. But ‘having won consent, the wind farm application was intervened on by the communities secretary’. Banks subsequently withdrew in June 2014 when a planning inquiry was scheduled for September, saying the likely costs were unaffordable.

February 24

Matthew Spencer, head of the environmental lobby group Green Alliance, brokers an agreement between the Conservatives, Liberal Democrats and Labour parties ‘to work collaboratively on climate change, regardless of May’s general election outcome’ (ENDS). It follows six months of talks with NGOs including Cafod, Christian Aid, Greenpeace, RSPB and WWF but does not include delivery issues in energy policy.

April 4

The Conservative Manifesto for the general election states “We will halt the spread of onshore wind farms”. This reverses their 2010 manifesto which said people would be ‘encouraged to support onshore wind farms and other renewable energy plants near their homes because local communities would retain the additional business rates they generate for six years’ (ENDS).

April 15

UKIP publishes its manifesto. Among the energy policies it pledges to support fracking for shale gas end subsidies for wind turbines and solar panels, seek to rejuvenate the coal industry and abolish "green levies" to cut the cost of fuel bills.

April 28

Ahead of the general election, ENDS Magazine examines the environmental commitments made in each party’s manifesto. It notes the main parties’ ‘remarkable … pledge to work collaboratively on climate change’ and that ‘UKIP vows to scrap the Climate Change Act saying it has caused “untold damage”. It now also proposes to scrap the Large Combustion Plant Directive which curbs emissions of sulphur and nitrogen pollution from power stations (not of greenhouse gases).

While the Conservatives say they will “cut emissions as cost effectively as possible”, they will “not support additional distorting and expensive power sector targets” and say “we will halt the spread of subsidised onshore wind farms”.

Labour says it would not introduce a moratorium on onshore wind and promises a decarbonisation target. All three main parties support shale gas extraction.

The Conservatives pledge that they will renegotiate the UK’s membership of the EU to ‘reclaim powers’, prevent foreign EU workers claiming benefits for four years, and reduce annual net migration and ‘give you a say over whether we should stay in or leave the EU, with an in-out referendum by the end of 2017’.

May 7

In the General Election, David Cameron’s Conservatives win most seats and a working majority of 12 seats. Nigel Farage, Nick Clegg and Ed Miliband all resign as party leaders. [In a 2019 BBC
documentary Inside Europe Donald Tusk President of the European Council will reveals that Cameron told him he expected his Liberal Democrat coalition partners would block a Referendum on Europe. His unexpected electoral success changed the equation.]

May 7

Climate sceptic and anti-wind campaigner Tom Pursglove, is elected MP for Corby and East Northamptonshire. Pursglove was Parliamentary Assistant to Chris Heaton-Harris, and worked with the Conservative MP for Wellingborough Peter Bone. According to his constituency Conservative website he was ‘Director of Together Against Wind, the national anti-wind farm campaign, and in that role, led the charge to secure national policy change in relation to onshore wind farms’. He became Parliamentary Private Secretary to Liam Fox.

May 18

Carbonbrief reports that a poll for the Sunday Times finds 61% in favour of the government either actively encouraging or allowing new windfarms to be built while a quarter would like the government to discourage or ban onshore wind. Opposition to onshore windfarms is higher among Conservative or UKIP voters, but is still outweighed by support.

For onshore wind, government should...

June 9

The Daventry Express reports that villagers near wind farms are complaining that changes to ‘Community Benefit’ payments mean they could lose thousands of pounds. The affected windfarms are at Kelmarsh, Winnick and Watford. Changes to the protocol set for windfarms mean that ‘rather than falling under the £5,000 per MW regime, Watford would only have to pay out a minimum of £1,000 per MW’. The newspaper is told by campaigners that the ‘total sum likely to be lost to local good causes as a result is staggering’. They say: “The headline conclusion is that these three small Daventry communities collectively stand to lose out on over £2.6 million of good works over the next 25 years!”

June 18
June 18

A statement from Amber Rudd at DECC confirms that it will end new subsidies to onshore wind through the Renewables Obligation (RO) by 1 April 2016 – one year earlier than originally planned (ENDS). ‘The RO will remain open to offshore wind and advanced gasification and pyrolysis projects until April 2018.

June 18

The Guardian points out that the end of support to onshore wind comes on the same day as the Pope delivers his encyclical on climate change, The Guardian also reports ‘there will be a grace period for projects that already have planning permission’ and … ‘two new “planning tests” so that councils can only approve windfarms on sites that have been clearly designated as part of a local or neighbourhood plan, and where the proposed project has the backing of the local community’

It adds: ‘the European commission warned on Tuesday that the UK was set to miss its key EU renewable energy target for 2020, and told the government it should review its policies to get back on track’.

June 18

Guardian writer Damian Carrington argues ‘The Conservative move will please a few locals but destroy the confidence of the investors being asked to spend billions to upgrade the nation’s energy system e in no doubt, the decision to end subsidies for onshore windfarms early is pure politics. Too many Tory voters dislike the look of turbines and their party has delivered for them, whatever the fallout.’

He quotes Savills Energy as saying it will “destroy investor confidence in renewable infrastructure projects”.

The UK has woeful levels of fuel poverty. But the cause of that is not subsidies for windfarms and other renewables. The cost of the entire Renewables Obligation subsidy scheme was just £30 a year in 2013, making up just 2.4% of the average bill.

Katja Hall, of Confederation of British Industry says: “Cutting the Renewables Obligation scheme early sends a worrying signal about the stability of the UK’s energy policy framework. This is a blow, not just to the industry, and could damage our reputation as a good place to invest in energy infrastructure.”

June 19

Chris Heaton-Harris tweets

Thu, 12:49: V pleased with the onshore wind announcements. Intermittent, expensive and constantly backed up by gas turbines, onshore wind has had its day

Thu, 12:51: Important details of the onshore wind announcements can be found here: https://t.co/DSdtZT80lV
Energy Minister Amber Rudd issues a statement ‘on ending new subsidies for onshore wind’. She reiterates that ‘the renewable electricity programme aims to deliver at least 30% of the UK’s electricity demand from renewables by 2020’.

‘The Levy Control Framework, covering the period up to 2020/21 is one of the tools to help achieve this. It limits the impact of support for low carbon electricity on consumer bills’.

‘At the end of April 2015, there were 490 operational onshore wind farms in the UK, comprising 4751 turbines in total’.

‘The Electricity Market Reform Delivery Plan projects that we require between 11-13 GW of electricity to be provided by onshore wind by 2020 to meet our 2020 renewable electricity generation objective while remaining within the limits of what is affordable. We now have enough onshore wind in the pipeline, including projects that have planning permission, to meet this requirement comfortably’.

‘We need to continue investing in less mature technologies so that they realise their promise, just as onshore wind has done. It is therefore appropriate to curtail further subsidised deployment of onshore wind … the Renewables Obligation [ ] will be closed to new onshore wind from 1st April 2016 – a year earlier than planned … my Department’s analysis indicates that, after taking account of an early closure, onshore wind deployment under the RO will be in the region of 11.6GW’.

With this capacity, and that of onshore wind projects that have received support through the new Contracts for Difference, we expect around 12.3GW of onshore wind to be operating in the UK by 2020 supported by the Levy Control Framework providing around 10% of electricity generation.

‘We estimate that around 7.1 GW of onshore wind capacity proposed across the UK will not be eligible for the grace period and are therefore unlikely to go ahead as a result of announcement of the 18 June. That equates to around 250 projects totalling around 2500 turbines now unlikely to be built’.

‘68% of the onshore wind pipeline relates to projects in Scotland’.

Onshore wind is an important part of our current and future low-carbon energy mix. But we are reaching the limits of what is affordable, and what the public is prepared to accept’.

July 1

Paul Hatchwell reports in ENDS magazine that the CCC, Parliaments Climate Change Committee, is calling for ‘immediate action to ensure investor clarity if future carbon budgets are to be met’. It warns that although emissions have been falling much of this is due to one off events that will not be repeated and that ‘the pipeline’ for carbon reduction projects ‘beyond 2020 is less developed and is at risk given the high degree of uncertainty about contracts that will be available to investors’. It cotes ‘delays in carbon capture and storage (CCS) and new nuclear projects’ and says of onshore wind that ‘there should be transparency on the cost impact of more expensive alternative solutions adopted to fill the gap’.
July 10

Paul Hatchwell is back in ENDS writing that a proposed Energy Bill ‘bars onshore wind subsidies but boosts oil and gas’. Some 250 existing wind projects could be scuppered by the onshore subsidy ban says ENDS.

He cites Maf Smith, deputy chief executive of RenewableUK, as saying: “Many onshore wind developers have spent hundreds of thousands of pounds per project in good faith – they should not be hung out to dry. If they are, investors in all types of energy infrastructure will shy away from the UK, seeing it as an unstable business environment.”

July 29

A Campaign Strategy blog says Chancellor George Osborne ‘is riding in his pomp’ as his enemies lay powerless, and ‘laying waste to green measures’. The election has left Britain with no effective opposition:

‘The Conservative government has lifted a ban on bee-slaying neonicotinoid pesticides, and slashed support for wind, biomass and solar power, killed off its scheme for greening homes, cut incentives to chose cleaner cars, abandoned a plan for all new homes to be ‘zero carbon’, reversed a pledge to keep fracking out of nationally important nature sites, dropped plans for taxing environmental ‘bads’, [and] announced it will start selling off its ‘green bank’.

Why ? Mainly because it is pay-back time for the Conservative base, donors and business lobbies. Only a few of these changes were put to the electorate (unlike the economic policies of Osborne’s recent budget) but amongst some British Conservatives, especially activists, there is a visceral dislike of environmental protections’.

Former Friends of the Earth Director Tony Juniper says ‘the last few months mark the worst period for environmental policy that I have seen in my 30 years’ work in this field’

August 28

A technical paper by ‘Powering Up: The Future of Onshore Wind in the UK’ by Richard Howard and Katherine Drayson of the centre-right think tank Policy Exchange observe that ‘The Government’s recent planning policy announcements effectively halt onshore wind development altogether (in England)’.

They write:

‘recent events mark a significant change in the Government’s attitude towards onshore wind. Whilst the 2010 Conservative manifesto position was to promote onshore wind, the 2015 Conservative manifesto included a commitment to “halt the spread of subsidised onshore wind farms”’.

‘transferring decision making powers for onshore wind developments of 50MW or greater capacity from the Planning Inspectorate to Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) .... will affect large projects in England, albeit that there are currently no onshore wind developments of this size currently awaiting a planning decision in England’
For ‘onshore wind developments of any size in England. From 18 June 2015, planning permission can
only be granted if the development site is in an area “identified as suitable for wind energy
development in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan”, and “planning impacts identified by affected local
communities have been fully addressed and the proposal has their backing.”

‘This effectively halts all new onshore wind applications in England, at least in the short term, since
almost 40% of LPAs do not have a Local Plan. Even those that do have a Plan are unlikely to have
identified sites suitable for onshore wind development (there is also no guidance available on how
suitable sites should be identified). Moreover, demonstrating community backing is problematic in
the absence of guidance on how this requirement is to be applied, leading to a Catch-22 situation for
LPAs, which could expose them to legal action for either granting or refusing consent depending on
how “community backing” is interpreted’.

‘The foundation of current planning policy, the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), set
out the core principle of a “presumption in favour of sustainable development”. Yet the new
requirement for explicit site allocation in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan is effectively a presumption
against sustainable development, at least until sites are allocated. This stands in the way of onshore
wind projects that are community-led, or commercial projects supported by communities, which is
counter to DECC’s 2014 Community Energy Strategy’.

They recommend that the condition should be dropped and question the claim that local
communities oppose wind farms: ‘this appears not to be backed up by the evidence. For example, a
study of objections to the planning application for Bears Down wind farm in Cornwall revealed that
95% came from people living outside Cornwall, likely due to the large proportion (almost 50%) of
dwellings in the area being second homes’.

The researchers also point to evidence that twice as many people oppose fracking as wind farms,
and although most Conservatives support them, opposition is also concentrated amongst older,
male and often rural dwelling Conservatives, saying: ‘the demographic profile of objectors
(particularly age and voting preference) may go some way to explaining the current Government’s
stance on onshore wind’.

September 26

Roger Helmer speaks to the 2015 UKIP Conference. He says: “after Brexit, we’ll be free to
implement a rational energy policy that can deliver the secure and affordable energy we so
desperately need ... UKIP policies are starting to gain traction. We’re already seeing signs of the
alarmist consensus breaking down. There’s been no global warming for eighteen years. The costs of
renewables are increasingly unaffordable”. He goes on: “We have a Prime Minister who’s given up
hugging huskies, and who reportedly wants to “Get rid of the Green Crap”. We’ve seen wind farm
subsidies cut, and wind farm plans knocked back”.

He adds: ‘Amber Rudd, described as Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, came into
office last year with ambitious plans to cover the nation’s roofs with solar panels. Someone – maybe
it was George Osborne — must have talked her through the costs of solar power, because she’s just
announced a dramatic cut in domestic solar subsidies’.

September 29
Gareth Simpson at [ENDS reports](#) that aiming to cut costs, the government consults on a proposal to slash solar FIT Feed in Tariff payments to householders with pv solar panels by 86% from January. ‘Wind power has also fared badly. Turbines of 100-500kW are set to receive less than half the former payout. And the tariff has been removed for systems over 1.5MW, leaving the Renewables Obligation (RO) as the sole option for support. But onshore wind will not be eligible for the RO’s successor – the contracts for difference (CfD) regime’.

The cuts are driven by the objective of not exceeding government limits on energy subsidy expenditure, the ‘[levy control framework](#)’ introduced by George Osborne.

**September 29**

Paul Hatchwell of ENDS points out that the Policy Exchange challenges DECC’s removal of onshore wind subsidies and says that they are vital for affordable decarbonisation’. Policy Exchange (see August 28) argues ‘onshore wind must remain eligible for renewable subsidies and should be backed up by policies that benefit communities if the costs of decarbonisation are to be constrained’.

[In other words whereas the logic of only investing in a technology to enable it to start-up and reduce costs (the logic used by DECC to justify ‘subsidy’ cuts of onshore wind and solar), is different from that for investing in technology to cost-effectively deliver decarbonization, in which case one prioritizes the cheapest renewables (onshore wind and solar pv). In practice these are being deliberately excluded by government policy.]

‘But Policy Exchange warns that removing mature technologies from subsidies would be expensive, suggesting that replacing one gigawatt of onshore wind with the equivalent amount of offshore wind would cost consumers £75-90m more a year’.
Survey evidence also shows that all categories of actual problems experienced by local residents are much lower than anticipated problems. Over 80% experienced no problems (below).
October 6

The business sustainability site edie reports that a RenewablesUK publication ‘Wind Energy in the UK’ shows ‘wind power has grown to generate 10% of the UK’s electricity needs, as more than 2GW of capacity was installed in 2014/15 - a growth of 18%, bringing total UK capacity to over 13GW’. It finds £840m was spent offshore and £402m onshore. Together, the two sectors provide 15,500 direct and 15,078 indirect jobs. RenewableUK’s chief executive Maria McCaffery hopes the report will serve as a “wake-up call” to Government. ‘despite mixed messages from Ministers’.

England is lagging behind in regards to onshore wind energy and is missing out on the economic benefits that it brings, RenewableUK concludes. During the past year, less than 10% of new consents for onshore wind were in England, compared to 70% for Scotland.
October 24

Chris Heaton-Harris retweets a Bjørn Lomborg article claiming ‘over the next 25 years, the contribution of solar and wind power to resolving the problem will be trivial – and the cost will be enormous’. He cites International Energy Agency estimates that 0.4% of global energy comes from solar and wind and ‘even in 2040, with all governments implementing all of their green promises, solar and wind will make up just 2.2% of global energy’. He states: ‘the main reason why wind and solar power cannot be a major solution to climate change stems from an almost insurmountable obstacle: we need power when the sun is not shining and the wind is not blowing’.

October 8

It could be lights out for solar power under this government says Terry Macalister in The Guardian. ‘Ten times as many of the [steel] jobs lost at Redcar are at risk under the government’s plans to cut solar power subsidies by 87% – and it may be schools that suffer most’. While subsidies for nuclear and gas power stations are increasing those for wind and solar power are falling. ‘Ministers ... seem deaf to warnings of 27,000 jobs being potentially lost in a brand-new industry now facing crisis due to their own clumsy cuts’.

Almost 1,000 redundancies have already been made by the solar panel installers Mark Group and Climate Energy. The government plans ‘to slash the feed-in tariff’ for people with solar panels on their home by almost 90%, while, an energy-efficiency regime has been scrapped. Meanwhile ‘maximum effort is being expended on removing roadblocks to shale-gas fracking and nuclear power. And yet new figures out this week from Bloomberg New Energy Finance show the cost of building nuclear or gas-fired power stations is rising – as wind and solar costs fall’.

Alex Lockton, general manager installer ‘will remind them that schools and community groups will suffer too’. “We have been engaged in community solar ventures, which have been a massive success story. But they are about to get blown out of the water if the government proceeds with its latest plans to cut subsidies by 87%,” Lockton says.
Lockton thinks the cuts agenda is being driven by George Osborne as he tries to meet Treasury austerity objectives, and says the cuts ‘have already destroyed a precious commodity in the world of renewables ... confidence’.

November 8

Energy and climate secretary Amber Rudd announces that all remaining unabated UK coal-fired power stations will be phased out by 2025 with restrictions on their operation from 2023. ENDS reports that ‘low carbon prices had failed to eliminate coal’, and so Rudd says intervention is needed’. Rudd wants more gas stations alongside renewables to plug the gap but the Climate Change Committee and NGOs fear this will hinder true decarbonization.

Nick Mabey of E3G says “if coal is simply replaced by gas the UK will continue its addiction to fossil fuels and is in danger of being left behind in the global clean tech race”.

2016

January 18

Chris Heaton-Harris speaks at the Second Reading of the Energy Bill. He takes to opportunity to reprise his account of his anti-wind campaigning. He says:

‘I was a bit of a “greenie” when I was first elected to the European Parliament back in 1999, and I enjoyed working with the hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Caroline Lucas) on certain things. It confused the hell out of her, but it did not do me any harm, and we actually had some interesting areas of agreement on policy. In 2001, though, I met a young gentleman called Bjørn Lomborg, and my journey to the light side has continued since then. Between then and 2010, I was interested in energy but did not really pay it much attention. As a Member of the European Parliament there are some big issues to talk about, but one does not look at individual policy areas in the way that one does when one becomes a constituency Member of Parliament representing, as I do, 72,500 people in the beautiful constituency of Daventry.

When I came here, I had one majorly controversial onshore wind farm development in my constituency, and I thought that I would do what everybody else in this place would do. I met the developer and representatives of the industry from the British Wind Energy Association, as it was then, to talk through the problems that my constituents had with their development. When that organisation later morphed into RenewableUK, I still spoke to it about how to incentivise them to take onshore wind in their area by working with them, perhaps even giving them some sort of rebate on their energy bills, so that they felt they were attached to local energy production for consumption in their areas. I have to say—and I am pretty sure that history will prove me right—that the wind industry decided to ignore all my counsel.

Bringing this forward to the present day, I suggest that how the onshore wind industry has treated communities up and down this country has done untold damage to how people see renewables in total as part of our energy provision. There is history to this that goes back further than the 2015 general election’.

The talking about the need to listen the views of local communities he continues:
'I had to learn this for myself first hand with regard to an onshore wind development in the beautiful village of Kelmarsh—along the A14, just down from the M1 junction —where a number of 126.5-metre turbines are currently being erected'.

[in fact Heaton Harris was campaigning against wind farms in 2008 before being elected as a MP]

‘I thought, as my constituents did, that if we formed a good local campaign with everything going for us, we could win the campaign and stop a proposed development being established on what was, in most people’s judgment, an inappropriate site—a grade 1 listed site. That view was borne out by the planning inspector. Because the local council did the right thing and turned the application down, the developer appealed. The gentleman from the planning inspectorate in Bristol came to visit and made a stunning, groundbreaking statement that changed how I dealt with these issues and culminated in the pledge on onshore wind that I am so proud of in the Conservative party manifesto that saw us into government.

The planning inspector said all the things that the local community had been saying about the development being on an inappropriate site and about it being damaging to local communities, and gave a whole host of reasons why he should not approve it, but he then went on to say that national policy trumped all this, and therefore, “You are having this onshore wind development no matter what you would like.” …’

He also says:

‘I would always argue in favour of local communities having way more say in developments. In fact, we should go even further and take the same approach as the French, whereby local communities are massively incentivised to get involved in taking on developments that are deemed unpopular elsewhere. Indeed, they choose to get involved: they have local campaigns for what would be very unpopular planning decisions in the United Kingdom, because they understand that they will be to their benefit.

I decided that I had to do my bit to try to change national policy, so I walked around the Lobbies of this place and found 100 other Members who felt similarly aggrieved about the way in which planning and onshore wind had been developed. I got them to sign a letter to the Prime Minister on how we should change things. I also noticed that, in 2011-12, we were already hitting our 2020 targets for onshore wind development capacity. Logic would suggest, therefore, that the subsidy we were giving to onshore wind was too high. The number of developments was such that we were going to shoot past the target without any trouble whatsoever.

The subsidy was too high and local people felt that they were being ignored. I would also argue that wind farms produce expensive energy, which puts people into fuel poverty and has contributed to energy prices going skyward at a time when the cost of energy is beginning to fall’.

And:

‘Over time, I was delighted to be able to persuade, cajole, elbow, nudge and force my own political party into changing our planning guidance. However, that did not have too much of an effect until … the former Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government reminded the planning authorities of exactly what he meant in his policy statements by calling in a number of developments at appeal stage and making the rulings himself.
We then went further and said in our manifesto that we would cut new subsidies for onshore wind, but that was not good enough for me: I had had enough of these people and how they dealt with my constituents, so I wanted to deal with them retrospectively. In the energy chapter of the manifesto, it was generous of the Prime Minister to take on my well-registered and well-documented concerns and my ideas about how we should progress, and to state that there would be no new subsidies for onshore wind...’

And

‘My constituents are annoyed by the noise and worried about health concerns. They cannot sell their houses as quickly as they would like’

January 23

UKIP leader Farage visits Northamptonshire for launch of ‘Grassroots Out’ bid to leave EU – Northampton Chronicle. He is joined in Wellingborough by local MPs Peter Bone and Tom Pursglove, who together with Labour MP Kate Hoey founded ‘Grassroots Out’.

February 11

Thomas Pursglove becomes a director of GO MOVEMENT along with Peter Bone, Lord David Stevens, Nigel Griffiths, Nigel Farage, Richard Tice, and David Wall. At this time Stevens is a UKIP Peer having been expelled from the Conservatives for writing in support of UKIP. The company is struck off on 21 February 2017 without filing any accounts.
February 12

ENDS reports that investors say confidence in the energy market is ‘fading’, due to ‘rapid policy changes and uncertainty about long-term government support’. ENDS cites this as ‘the key conclusion emerging from a 9 February House of Commons Energy and Climate Change Committee session on the impact of policy changes to renewable support and of energy secretary Amber Rudd’s policy reset speech’. Changes including postponement of the second contracts for difference (CfD) auction, ‘were now increasing risk and damaging investor confidence’.

Carol Gould, head of power and renewables at the Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi, ‘confirmed anecdotally that there is “a much smaller pipeline on early development projects”’ and ‘there are “95% less conversations on onshore wind”’. ENDS says ‘she foresaw a big gap in projects in 2016-17 ahead of the next CfD auction’.

Peter Dickson of fund managers Glennmont Partners said the reset speech had been interpreted as backtracking.

Chris Hullatt of Octopus Investments, was concerned that “there’s going to be a very diminished pipeline going forward”, and is waiting for clarity. “The supply chain for wind and solar is at risk of falling apart and being frittered away if there is a stop-start approach to the availability of [support]”. Dickson described “a bit of a blockage in our vision for the future”, with the post-2020 period “the major concern”.

Morgan Angus, principal of Townsend Group, confided that it is now focusing only on short, very specific periods with co-investment to limit risk to investors. “We would not today invest in a ten-year closed ended or 15-20 year fund structure that was just targeting UK renewables.”

February 16

The Express says the board of GO MOVEMENT is expected to be chaired by property entrepreneur Richard Tice. (Go Movement does not become the official Leave campaign but Tice goes on to co-found Leave.EU and work with Arron Banks and Nigel Farrage before leaving to found Leave Means Leave after the Referendum).

February 17

Tom Pursglove and Peter Bone are to speak at the UKIP conference in March, report Rowena Mason and Megan Ward in The Guardian. They are ‘scheduled to speak on the main stage of Ukip’s party conference next month in a highly unusual move that is likely to antagonise their own party’ and ‘are listed to speak as representatives of Grassroots Out (GO), one of the cross-party groups campaigning for the UK to leave the EU. Both deny any suggestion they would defect to Ukip’. They add ‘the move to address another political party’s conference is extremely rare and bound to infuriate their own whips. Politicians sometimes address fringe events at rival party conferences but not the main hall of the event’.

The Ukip conference agenda lists Pursglove, MP for Corby, as running through the group’s campaign strategy.

‘Grassroots Out is planning a rally in London to coincide with the end of the European council meeting at which David Cameron is hoping to secure a deal for reform of Britain’s membership
before calling a referendum. At that point, cabinet ministers who want to campaign for an exit from
the EU will be released from collective responsibility’.

Grassroots Out is affiliated to a new umbrella organisation, called GO Movement, which is applying
to the Electoral Commission to become the official campaign for leaving the EU.

[Farage, Bone and Pursglove are all directors of Grassroots Out].

March 5

www.webarchive.org shows ‘togetheragainstwind.com has been disabled’.

This was around the time Pursglove became a director of GO MOVEMENT along with Peter Bone and
Nigel Farage on (11 February 2016). This was intended as a cross-party platform in the EU
Referendum but failed to secure the position as the official Leave campaign (which was Vote.Leave).

March 31

The Commons debates the Energy Bill, and votes not to ‘relax the imposition of cut-off date after
which new on-shore electricity generating wind turbines would cease to be considered renewable
energy sources for the purpose of a legal requirement on generators to produce a certain amount of
energy from renewable sources’. Chris Heaton-Harris says that in the General Election, Liberal
Democrats ‘lost their seats partly because in their communities they could not defend the onshore
wind turbines that the Conservative party had made a clear commitment to get rid of’.

May 12

Centre for Sustainable Energy publishes a guidance note: How to identify suitable areas for onshore
wind development in a neighbourhood plan

May 12

The Energy Bill bringing forward the closure of the Renewables Obligation for onshore wind to 31
March 2016 (with a grace period for some projects to a year later) becomes law as the Energy Act
2016, after unsuccessful attempts to amend it in the House of Lords. It also establishes an
independent Oil and Gas Authority (OGA) to promote exploitation of UK offshore resources.

May 26

At the website ‘law and religion’ David Pocklington analyses the planning tussle over onshore wind
in Cornwall within the Church of England which has pitted the diocese, committed to sustainability,
against local opponents. A Good Energy proposal for the ‘Big Field Wind Farm’ is opposed by
Communities Against Rural Exploitation, (CARE), even though it is a revised proposal with smaller
turbines has significant community ownership potential and could be subsidy-free. Pocklington
writes:

‘On 15 May, the Cornish Guardian reported that the Diocese of Truro Environment Group was to give
evidence in favour of certain aspects of the application, despite members of affected parishes having
mixed opinions about the proposed wind farm. The Chair of the group, the Venerable Bill Stuart-
White, Archdeaon of Cornwall, commented that the diocesan environment policy recognized the
serious damage caused to the life systems of earth by factors that include the continued use of fossil
fuels, and supported renewable energy and commits us to radically reduce our use of fossil fuels.
He is quoted as saying: “[i]ssues of visual impact are largely subjective ... Far from being swayed by the argument that the turbines represent a ‘visually dominant and distracting addition to the setting’ of St Anne’s [Church], we believe from the available photo-montages that the turbines should appear from the church as slender and relatively unobtrusive structures”, adding “[t]he substantial harm that is of far greater significance is that inflicted on the planet by the impact of global warming, caused in no small measure by our reliance on fossil fuels”. The Bishop of Truro, the Right Reverend Tim Thornton, has written to the Rt Hon Greg Clarke, MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, bringing the arguments of the Diocese of Truro Environment Group to his attention.’

June 23

In the referendum on EU membership 51.89% vote to Leave and 48.11% vote to Remain.

June 24

David Cameron resigns as Prime Minister triggering a Conservative party election contest won by Theresa May, becoming Prime Minister on 13 July.

June 27

In a blog at the London School of Economics entitled UKIP energy: promoting distrust and climate scepticism on social media, researcher Matt Reed finds ‘UKIP is part of a wider wave of ‘anti-reflexive movements’, promoting distrust and doubt to further certain political ends’.

Reed manually analysed 1,000 tweets by Roger Helmer MEP (UKIP energy spokesman) and Nigel Farage (UKIP Leader) in 2012 – 14, and used automated tools to analyse another 16,000. He writes: ‘Very quickly it became apparent that UKIP had little to say about rural life, apart from some very generic statements about pubs and hunting with hounds’.

Deeper analysis ‘started to suggest that this opposition to renewable energy generation nestled in a wider pattern of directing readers’ attention to other arguments and opinions. Little use of hashtags or indexing terms in the tweets meant that they did not travel widely but were intended for those following the account. Rather than taking part in a wider debate most of the messages in the accounts were creating political messages. This strategy was reinforced by links to blogs, and websites that promote climate scepticism, mostly ‘Climate Depot’ and ‘The Global Warming Policy Foundation’, as well as conservative journalists and other EU-sceptics. In this discussion, the lexicon of climate change is changed so that concern about climate change is ‘alarmism’ and those raising public awareness are ‘warmists’.


‘It is clearly fostering not just a scepticism towards climate change but many of the key institutions around these public debates’.

‘Opponents of the UKIP view are regarded as having selfish motives, foisting waste on others and benefiting themselves. The evidence in this paper showed that UKIP did not have an organised presence in rural areas but was taking opportunities where they found them’.

‘Countering this narrative involves engaging not only the arguments of UKIP and its allies but giving consideration to social conditions in which these debates are held. In this example, UKIP looked to
exploit feelings of those who felt marginal; from Westminster, political parties and the development of contemporary society’.

June 27

In his FT blog, Nick Butler writes ‘To a degree that often puzzles business leaders, energy policy in the UK (and in many other countries) is shaped by the emotional attachments of individual leaders to particular forms of energy and their hostility to others. The choices are not always rational on any objective economic basis’.

July 13

Theresa May becomes Prime Minister

October 19

Climate campaign group 1010 publishes an analysis of newspaper coverage of wind power and fracking by Sandra Bernick from Imperial College. She studied articles from 1st Jan 2011 and the 16th Sept 2016 and found 5,398 news articles on wind and 7,393 on fracking. The number of comment pieces and editorials was about the same for the two technologies - 250 on wind and 279 on fracking. Reader comments about onshore wind posted online ‘tend to be negative. Over half the comment pieces about onshore wind were negative - 52% in fact, with 31% neutral and 17% positive’.

October 28

ENDS reports that ‘The UK has fallen to an all-time low in EY’s renewable energy country attractiveness index …. At fourteenth place, down from thirteenth in the spring, the country has now fallen behind Morocco. Brazil and Mexico are also far above it in the rankings’.

‘EY says the uncertainty caused by Brexit, the closure of DECC and the approval of the Hinkley Point C nuclear project “all dealt a sizeable blow to the UK renewable sector”.’ [EY = Enrst and Young].

2017

January 18

Ahead of the March Budget, campaign group 1010 launches a petition against the exclusion of onshore wind and solar from government financial support, despite their being the cheapest forms of renewable energy. In an explainer, 1010 points out that ‘2016 was the year both wind and solar beat coal; the year Christmas in Scotland was entirely powered by clean energy and the year 25% of our energy mix came from sea, sun and more’ and this is partly as onshore wind is the cheapest low carbon energy source’ in the UK and cheaper than nuclear, gas or coal.

Yet because of their 2015 manifesto promise, ‘the government are blocking onshore wind from competing in their energy auctions which are known as Contracts for Difference (CfDs). The auctions have two pots of cash - snappily known as Pot One and Pot Two. Pot Two auctions are for less mature, newer technologies like offshore wind and hydro power. Pot One is for mature, established technologies like onshore wind and solar’.
'Thanks to their manifesto commitment and EU regulations, the government can’t exclude particular technologies from an auction. They have to be ‘technology neutral’. In other words, they can’t just run the auction but keep onshore wind out of it. So instead, they’re not running any Pot One auctions at all’.. and freezing out wind and solar.

This contradicts another government manifesto promise to ‘decarbonise at lowest cost’ and endangers ‘the once thriving onshore wind industry - losing jobs, skill and investment. Ikea are already claiming they won’t spend their £524 million green investment pot in the UK because of the government’s policy on onshore wind’.

March 16

The government has announced final details of the second contracts for difference (CfD) round covering 2021-2023 writes Paul Hatchwell of ENDS magazine. [It does not include any money for solar pv or onshore wind]. The strike price of offshore wind has been confirmed as based on 2012 prices of £105 per megawatt hour in 2021/22, falling to £100/MWh for 2022/23. The Levy Control Framework is to be abolished with new controls to be announced by Treasury later in 2017.

April 4

Sam Hall from Bright Blue writes at Conservative Home website that:

‘Concern for the environment should be at the heart of conservative thinking’. Polling shows ‘70 per cent of Conservatives are concerned about the impacts of climate change’ and ‘at a time when there’s a climate-sceptic Republican President in the White House reversing American climate action, our polling reveals most British Conservatives (60 per cent) accept the scientific consensus that climate change is happening and is mostly caused by human activity. Indeed, this was the majority position of all types of Conservatives: young and old, Remain-voting and Leave-voting, men and women’.

‘Under the Coalition Government, the share of Britain’s power that comes from renewable energy has increased from nine per cent in 2011 to 25 per cent in 2015. Conservatives in our polling strongly endorse this shift. In fact, around half put increasing renewable energy in their top three environmental priorities. Conservatives have a more positive view of renewable energy forms like solar, tidal, offshore and onshore wind, and biomass, than they do of nuclear and fossil fuels. Even more remarkably, new onshore wind developments, which the last Conservative manifesto pledged to halt, are supported by a majority (59 per cent) of Conservatives, provided they did not receive any subsidy’.

‘An overwhelming majority of Conservatives want to see all the main EU environmental regulations at least maintained after Brexit, and in some cases strengthened. Further, they support policies such as the closure of the remaining coal-fired power stations (66 per cent), a requirement that homes must meet a minimum energy performance standard before being sold (70 per cent), and regulation to mandate that all major home renovations include energy efficiency measures (80 per cent)’.

May 4

Gareth Simkins reports in ENDS that investors are increasingly turning to storage due to poor prospects for renewable generation in the UK. Storage could expand a hundred-fold within years, according to SmartestEnergy’s annual report on the sector. ‘So far, independent generators – those
not owned by electricity suppliers – have invested £2.75bn in more than 6,400 renewable projects across the UK, states. These projects met 8.6% of electricity demand last year’.

‘Although their capacity has now reached 12.75 gigawatts, growth has “flatlined” says the report, “bearing out warnings that subsidy cuts and political uncertainty are combining to push a thriving sector over a cliff edge”.

‘In the last quarter of 2016, only 38 projects were commissioned, falling to 21 between January and March. In contrast, an average of 275 independent projects have been completed each quarter since 2013 (see graph).’

Independent investment in renewables has crashed. Figure: SmartestEnergy

‘The early closure of the Renewables Obligation to solar power and onshore wind have shaken the market. Cuts to feed-in tariffs and the uncertain fate of energy policy following Brexit have also affected business confidence.

‘Think-tank Green Alliance made much the same observations last December, remarking that unless the renewable market improves markedly, attainment of carbon budget and Paris Agreement goals will be threatened’. 

A total of 20 megawatts of commercial battery capacity was in place by the end of last year, rising to a predicted deployment of 131MW in 2017. But 2.3 gigawatts is in the pipeline, split over 153 projects.

Due to their concentration of renewable generation, two locations have become particularly attractive for storage projects. Kent has 594MW planned, with Yorkshire following at 402MW, the report notes.
May 11

UK renewables growth rate halved in 2016 reports Paul Hatchwell in ENDS.

An extra 14% of capacity was added in 2016 but ‘the sector’s remarkable run could be finally coming to an end, with independent investor interest falling. The rate of annual increase dropped by 40% between 2015 and 2016 (14%) relative to the previous year (23%).’

‘The main drivers of growth continue to be onshore wind and solar PV. Yet both of these have been hit by exclusion from the now closed Renewables Obligation and the contracts for difference (CfD) regime that has replaced it, as well as deep cuts to feed-in tariffs. These policy changes led to negative sentiment across the sector from 2015, with effects on project pipelines’.

‘Onshore wind grew by 205% between 2009 and 2016, adding 7GW and accounting for 27% of overall growth. But while the average annual growth since 2009 has been 25%, it fell to just 15% between 2015 and 2016’.

‘Solar PV has seen spectacular growth of 436% since 2009, overshooting expectations and leading to sudden reductions in government financial support from 2015. It accounted for 43% of overall growth between 2009 and 2016. But the technology’s average annual growth rate halved to just 25% between 2015 and 2016 following policy changes’.

By comparison, offshore wind, which is now one of the mainstays of growth in the UK. Despite these latest results, the UK is on track to meet its 2020 EU renewable electricity sub-target, though any slowdown could threaten deeper the decarbonisation of the sector needed from 2030.

June 8

In a General Election called by Theresa May, the Conservatives take 330 seats with 36.9% of the vote, Labour under Jeremy Corbyn take 232 seats with 30.4% and UKIP loses its only seat and its vote falls from 12.6% to 1.8%. The Conservatives form a government with a 12 seat majority through a confidence and supply arrangement with the Ulster DUP.

June 13

Roger Helmer MEP (formerly Conservative then UKIP) is to resign ‘amid investigation into alleged misuse of funds’ – The Guardian. ‘Roger Helmer, known for controversial views on climate change, rape and homosexuality, will stand down in July’. Helmer is said to face a demand from the European Parliament over a bill close to £100,000 and ‘alleged misuse of public funds’. The Guardian says it ‘has learnt that Helmer faces a bill close to £100,000 for illicitly employing a Ukip party worker, Paul Oakden, as his assistant. Oakden’s contract has already been suspended’.

[Oakden was also working as UKIP’s Party Chairman, against EP rules. He resigns in February 2018 after working for five different party leaders. Oakden was sacked as Agent by Conservative MP Andrew Bridgen in 2008. Oakden pretended to be a pilot on a dating website and posted pictures of himself with an Aston Martin which in fact belonged to Andrew Bridgen who subsequently described him as a ‘political suicide bomber’.

‘MEPs are banned from hiring full-time assistants who have jobs in national political parties. Paul Oakden was employed as Helmer’s assistant, while also working as Ukip chairman’.
‘Helmer is one of eight Ukip MEPs who has been investigated by European parliament financial controllers for alleged misuse of EU funds in 2017. Investigations are ongoing into the offices of Ukip former leaders Paul Nuttall and Nigel Farage, as well as other MEPs, including Raymond Finch, a Farage protégé’.

‘Known for his hostility to climate science, Helmer has described global warming as “myth” and as a Conservative MEP spent public money on a billboard campaign decrying wind turbines in his East Midlands constituency.’

**June 17**

The Guardian’s Adam Vaughan writes that on what one grid manager called “stunning Sunday” on June 11 ‘a record 70% of the electricity for the UK’s homes and businesses was low-carbon, as nuclear, solar and wind crowded out coal and even gas power stations’. ‘The carbon intensity of producing power – a key measure of progress towards climate goals – dropped below the “magic number” of 100g of CO₂ per kilowatt hour for the first time. That’s the level that must be the norm by 2030, according to the government’s climate advisers’.

Plus ‘on one Friday in May, solar power briefly eclipsed the UK’s eight nuclear power stations and ‘the grid recently went without coal for an entire day for the first time’.

‘Last week ... high wind output pushed down the wholesale price and resulted in negative power prices, which means some conventional power plants had to pay household suppliers like British Gas to take their electricity’.

‘In Germany, lower power prices driven by the country’s green energy boom have wiped billions off the share prices of energy giants E.ON and RWE’.

Duncan Burt, who oversees daily operations at the National Grid, says: “It’s one of these things where we’ve tipped through a threshold”

In Germany renewables ‘are producing power in such abundance that conventional providers relying on coal and gas are being squeezed out of the market’. On 8 May 2016, a record 87.6% of Germany’s energy needs were met by renewables.

**July 23**

Engineering consultancy Arup says the government should look again at onshore windfarms which can be built as cheaply as gas plants and deliver the same power for half the cost of Hinkley Point.

It says ‘the technology has become so cheap that developers could deliver turbines for a guaranteed price of power so low that it would be effectively subsidy-free in terms of the impact on household energy bills’.

EDF’s Hinkley nuclear was given contract for difference (a top-up payment) of £92.50 per megawatt hour over 35 years but windfarms could do £50-55 per MWh across 15 years.

ScottishPower, which commissioned the analysis, hopes to persuade the government to reconsider its stance on onshore windfarms, which the Conservatives effectively blocked in 2015 by banning them from competing for subsidies and imposing new planning hurdles.
Keith Anderson, the firm’s chief operating officer, told the Guardian. “You put these projects in the right place, you will get the correct level of resource out of them to keep the costs down and you will get public acceptance of people liking them,” Anderson said, citing the example of the company’s huge Whitelee windfarm near Glasgow.

Dr Robert Gross, director of the centre for energy policy and technology at Imperial College, said: “Onshore wind has been coming in at remarkably low prices internationally, so a contract for difference price of around £50-60 per MWh looks perfectly feasible for a good location in the UK, one of the windiest countries in Europe.

Leo Murray, of climate change charity 10:10, said: “It looks increasingly absurd that the Conservatives have effectively banned Britain’s cheapest source of new power.”

July 28

‘The rate of growth in renewable energy sector jobs has been slashed by more than two thirds over two years, coinciding with a rollback in government policies and funding since 2015 and Brexit uncertainty’ reports ENDS. The Renewable Energy Association’s (REA) annual report, finds the sector grew only 2.5% in 2015/16, down from 8.8% in 2012/13 and 2013/14.

The number of companies operating in the sector fell 5%, due largely to sharp contraction in the solar PV market. Employment in solar PV fell from 16,880 in 2014/15 to 13,680 in 2015/16. The report warns that the full impact policy rollback has yet to unfold through 2016/17. (Due to changes to feed-in tariffs, closure of the Renewables Obligation to onshore wind and solar, reform of the Renewable Heat Incentive, loss of exemption from the Climate Change Levy and cuts to benefits for embedded generators).

The £14.7bn sector is ‘a major driver of UK green economy employment’, has increased by an average of 6% since 2012/13 and has 129,940 jobs. Renewables supply over 24% of power, 6.2% of heat and 2.9% of transport fuel. Over 16,000 jobs have also been added in electric vehicles and energy storage.

The conclusions are similar to those of the Energy Institute’s Energy Barometer survey in June, ‘highlighting political risk to the low carbon transition’.

But with government recognition of the importance of smart energy, energy storage and electric vehicles in its industrial strategy and anticipated new renewables support policies in its long-delayed clean growth plan, the long-term outlook for growth and green jobs could yet receive a boost.

September 11

Roger Harrabin BBC environment analyst writes that ‘Energy from offshore wind in the UK will be cheaper than electricity from new nuclear power for the first time. The cost of subsidies for new offshore wind farms has halved since the last 2015 auction for clean energy projects’.

Two firms said they were willing to build offshore wind farms for a guaranteed price of £57.50 per megawatt hour for 2022-23. The new Hinkley Point C nuclear plant has secured subsidies of £92.50/megawatt hour. In 2015 offshore wind prices were £114 and £120 per megawatt hour. Onshore wind power and solar energy are cheaper and already both cost-competitive with gas in some places in the UK.
According to Carbon Brief ‘the UK government today awarded contracts worth £176m to 11 low-carbon electricity schemes, with offshore wind the big winner’. Two offshore wind schemes won contracts at record-lows of £57.50 per megawatt hour (MWh). This puts them among the cheapest new sources of electricity generation in the UK, joining onshore wind and solar, with all three cheaper than new gas’. The offshore wind schemes ‘are also close to being subsidy-free’.

‘In late 2016, BEIS projections suggested offshore wind projects coming online in 2025 would cost around £100/MWh – far more than new gas and comparable with new nuclear’.

‘Note that BEIS has so far refused to run so-called pot 1 CfD auctions for onshore wind, solar and other “established” technologies’.

Levelised costs of electricity generating capacity coming online in 2025. PWR FOAK is first-of-a-kind pressurised water nuclear reactors. CCS is carbon capture and storage. CCGT is combined cycle gas turbine. OCGT is open cycle gas turbine (for peaking). R3 is the third round of offshore wind licences awarded by the Crown Estate. Source: BEIS projections.

The chart below shows awarded CfD prices for wind and solar (blue and yellow lines) compared to the Hinkley C new nuclear plant (purple line), which has a 35-year CfD for £92.50/MWh. Also shown are current and expected wholesale power prices (black) and the projected cost of building large new gas-fired combined cycle plants (CCGTs, red).
The chart shows that offshore wind, along with onshore wind and large solar farms, are all thought to be cheaper than new gas generation.

‘By the mid-2020s, renewables will be cheaper than new gas even after accounting for the costs of integrating them into the electricity grid and providing backup to guarantee supplies’.

‘Writing before today’s auction results, Gareth Miller, chief executive of consultants Cornwall Energy, wrote: “The traditional challenge [that] critics of onshore renewables have posed about whole system costs eradicating the competitive benefits of deployment start to disintegrate at these sorts of strike price levels.”’

‘It might also increase pressure on the government to run auctions for onshore wind and solar, which are likely to be even cheaper. Consultants Baringa Partners say auctions could secure 1GW of onshore wind for £46/MWh, which would be effectively subsidy-free. Meanwhile, Cornwall Energy says some onshore schemes could offer CfD bids as low as £40/MWh.’

24 September

Simon Clarke, Conservative MP for Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland writes an article at Conservative Home website: ‘The case for lifting the national bar on onshore wind’.

He says there has been ‘a huge fall in the cost of offshore wind in Britain’, and ... ‘as Ambrose Evans-Pritchard wrote in the Daily Telegraph recently, we have the opportunity to become the Saudi Arabia of wind power’.

‘Failing to capitalise on this capacity, and thereby losing the jobs and investment (not to mention the cheap energy) that goes with it, would be a terrible mistake. Part of the reason for this good news is
that we have consistently underestimated just how quickly other countries would step up their action on climate, and how ready they are for renewables. China now has more than 100 gigawatts of solar cells. India’s 100 per cent electric vehicle target will come into force ten years before ours’.

So what more can we do to position ourselves at the front of the pack of the clean tech revolution? ...

Onshore wind is inherently cheaper than offshore wind – with onshore the costs of transporting turbines out to sea, attaching them to the seabed, and then bringing the power back to land are eliminated from the equation. Given how cheap offshore wind now is, any future onshore wind projects will almost certainly result in fixed prices agreed below the expected market rate. And with the contract mechanism – it is not a subsidy, but a fixed price contract – this means companies will be paying money back to the exchequer more often than they receive it. Not just subsidy free, but making money for the taxpayer’.

‘Surely local people should be able to decide if they want to take part in this revolution? The polling suggests they want to – with a recent YouGov poll finding that fewer than one in four dislike the prospect of living near a wind farm. With the money made funnelled back into the community, local people could reap the onshore wind dividend for local projects. As things stand Whitehall prevents local people from approving developments that could provide cheap, clean energy and much needed investment in less well-off areas. Similarly, investment in Carbon Capture and Storage offers us an opportunity to get ahead in a technology that will be wanted around the world. Invest now and the export opportunities – as we are seeing with offshore wind – will be huge’.

**September 26**

Energy Minister Claire Perry opens the first ‘subsidy free solar farm’ in the UK near Flitwick in Bedfordshire. The Clayhill development also features five battery storage units.

**October 24**

Heaton-Harris is at the centre of controversy after writing the universities demanding “the names of [their] professors involved in the teaching of European affairs, with particular reference to Brexit” as well as requested “a copy of the syllabus” and “links to online lectures.” Universities denounce it as ‘McCarthyite’ and ‘sinister’.

**October 25**

The Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit (ECIU) says “outdated” policy on onshore wind could cost the UK around £1bn over the next four or five years. ECIU states that price reductions mean onshore wind farms do not need a subsidy, but most developments still require centrally-agreed fixed-price contacts. It says ‘1GW of new onshore wind farms would be £30m cheaper a year than offshore wind, and £100m less than new nuclear or biomass plants’ but the UK’s “effective ban” on support for onshore wind is blocking development of the cheapest technology.

“The effective ban on the cheapest form of new power generation looks increasingly perverse,” says ECIU director Richard Black. Onshore wind has been locked out of the UK’s Contracts for Difference (CFD) framework since 2015. Since then, the cost of the technology has plummeted. “David Cameron promised no new subsidies for onshore wind,” Black says. “But it now doesn’t need a
subsidy ... fixed-price contracts would more than pay for themselves” even including additional costs allowing for intermittency.

The UK is set to fall to bottom place among comparable EU nations for wind farm efficiency without investment in new technology, according to the report. It also notes that Britain risks losing its place as a global hub for onshore wind in manufacturing and installation, and in associated financial and legal services.

ECIU Report ‘Blown Away’ states: ‘Onshore wind power is now the cheapest form of electricity generation that can be built in the UK. However, once the current project pipeline is dry, there are few plans to build any more onshore wind farms owing to lack of government support’.

From Blown Away:

“Onshore windfarms often fail to win public support... we will end any new public subsidy for them and change the law so that local people have the final say on windfarm applications”
- 2015 Conservative manifesto.

“We do not believe that more large-scale onshore wind power is right for England”
- 2017 Conservative manifesto.

Surveys consistently show onshore wind to be one of the most popular forms of energy in the UK. The government’s own most recent results show that nearly three in four Britons (73%) support onshore wind (Figure 6), with only 16% of respondents unhappy to have a large scale renewable energy development in their area.

These results (and previous academic research) highlight the disparity between the reality of public opinion and the Cameron government’s perception of it. Levels of objection are higher among Conservative voters than the public overall; yet more than half approved of onshore wind when the
pledge to ban new capacity was first mooted in 2010. Support has risen since, with a 2017 survey of Conservative voters finding that 59% now back onshore wind providing local communities have the final say and there is no subsidy.

October 26

In ENDS, James Parsons reports that the government-commissioned review by Oxford economist Dieter Helm has called for ‘radical change’ to the operation of the UK energy system including ‘a universal carbon tax’, redefinition of grid operators, a single bidding auction for all energy technologies and ‘removal of government from decision-making in the country’s low-carbon future’.

Helm criticizes "spectacularly bad" government predictions about the cost of hydrocarbons and the falling cost of renewables, and ‘large legacy costs from subsidy schemes like the Renewables Obligation (RO), Feed-in Tariffs (FITs) and set-price contracts in the form of Contracts for Difference (CfDs)’ which Helm says make up 20% all electricity bills.

‘Helm proposes the gradual phase-out of FiTs and CfDs (the RO is already closed although a grace period until 2019 has been granted)’ and ring-fencing them as part of a “legacy bank”.

He proposes merging future auctions for FiTs and other low-carbon CfDs into one “equivalent firm power (EFP) capacity auction” so all forms of energy generation can compete, with intermittency issues put on generators (like solar and wind farms).

Helm believes this will incentivise for intermittent generators to invest in demand-side storage and backup plants based on decarbonization costs, although he ‘concedes [that] setting ‘the right carbon price’ will be ‘contentious’.

‘In response to Helm’s report, dubbed the Cost of Energy Review, energy secretary Greg Clark said a consultation would be announced shortly’.

November 8

Chris Goodall, blogger at ‘Carbon Commentary’ writes that 0.1% of 16-44 year olds ‘strongly oppose’ onshore wind. He says: ‘Every few months the UK government interviews 2000 people about their views on energy. These surveys show the gradually rising popularity of renewables, including onshore wind. I looked at the underlying data ... and found that just 1 person between 16 and 44 from the entire interview panel was ‘strongly opposed’ to wind. (Want to know more? She lives in a rural area, earns a high income and supports other renewables. She doesn’t like fracking). By contrast, 235 respondents in this group ‘strongly supported’ the technology’.

‘Across all age ranges, wind seems to be rising in popularity. The only group with more than a few opponents are those over 65. And yet the reduction in those opposing onshore wind has been fastest in this age range. Media coverage shouldn’t start from the assumption that people don’t like turbines. Wind power is popular. Vastly more popular than fracking’.

‘Energy minister Richard Harrington said at this year’s Conservative Party conference that ‘Provided that it goes through a reasonable local planning system, I see no reason why it should not be on the same level playing field as everything else’.”
‘The latest edition of the regular government survey on attitudes to wind power and other renewables was issued last week. It showed that onshore wind was supported by 74% of the population and opposed by only 8%.’

‘Among those against wind, those who are ‘strongly opposed’ to this form of renewable energy represent less than 2% of the UK population’.

‘The net balance of 66% supporting onshore wind is a new record in the five year history of the survey. The average next balance until survey 15 in 2014 was less than 55%. But support has increased in each of the last four waves since then’.

Source: *Energy and Climate Change Public Attitudes Tracker*, BEIS

‘Two important other conclusions come out of the survey.

1) Age is by far the most important predictor of attitude towards wind. Young people are almost universally in favour. However, all age groups have increased approval of onshore turbines in the last few years.

2) The people in rural areas – despite repeated assertions to the contrary – are typically more in favour of wind than urban dwellers. A much larger fraction are strongly supportive. However, more rural interviewees were also ‘strongly opposed’ although the numbers are tiny.’

‘Only 3% of all those interviewed and aged between 16 and 44 were opposed to onshore wind power. (This includes both people who ‘strongly opposed’ wind and those who simply ‘opposed’). Put another way, 28 people out of the 871 interviewed in that age range didn’t like turbines.

By contrast, 132 people out of 596 respondents who were over 65 disapproved of wind. This was 22% of those interviewed. But even in this age range, only 4% ‘strongly opposed’ onshore turbines.’
Between survey 15 (in late 2014) and the latest round of interviews, every age group showed an increase in the percentage supporting onshore wind. (In the case of 35-44 year olds, the increase was only half of one percent).

Even among the 65+, the percentage approving of turbines rose from 53% to almost 65%. The number disapproving fell from 22% to 16%. This reduction was the largest of any group in absolute
percentage terms. The numbers opposing wind amongst all age groups 16-44 is now almost insignificant.’

Source: *Energy and Climate Change Public Attitudes Tracker*, BEIS

Rural versus urban

‘Perhaps the rise in support for onshore wind is confined to those who live in large towns and cities? These people will generally not even be able to see a new generation of onshore wind turbines from their windows.

The reality is that rural dwellers as a whole are more likely to approve of onshore wind than people in towns. About one quarter of the UK population is defined as living in rural areas. These people include 32% who strongly support wind, compared to 21% for the population as a whole.

On the other hand, more rural people than urban dwellers ‘strongly oppose’ wind but this is not enough to overturn the general conclusion that living in the country makes a person more likely to support the technology.
What does this all mean? The large majority of British people support onshore wind and this support is increasing among all age groups. Tiny numbers strongly oppose turbines and these people are almost exclusively old. It’s time to start developing Britain’s extensive and inexpensive resources of wind again. Despite what you might read in the newspapers, there really isn’t much opposition.’

**November 23**

The Guardian reports that the Treasury says there will be ‘no subsidies for green power projects before 2025’. New windfarms, solar plants and tidal lagoons, ‘have been dealt a blow’. ‘The Treasury said it had taken the decision to “protect” consumers’.

‘WWF said it was a huge disappointment, while Greenpeace claimed Wednesday’s budget was one of the least green ever. Business groups also reacted with dismay’. ‘Aldersgate Group, whose members include BT, Ikea and Marks & Spencer, said the lack of clarity on low-carbon power investments was disappointing’.

‘James Court, head of policy at the Renewable Energy Association, said: “The UK government seem to be turning their back on renewables’.

Some industry figures took comfort from Treasury language suggesting that some contracts might be allowed for renewables if the price were so low as to be effectively subsidy-free.

“the Treasury ... continuing its indefinite freeze of the carbon price support rate [is] a move that could endanger the achievement of the UK’s emissions target for 2030,” said Bob Ward at the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment.
November 24

Gareth Simkins of ENDS magazine reports that the autumn budget ‘sees government “turn its back” on renewables and nuclear’. Renewable Energy Association's head of policy and external affairs, James Court, said: “The UK government seems to be turning its back on renewables by announcing no new support for projects post 2020. The Chancellor talked about embracing the future in his speech, yet hid away the details that he was blocking all renewables to market’.

“Onshore wind and solar are already cheaper than new-build gas, and we have seen huge cost reductions happening in offshore wind, energy from waste and biomass. These are the technologies of the future and the Government should be backing them, not blocking their progress.”

Chancellor Philip Hammond described plans to establish a £400m fund for electric vehicle charging points, incentives to buy energy-efficient technology, and raise tax on diesel cars but did not mention that there ‘may be no new support for renewables or nuclear power for some seven years, at least beyond existing commitments’.

This follows Hammond’s March announcement that the levy control framework would be scrapped to limit the costs to consumer bills more reliably.

In March 2016, the government set aside £730m per year for CfDs, all of which would be allocated by 2020. This leaves £557m to be allocated by 2020, with no more to be added until low-carbon energy becomes more cost-competitive. This could disrupt the deployment of both tidal lagoons and new nuclear power.

The government says it is “committed to keeping energy costs as low as possible … [and] … “Therefore, in order to protect consumers …will not introduce new low carbon electricity levies until the burden of such costs are falling … this means there will be no new low carbon electricity levies until 2025. All existing commitments will be respected” .

Hatchwell says: ‘It would appear to be a reaction to Dieter Helm’s review of the UK energy system” but without the fundamental shakeup he called for.

He adds: ‘The announcement came despite September’s CfD round demonstrating that offshore windpower had become the UK’s cheapest source of power at £57.50 per megawatt-hour, with new onshore capacity thought to be even cheaper. The same day, German contracts for onshore wind reached the record low of only €38 (£34) per MWh’. However, the Treasury explained that new carbon levies may be added to bills if the aggregate costs of existing ones are forecast to have a “sustained and significant fall in real terms [and] have a net reduction on bills”.

This leaves opens the possibility for guaranteed pricing for new projects, but only if they do not cost the government or consumers any extra — effectively a ‘subsidy-free CfD’.

“The removal of an annual cap on the Levy Control Framework reduces the risk of a boom and bust cycle” but “ambition to take full advantage of the UK’s global-leading renewables industry” is “missing”.

Fuel duty
Before Hammond’s speech, there had been speculation that duty on diesel fuel would rise, a move hinted at when the Treasury opened a call for evidence on reforming the treatment of non-transport red diesel, earlier this year.

Although he froze the tax for the eighth year running, the government has decided to review if the existing rates for alternatives to petrol and diesel – such as biodiesel and gas fuels – are appropriate, ahead of the next budget.

2018

January 16

Rob Merrick, Energy Editor of The Independent writes that new figures show ‘wind and solar power investment crashed after Government cut funding’. The dramatic slump – a 56 per cent fall in a single year – sparked an accusation that the Government is failing in its environmental strategy, despite its “green veneer”.

Ministers were also warned they are in danger of missing their own legally binding carbon reduction targets and that Brexit will “make the problem even worse”.

He says ‘the 56 per cent plunge in investment in renewable energy in 2017 marks the second successive year that financing has fallen in the UK. It follows a ban on subsidies for onshore wind farms and huge cuts to help for solar power’. The UK decline was the largest in the world, while China was up 24%, Spain 36%, Canada 45%, and the Netherlands up 30%.

Mary Creagh, the Labour chairwoman of the Commons environmental audit committee, said: “Current rates of investment simply won’t deliver enough renewable energy to meet our legally binding carbon reduction targets. Losing European Investment Bank funding if we leave the EU could make the problem even worse.” The figures were revealed to Ms Creagh’s committee by Bloomberg New Energy Finance.

Ministers said their priority was to “ensure energy bills for hardworking families and businesses are kept as low as possible”, rather than boost support for low carbon technologies.

January 16

ENDS writes that Dieter Helm defends his review against energy industry critics which he dismisses as ‘vested interests’. Appearing before the business and energy committee in the House of Commons, leaders of the energy and renewables industries have said Helm’s model of the energy market is unrealistic, and ‘philosophically consistent but not based on real-world evidence’.

They ‘rejected Helm’s idea to implement his catch-all EFP energy auction, citing international evidence that technologies have developed precisely because of government intervention. In the UK wind sector, offshore wind prices have topped under the contracts for differences auctions (CfD). The argument for allowing onshore wind to compete in future auctions is also growing as prices could potentially fall towards £50 per megawatt hour’, one said.

February 11
The Daily Telegraph reports that the row over onshore wind ‘threatens to re-ignite’ within the Tory party after ‘energy ministers Claire Perry and Richard Harrington alarmed their backbench colleagues by revealing that they are working on ways to support future projects.’

MPs have ‘warned the Government not to drop its manifesto pledge that effectively blocks onshore wind farms’. Ms Perry ‘raised eyebrows late last year after saying that onshore wind “is absolutely part of the future” and that she is working on ways “to see how we might bring forward onshore wind, particularly for areas of the UK that want to deploy it.”’

‘Richard Harrington, the junior energy minister, has also said publicly that he sees “no reason” why onshore wind farms should not compete on a level playing field against other energy options vying for financial support’.

‘Glyn Davies, the MP for Montgomeryshire in Wales, who played a leading role in the backbench campaign against onshore wind farms, said he was “alarmed” by the change of tone among energy ministers.’

“‘I’ve spoken to Claire Perry because I wanted to let her know my view. The minister assured me that there hasn’t been a change and I am a bit reassured by that,’” he said.

"We've got huge numbers of people who demonstrated their opposition previously and I think all those people would be reactivated if the Government changed its position," he warned.

Bob Stewart, the MP for Beckenham and another anti-wind campaigner, said: “We are constrained by the manifesto and if we have said we will do something we should. If we don’t, there should really be a very good reason not to.”

‘A Government spokesman clarified the ministers' comments, saying: “We do not believe that more large-scale onshore wind power is right for England, but in other areas where there is public support and it is cost effective it could be developed in future.”’

The Telegraph’s writers attribute this to ‘plummeting turbine costs’, meaning cheaper power which ‘could open a loophole for ministers to offer support to onshore wind projects, without breaking the pledge to scrap subsidies, through so-called ‘subsidy-free’ contracts’. Emma Pinchbeck, of Renewable UK, agrees that “the political debate about onshore wind has begun to shift because the economics have changed”.

Mr Davies, a ministerial aide to Alan Cairns, the Wales Secretary, opposes plans by National Grid for new power lines through Mid Wales to connect any new wind farms. He wants any new turbines to be “remote, hopefully at sea, and definitely as far out of sight as possible”.

February 12

ENDS Report says, that energy ministers are ‘talking up onshore wind’ at the same time as the fracking ‘boom’ may have ‘gone bust’. It notes that ‘Greenpeace journalists at Unearthed have had sight of “confidential Cabinet Office projections” which they say show that the government is not expecting a fracking boom on the scale predicted by the industry’. Shale gas industry backed studies anticipated 4,000 horizontal wells by 2032 but government projections now put the figure at 155 by 2025.
‘The Implementation Unit Report on Shale Gas’ made in 2016 for the Cabinet Office, has never been released but some details were obtained by Greenpeace ‘Unearthed’ through a Freedom of Information request. Dan Lewis, senior adviser at the Institute of Directors, which produced the analysis behind the 4,000 well figure, told Unearthed that the failure was down to planning issues and cheaper wholesale gas prices. Unearthed points out that ‘in 2012 would-be fracking firm Cuadrilla predicted 800 wells ‘within the next 5 to 10 years’ in the Bowland Shale alone, the largest of the UK’s three formations’.

**February 14**

Figures published by trade body WindEurope show more onshore wind power capacity was installed in the UK in 2017 than offshore wind, reports ENDS. The UK now has a tenth of the total wind power in Europe. Onshore wind in the UK increased by 2.6GW in 2017, while offshore wind capacity increased by 1.7GW. ‘However, WindEurope … warned the growth in 2017 was the result of projects being "pushed through the gates" to benefit from feed-in tariffs, ahead of the widespread shift to auction-based systems, and could leave to a large drop-off in the medium term’.

The report says the “switch from feed-in tariffs to auctions, which has been imposed by the European Commission and creates major difficulties in particular for small and medium-sized investors, including community ownership”.

**Image credit:** WindEurope

Annual onshore and offshore wind installations in the EU

**March 9**

Earlier this week, the government published a draft of a revised version of the NPPF for consultation. - ENDS Report

ENDS recalls that ‘Seven years ago, the publication of a draft version of the key planning blueprint for England, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), unleashed a storm of protest. In the weeks and months that followed, the Tory-Lib Dem coalition government felt the full force of protests from backbench MPs, countryside campaigners, and the Daily Telegraph, which in a
succession of stories warned of the threat posed to the countryside by the proposals, under the banner of its “Hands Off Our Land” campaign.

By the time the framework was adopted in March 2012 the furore had largely died down, but the row that had played out over the preceding months serves to underline the tension that can exist between housing growth and environmental aspirations.

The main debates are around topics such as biodiversity ‘net gain’ and housing development. ‘Overall ... the revised framework has been given a cautious welcome by environmental campaigners’ although ‘the move to incorporate a written ministerial statement’s tough planning rules on onshore wind within the framework’ are seen as a ‘backwards’ step’, and the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) ‘fears that a proposed change to the framework’s wording could “downgrade” the planning system’s obligation to deliver on the provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008.’

March 19

Greenpeace’s Unearthed team announce that the government says the 2016 Shale Gas Implementation Report cannot be released for reasons of exemptions concerning ‘commercial interests’ and ‘formulation of government policy’ and the 155 wells figure may now be ‘out of date’ even though they are confirmed as still the most recent available.

It adds: ‘and yet, in its rejection of a freedom of information request, the Cabinet Office said that “even with the passage of time” the report “could call into question the industry’s viability”’. [Suggests that the penny has dropped in government that shale gas is not going to replace onshore wind as a cost-effective energy source? Hence an underpinning assumption about the viability of the ban on onshore wind has disappeared].

March 27

For Carbon Brief Simon Evan reports that ‘Developer Renewable Energy Systems (RES) has planning permission to build 200MW of onshore wind and solar capacity in the UK, which it intends to develop without government support’.

March 29

‘With government’s decarbonisation drive high on ambition but low on funds’ plugging the low-carbon finance gap is now urgent ‘to ensure the UK can meet its low-carbon commitments beyond 2020’ says Paul Hatchwell in ENDS.

‘The UK power sector is crucial to meeting the government’s fifth carbon budget and Paris Agreement commitments’ but ‘government subsidies and network operator spending have been capped, EU sources withdrawn and post-2020 policies are still unclear to investors’.

He says government’s ‘Industrial Strategy and Clean Growth Strategy’ is impressive but lacks funding. ‘Ministers are tightening the reins on the Levy Control Framework, which caps the costs of schemes to support low-carbon generation, beyond 2020. The government has said there will be no new renewables levies until at least 2025 – just when decarbonisation needs to ramp up to help meet the fourth and fifth carbon budgets through to 2030’. 
Enough has been set aside for offshore wind projects in the planning pipeline up to 2020, with £557m remaining for contracts for difference (CfD) subsidies, which offset the risk of investing in new infrastructure by guaranteeing a minimum price per unit of power generated.

But after this the cupboard is bare, particularly following the ending of feed-in tariffs and Renewable Obligation funding for onshore wind. The situation remains dire for solar PV and less developed wave and tidal technologies that have lost out in CfD auctions. To maintain momentum, policy clarity, continuing support and innovative demonstration projects are needed.

Costs have fallen and subsidy-free investment models are emerging but ‘investor uncertainty beyond the early 2020s remains, with policies still vague’.

£45bn is also needed in the next five years alone, for upgrading transmission and distribution networks. This depends on distribution network operators (DNOs), heavily regulated by Ofgem to keep the costs down for consumers but also warned by Ofgem to expect lower rates of return in future. The government-commissioned Green Finance Task Force has just published its recommendations which could ‘make or break’ the government’s clean growth and industrial strategies.

April 26

‘Coal generation at new low, consumers love renewable energy’ says ENDS report and ‘Coal generation falls 28% as electricity from renewables(*) rises to 45%’.

‘Overall, electricity generated by the major power producers declined 4% in the past year, according to statistics released today by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)’.

‘The low-carbon share of electricity from the major producers was up 3.9 percentage points to 45.1% as a result of more renewables including notable increases in offshore and onshore wind power’.

The energy and climate change public attitude tracker commissioned by (BEIS) finds that 72% are worried that the UK is becoming “too dependent on energy from other countries”, and 71% felt the UK is “not investing fast enough in alternative sources of energy” up from 66% a year ago. ‘This appeared to be linked to a concern expressed by [77%] ... about the risk of steep energy rises in the future. Support for renewable energy is very high (85%), up from 79% last year’, and only 3% were opposed.

[* or is this incl nuclear?]

May 11

In a response to a government consultation on the NPFF, a consortium of pro-wind groups led by 1010 writes that the Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) on onshore wind, (HCWS42 - issued 18 June 2015) ‘has had a hugely damaging impact on both the commercial and community onshore wind sector in England’. Their analysis finds that ‘since June 2015, there has been a 94% decrease in the number of planning applications for onshore wind projects in England, representing a 92% drop in potential new installed capacity. There has been just one application for a community-led wind initiative, which is a single-turbine project’.

May 16
Catherine Early writes in ENDS that ‘clean energy investment hits ‘lowest point in a decade’. It fell by more than 56% in 2017, according to an inquiry by the parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee. The cross-party group of MPs said that the fall in investment was “dramatic and worrying” and questions the UK’s ability to meet its legally-binding carbon reduction targets.

‘The committee blamed changes to policy in 2015, including closing the renewables obligation to onshore wind one year earlier than planned, reducing feed-in-tariffs for small-scale renewable generation, cancelling the zero carbon homes policy due to come into force in 2016 and scrapping the £1 billion carbon capture and storage competition’. These changes damaged investor confidence in low carbon projects, say MPs.

The UK’s vote to leave the EU has also contributed: MPs heard that the European Investment Bank (EIB) contributed €15.69 billion between 2006 and 2016, and in 2016, the EIB invested €5.5 billion but only €1.9 billion in 2017. The government’s sale of the Green Investment Bank also raised a question mark over future investment MPs said.

Committee Chair Mary Creagh, said: “The government must urgently plug this policy gap and publish its plan to secure the investment required to meet the UK’s climate change targets. It should provide greater clarity on how it intends to deliver the Clean Growth Strategy by the 2018 budget, and explore how a Sovereign Green Bond could kickstart its Clean Growth Strategy”.

‘Earlier this month, consultancy EY ranked the UK as the seventh most attractive country in the world for investing in renewable energy, rising three places from last year. This was due to a rise in renewables being built without subsidies and repowering of old wind farms’.

May 24

ENDS reports that the UK’s first subsidy-free wind farm has gained financial backing. Withernwick II extension project in Yorkshire has secured a long-term financial contract with a leading supplier, known as a power purchase agreement (PPA), to bring the project to fruition.

May 25

An onshore wind farm application first proposed by Good Energy south of Bude in Cornwall in 2014 (Big Field) is turned down in the High Court.

James Parsons writes in ENDS that plans for the 11-turbine wind farm on agricultural land near Bude were refused by Mrs Justice Lang Justice Lang on grounds that £5000 community benefit and a 20% tariff reduction for local residents “was essentially an inducement to make the proposal more attractive to local residents and to the local planning authority” but was “not necessary” to make the development acceptable in planning terms under regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010. Nor could it “be properly described as community ownership”.

The refusal followed earlier rejections by Cornwall Council in 2014 and on appeal by the former communities and local government secretary Sajid Javid in 2017. ‘Both the planning inspector and Javid concluded that the wind turbines would have been “an incongruous presence of significant scale, in terms of wind turbine height, and the spread of the array, in many views inland from the AONB and Heritage Coast”’.
Good Energy had argued that Javid had been legally wrong to disregard the commercial benefits and that planners ‘had failed to have proper regard to the newly-adopted Cornwall Local Plan’.

It followed a precedent set in the court of appeal in 2017 about a similar £5,000 community benefit offer in the Forest of Dean.

**May 28**

The Cornish and Devon Post summarises the history of the rejected Good Energy ‘Big Field’ windfarm in ‘Dismissal of plans for Big Field Wind Farm ‘will be a huge sigh of relief’ for local people, says MP’

Conservative MP Scott Mann said he is ‘delighted’ the High Court has dismissed proposals to build a wind farm near Week St Mary. ‘Good Energy first submitted plans for 11 wind turbines, also known as the ‘Big Field Wind Farm’, at Creddacott Farm to Cornwall Council in 2014. The plans were refused by the local authority with the developer then appealing this decision. The appeal involved a public inquiry, which was held in Launceston between April and May 2016 where members of the public were able to submit statements in favour of or against the proposals. This appeal was dismissed by the then Communities Secretary Sajid Javid on July 26 2017.’

‘Good Energy then applied to the High Court for judicial review to try and overturn the decision, prompting Mr Mann to write to Good Energy asking the developer ‘to withdraw their legal action in the High Court’. During a public inquiry conducted by the Planning Inspectorate, Mr Mann lodged his objections to the wind farm, saying that it would have a ‘negative impact on the environment and that the developer should respect the decision by Cornwall planners as well as the will of local people’.’

‘There was opposition from the local community, including the group Communities Against Rural Exploitation (CARE), which has campaigned for more than five years to prevent the development. CARE chairman, Richard Sowerby, said: “We are of course delighted by this decision. This proposal has caused anguish and worry for local residents over the last five years. We are very grateful to the many people who have steadfastly worked together to oppose Big Field Wind Farm, a development the Planning Inspector rightly described as ‘an incongruous presence of significant scale, in terms of wind turbine height, and the spread of the array, in many views inland from the AONB and Heritage Coast.”’

‘Jeremy Ward, CARE committee member and chair of Week St Mary Parish Council, added: “In theory, the developer can apply for a further hearing in the Supreme Court. Given that their proposals and claims have now been refused by Cornwall Council, the Planning Inspector, the Secretary of State and the High Court, we hope they will accept the realities of the situation and put an end to the misery they have caused local people.”’

‘Welcoming the High Court’s decision, Mr Mann said: “I’m delighted that the High Court has dismissed this appeal by Good Energy and that the will of local people has prevailed. “The proposed wind farm was heavily scrutinised by local planners and the Planning Inspectorate, and I was astounded that even after a drawn out inquiry which ended with the Secretary of State rejecting the proposals, Good Energy decided to appeal it in the courts.’
June 12

The Unilever-owned brand Ben and Jerrys joins 1010 in campaigning for onshore wind. Adam Vaughan writes in The Guardian that ‘With names like Strawberry Breezecake and Cherry Gale-cia, ice-cream maker pushes for government re-think’. The renamed flavours will be sold at half price on “windy Wednesdays” to support a pro-renewables push. Onshore windfarms have largely stopped being built since the Conservatives ended subsidies and introduced planning reforms. Ben & Jerry’s drive will feature a tour of the UK, including London, Birmingham and Bristol, to encourage people to take action supporting the technology. The firm is also backing a petition by the climate change charity 10:10. Rebecca Baron, the company’s UK social mission manager, said: “If we want to move away from polluting fossil fuels and build a future based on clean energy, then wind power is a vital ingredient.” The government’s own polling found public support for onshore windfarms at a record high of 76% in April, up from 74% last November.

‘Allowing onshore wind back would save £1.6bn on household energy bills between 2019 and 2025, according to a report this week, commissioned by energy firms. Lord Deben, the government’s top climate adviser, has also waded into the debate, saying ministers should tell consumers they face higher energy bills if there is no rethink.’

June 28

The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) warns that unless action is taken now, the public faces an unnecessarily expensive deal to make the shift to a low-carbon economy ENDS Report.

‘In its tenth annual report since the Climate Change Act 2008 came into force, the CCC said the government should support “simple, low-cost” options such as onshore wind and home insulation if it is to meet legally-binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the 2020s and 2030s’.

Both onshore wind and solar pv are currently excluded from public funding and the opportunity to bid for electricity supply contracts.

July 25

A YouGov survey of MPs for the Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit shows that just 8% of Members of Parliament know that onshore wind farms are now the cheapest way to add electricity generating capacity in the UK. By comparison, 12% believe that large nuclear power stations, like Hinkley Point C, provide the cheapest new capacity.

MPs also overestimate opposition to onshore wind. The most recent Government survey shows that just 2% of the population strongly opposes it but only 9% of MPs think that the figure is less than 5%. Most (52%) believe ‘strong opposition’ to be above 20%.

A separate poll of the public, finds that a majority of voters support lifting the Government’s de facto ban on new onshore wind projects. 66% would support a change in policy so that onshore wind farms can be built in areas where they have local backing.

July 30

Carbon Brief writes that ‘fossil fuels supplied 80% of the UK’s primary energy in 2017, a drop of one percentage point compared to 2016. This is the lowest ever share in the modern era. Even just 10
years earlier, the share stood at 91%’. The overall share renewables reached 11.3% in 2017, its highest ever and 1.2% up on 2016.

‘Onshore wind, in particular, showed a large increase, rising by 40% compared to 2016 (although this comes after a small fall in 2016 due to lower wind speeds that year). Altogether, onshore wind electricity has now risen by 139%, or close to two-and-a-half times, since 2012’.

‘Offshore wind generation also saw a significant rise in 2017, increasing by 28% compared to 2016. Overall, offshore wind generation has increased by 175% since 2012.

A report by carbon thinktank Sandbag shows new onshore wind and solar power can now compete with ‘the short-term costs of generating electricity from existing coal and gas plants in Europe’ (ENDS Report).

The cost of coal had increased by 72% to €46(£42)/MWh since January 2017, and gas by 43% to €49/MWh, while in Germany’s electricity auctions, wind and solar bids have been as low as €38/MWh.

Sandbag says it has “never been easier to rapidly phase-out coal with wind and solar”.'
Renewable energy consultant Alison Fogg writes at Spin Watch about her experiences of anti-wind campaigning in the South West: ‘Connecting The Dots: A Firsthand Account Of How The UKIP Surge Drove The Tories To Sabotage The Renewables Industry’. She describes how in 2014 she found that it was almost impossible to get positive press coverage in the local North Devon Journal because of links between UKIP, the ‘Slay The Array’ campaign against an offshore wind farm, and the local branch of the CPRE, whose chair, Penny Evans, had stood for UKIP. She reports ‘At one Slay the Array meeting, a 59-year-old supporter of the Array plans was ejected after asking too many questions. This man was then beaten up. And that was at a renewable energy event’. The main suspect ‘was described by police as “wearing a purple jacket with a UKIP badge”’.

She adds that a journalist ‘told me that the North Devon Journal received loads of anti-wind and anti-solar letters after each article’ and ‘although the letters seemed coordinated, it was difficult to prove who was behind them … [and] having talked to hundreds of customers in the Devon area, this was at odds with what I knew … So I started looking into CPRE Devon’.

She found that ‘despite its limited membership figures and charitable income, this group did phenomenal campaigning work. Their website offered comprehensive reference materials for: contacting every MP, writing letters to media titles … [objecting to] planning applications on solar parks and wind turbines’. Plus ‘This activity also went beyond just Devon. CPRE Devon provided an online portal for anyone in the country (or world) to write letters of objection for cleantech. The policies of CPRE Devon were out of line with CPRE National — none more so than with the views of the likes of Phillip Bratby, who had given evidence at UK parliamentary select committees. Bratby is a trustee of CPRE Devon, yet is a full blown climate denier’.

Fogg says: ‘George Eustace, Cornwall Conservative MP and former UKIP candidate, appeared on BBC local TV speaking out against solar parks’ and the Dorset Wildlife Trust campaigned against a solar park. ‘Despite contacting CPRE national head office, nothing could be done as CPRE Devon was a separate fundraising group and the national body had no control over it’.

‘In the 2015 national election … The West Country, a traditional Lib Dem area … many Lib Dem MPs lost their seats’. ‘Sir Ed Davey (ex-Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change) warned us at a Regen SW renewable energy event that the Chancellor, George Osborne, was pro-gas. And that Osborne was “pro-gas of any kind” and the Feed-in Tariff was likely to be reviewed … We all started campaigning to save the solar industry. But our campaigning failed’.

She states that ‘local companies … [met] North Devon Conservative MP Peter Heaton-Jones.. [he] was supportive of our concerns … [but] … said he didn’t dare speak up in favour of wind turbines or solar parks because whenever he did, he received a sackload of letters the next day in protest of his actions’. And ‘at a Solarsense launch event for the community-funded solar park in July 2016, Sir Ed Davey said that the Conservatives had adopted UKIP policies by mistake, including killing the solar industry. Worried about losing the vote to UKIP, the party had become anti-renewable energy, destroying a vibrant sector essential for the future economy’.

Clive Betts MP, chair of the Commons’ Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee and a leading advocate of ‘localism’, talks to Rachel Salvidge of ENDS ‘about the government’s plans to speed up the planning process for fracking and how DEFRA’s 25-Year Environment Plan is not yet on other departments’ radars’.
Betts contrasts the way the Conservative government treats local communities over fracking and over onshore wind:

“It’s very interesting the difference [in government attitudes] between onshore wind and fracking,” he notes. “Onshore wind is a no-no, the local community has got to agree it first, but with fracking they’re going to get it whether they agree or not – the contrast there is absolute and completely ridiculous.”

August 31

A report by RenewablesUK ‘Onshore Wind Powering Communities’ reveals that 2017 was ‘a record year for onshore wind deployment, with 2.6GW installed across the UK; enough to power more than 1.8 million homes. This represents over one-fifth of the UK’s entire onshore wind fleet, and is double the previous annual record set in 2013’

However the main driver was an impending ‘deadline to accredit for the Renewables Obligation scheme’ and as ‘new onshore wind projects are currently barred from taking part in competitive auctions for contracts to generate electricity (Contracts for Difference)’, it foresees that ‘the amount of new capacity installed in 2018 and 2019 is expected to drop sharply’, and the ‘pipeline’ of new projects post-2020 is ‘uncertain’.

64% of UK installed onshore wind is in Scotland, 14% in Wales, 13% in England and 9% in Northern Ireland.

October 20

Professor David Toke blogs that the Treasury is aiming to change policy so that ‘almost all future development for renewable energy in the UK will be stopped. Continued incentives and tax breaks for nuclear power, shale gas and conventional power stations will, however, remain in place.’ It wants to end Contracts for a Difference (CfDs), end ‘all incentives to solar pv, including for solar power exported to the electricity distribution system’, and ‘the carbon price floor which makes fossil fuel more expensive and non-fossil sources relatively cheaper’.

This ‘would shift the balance in electricity generation towards coal and away from non-fossil fuels’. Junior Energy Minister Claire Perry is opposing it but Toke says she just serves as a ‘green façade’ and the Treasury favours ‘conventional’ energy sources ie nuclear, gas and coal. He adds: ‘The incentives offered for Hinkley C are very high - and even more Government guarantees are being discussed for the Wylfa nuclear project. Meanwhile conventional power plant can bid for annual rounds of 'capacity mechanism' payments, a facility which suits conventional power plant much better than variable renewables. On top of this shale gas entrepreneurs are being offered generous tax breaks not available to renewable energy developers’.”

November 13
Carbon Brief interviews Sir John Armitt chairman of the Infrastructure Commission about the first infrastructure assessment. Carbon Brief asks ‘the report describes the shift to green energy as a golden opportunity for ministers. Do you think that ministers are listening to that message and taking action?’ Armit says:

‘JA: I think that ministers would like to take action. There’s always the issue of affordability. We’ve always had the trilemma of making sure that we’re producing our energy in a sustainable and green way. But we have energy security at the same time and it’s something which the public sees as being an affordable cost to them – and balancing those three has always been a trilemma, as we’ve traditionally called it. That hasn’t gone away. We think, though, that there are opportunities, when you look at the plummeting prices, for example, in offshore wind auctions. You are down to £45 a kilowatt and continuing, probably, to come down [In the latest auction, two offshore windfarms won contracts at £57.50 per megawatt hour (MWh). If an auction were opened to onshore wind, it is expected to come in closer to £45/MWh]. We see a real opportunity for costs to come down’.

November 18

Business and Energy secretary Greg Clark delivers a speech on the energy market, ‘After The Trilemma: 4 Principles for the Power Sector’, following up on Dieter Helm’s review. Clark says the “energy trilemma” is “coming to an end”. “Cheap power is now green power ... it is no longer true that when it comes to electricity, you can only choose two of the three things that we really want: green, cheap and secure.”

Zero subsidy say Clark should be a principle, and ‘it is looking now possible, indeed likely, that by the mid 2020s, green power will be the cheapest power. It can be zero subsidy’.

December 12

As Prime Minister Theresa may faces an internal challenge arising from the Brexit debates, ENDS Report analyses the environmental positions of potential Conservative leadership contenders.

As well as Michael Gove, current DEFRA Secretary, these include Sajid Javid, Boris Johnson, Jeremy Hunt, Penny Mordaunt, Dominic Raab, Jacob Rees-Mogg and Amber Rudd.

Sajid Javid: ‘Media reports indicate he used a cabinet meeting in September to set out a “huge shopping list” of market-friendly reforms that would include reducing workers’ rights and scrapping some environmental protections’.

‘While serving as communities secretary, Javid won praise from environmental groups after refusing planning permission for an open cast coal mine at Druridge Bay, citing the plan’s impact on climate change and the landscape. But the High Court subsequently overturned Javid’s decision, finding his reasoning to be “significantly inadequate”.’

‘He also refused permission for a £30m wind farm in Cornwall because of its impact on the landscape, a decision that was upheld by the High Court this year.’

‘While communities secretary, Javid supported the government’s pro-fracking agenda by overturning Lancashire County Council’s decision to reject Cuadrilla’s application to drill and hydraulically fracture four wells at Preston New Road’.
Boris Johnson: ‘Johnson has a patchy record on environmental matters. As mayor of London he struggled to get to grips with air pollution ... He offered his support for a controversial report by the Institute of Economic Affairs, a right-wing thinktank, that criticised EU rules on environmental protection for “moving in an anti-competitive direction”.

‘In newspaper columns, he has made contentious claims about climate change, citing the views of Piers Corbyn ... But Johnson has been careful not to endorse these views himself. As foreign secretary he pledged to urge the Trump administration to remain in the Paris climate agreement’.

Jeremy Hunt: Hunt has consistently voted against the introduction of measures aimed at preventing climate change, but largely in line with the government’s own position, according to TheyWorkForYou. In 2016 Hunt voted against reducing the permitted carbon dioxide emission rate for new homes and against requiring a strategy for carbon capture and storage for the energy industry. In 2013, when the Energy Bill was going through parliament Hunt was notably absent for votes on the bill relating to decarbonisation’.

‘Earlier this year, he likened antibiotic resistance to climate change because it is “slow-burn but [with] potentially disastrous consequences if we do nothing”.

Penny Mordaunt: ‘shrinking the state and increasing its collaboration with private sector is a running theme in her political interventions. She has advocated for “seriously small government” in response to public dissatisfaction with the political status quo’ But Mordaunt has been less outspoken on environmental matters ... and as a government minister has frequently made references to honouring the UK’s environmental responsibilities.

Dominic Raab: A strong advocate for leaving the EU, Raab has praised Michael Gove’s proposals for a ‘green Brexit’. However, he also has family ties to the Global Warming Policy Foundation, an organisation promoting climate science denial, according to Desmog UK. As housing minister, Raab ... ‘was also involved in plans to set up a new fracking regulator that campaign groups warned could undermine local-decision making’.

Jacob Rees-Mogg: ‘When it comes to environmental protections, he is a strident proponent of deregulation. Speaking at a session of the Treasury Select Committee, he said the UK could roll back environmental standards “a very long way” after Brexit. He has called for an overall in “sclerotic” planning restrictions and heavily criticised the environmental non-regression clause proposed in the government’s white paper on its future relationship with the EU.

Amber Rudd: ‘On the liberal wing of the party, Rudd was energy secretary from 2015 to 2016, when the Department for Energy and Climate Change was rolled into the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy after the Brexit referendum. ... Campaigning to remain in the EU, she warned that Brexit would cut investment in energy, harm energy security and lead to higher costs. Perhaps her most important contribution to environmental policy was announcing the end of unabated coal power by 2025. She also granted planning consent to the Swansea Bay tidal lagoon project in 2015, although a subsidy refusal killed it off this summer.’ ‘Although she committed the government to meeting the fifth carbon budget, covering the crucial 2028-32 period, “offshore wind, biomass and solar PV were not given a lot of love” under her tenure, Paul Nowak, deputy general secretary of the TUC, told ENDS last year. Planning permission for onshore wind turbines was denied, subsidies cut back substantially and funding for carbon capture and storage halted. Diesel generation also bloomed after she boosted the capacity market’.
2019

January 7

Simon Pickstone at ENDS writes: ‘Treasury to target green energy programmes as part of spending review’. Chief Secretary to the Treasury Liz Truss writes in the Sunday Telegraph ‘“We must be prepared to junk the white elephants, the programmes that haven’t worked’.

January 7

Leo Murray of 1010 tweets Leo Murray @crisortunity Jan 7 ‘What green energy policies? There’s only two left - CfDs for offshore wind and the carbon floor price, both of which have been spectacularly successful. New nuclear?? Which is what we all think of when we think white elephants obviously. But the military need nuclear. Hmmm’m’

January 8

‘People who install solar from April will have to give away surplus’ until a new scheme launches, writes Adam Vaughan in The Guardian. Conclusions on a government consultation on will not be concluded until perhaps months after the current FiT ends on 31 March.

January 20

Chris Heaton-Harris’s website states under ‘campaigns - Wind Energy/Planning’:

‘Working to cut subsidies for wind farms and limit onshore wind farms are one of Chris’ main policy focuses. He has made numerous speeches in Parliament on the topic and organized a letter to the Prime Minister signed by over 100 MPs calling for drastic cuts in on-shore wind farm subsidies. Chris has also worked to call attention to the problems created by wind farms for local residents including noise, visual intrusion and their effect on wildlife. He is working with a number of local communities, helping them to fight both wind-farm proposals and giving local committees a greater say in their future’.

‘To join the national grassroots campaign against on-shore wind farms and to find out more about what is being done, please click here: http://www.togetheragainstwind.com/’ [defunct]

‘To find out more about how Chris is working to change the Government's policy on wind energy and to read recent publications concerning wind turbine noise, please click here.’

‘To read the recent Hansard of the debate concerning the Energy Bill (HL) 2015-2016 please click here and to read Chris’ individual contribution to that debate, please click here (begins at Column 1188).’

‘If you would like more information about this or would like Chris to help you object to a local on-shore windfarm proposal, please e-mail him at chris.heatonharris.mp@parliament.uk’

January 31

Greg Clark Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, writes in a letter published in the Financial Times, ‘the global energy market is changing fast. Cleaner sources of
power, such as offshore wind, have fallen in cost to the point they will soon need no public subsidy...

Britain’s electricity requirement for the 2030s is not a problem of shortages but the much better challenge of abundance. In fact, the last contract for difference auction in the UK procured 3 gigawatts of offshore wind — equal to the capacity of a nuclear power station — for only £57.50 per megawatt hour.

Clark states ‘We are committed to nuclear power as part of a diverse energy mix’ citing Hinkley Point C, Sizewell C and Bradwell and then qualified it: ‘But none of these can be at any price, hence the decision to set limits on consumers’ and taxpayers’ exposure to the costs of Wylfa’..... ‘The developing technology and economics of energy mean that we have a wider choice of power at a lower price than ever before, much of which can be deployed within years rather than decades’.

He continued: ‘supplies are secure and costs are falling. Rather than resist this by applying rigidly an approach put together a decade ago, our policy is allowing taxpayers and consumers to take advantage of these developments’, signalling that ‘this summer ... our energy white paper ... will set out how this can benefit industrial and commercial customers’.

ends