

Offshore wind farms a cash boost for district



BUT THERE IS CONCERN OVER SOLAR FARMS ON AGRICULTURAL LAND

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LINCOLNSHIRE is already seeing a large financial contribution to local facilities from renewable energy according to a community leader from Louth.

But in the meantime, a prominent member of the Lincolnshire Independents has caused for a 'pause' on certain solar projects in North Kesteven.

Councillor Ros Jackson, the Chair of Audit and Governance for East Lindsey District Council, has told this paper, that according to the figures she has seen, Net Zero is not costing people money, rather it is paying for the East Lindsey's £10m investment fund this year, and will pay a whole lot more besides.

On February 20 at an executive board meeting, East Lindsey Executive Board approved an additional £7.83m to be spent on projects to benefit tourism across the east coast on top of £1m that had already been allocated.

But the £10m of income which has funded the investment, is a windfall which has come from business rates from offshore wind farms.

This year the money will be spent on £1.8m for tourism related activities, £1.25m for place and asset improvements, £650k on cultural and the arts and £250k for heritage projects including markets across East Lindsey, public car parks; resurfacing works, new signage, lighting

and street furniture. works to enable shop front improvements and the purchase of the ancient 483-acre Harrison Woodlands between Louth and Alford.

Harrison Wood is a project also supported by an appeal by the Woodland Trust - a key project because England is the least wooded country in Europe and Lincolnshire is the least wooded county in England. Grant funding is also available for play parks and Cllr Jackson is pushing Louth Town Council to accept funding for a new play park near Park Avenue shops.

East Lindsey hasn't had so many nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs) producing energy yet, such as those in the West of Lincolnshire, because the backbone of the national grid isn't there to support them.

Cllr Jackson, who is also the Labour leader at East Lindsey District Council said: "Certain parties and vested interests portray Net Zero as costly, but Net Zero is not costing people money.

"It's quite the opposite - Lincolnshire is getting a huge contribution to local facilities from renewable energy.

"There's jobs, there's finances, and we've got money left over from renewable energy to spend on investment in Lincolnshire whilst other councils are collapsing in debt.

"Renewable energy will power our future, so we need to invest in training technicians locally to install solar

panels and charging points on homes and businesses, for example."

Councillor Jackson is not in favour of building solar farms on productive agricultural land, but accepts it may come and that every cloud has a silver lining.

She said: "There are plenty of car parks that ought to be covered in solar panels before we lose prime agricultural land. For example the Horncastle Hub Car Park. I am pushing to put solar capacity on car parks before farm land."

Meanwhile, in the Cliff Villages in North Kesteven, Councillor Marianne Overton held two public meetings to protest against local solar farms, and then joined a 'Leaders Council' with the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, Kerry McCarthy MP.

Cllr Overton called for a "pause" on NSIPs in Springwell, Fosse Green and Leoda to give Ed Milliband's new public energy company GB Energy what she called a "look-in".

She also called for the following: ■A statement calling for all new-build to be energy efficient. The cheapest energy is that which we have not used.

■A requirement for commercial roofs to be covered in solar wherever possible.

■A review of energy feed-in tariffs so that householders and businesses can access sufficient receipts for a shorter pay back period. Currently a national tariff encourages energy to be produced on relatively "cheap" farmland many miles from where it is needed, creating loss en-route.

■Energy should be produced close to where it is needed and differential feed-in tariffs could make that happen.

■There needs to be a limit to prevent the cumulative impact of vast solar industrial developments on open countryside. For example, my home area, which has almost 10,000 acres of farmland out of production and industrialised sprawling over an area big enough to easily house more than 100,000 people in the City of Lincoln. All this, while 630,000 acres of roof lie vacant.

“There are plenty of car parks that ought to be covered in solar panels before we lose prime agricultural land.”

Cllr Ros Jackson

IN BRIEF

Appeal to find wanted man



OFFICERS are appealing for help in located a wanted man.

Lincolnshire Police want to speak to Josh Winnard in connection with an allegation of grievous bodily harm.

The 27-year-old, pictured, is from South Yorkshire, however it is believed that he has links to Lincolnshire. Anyone with information that could help the force locate him should contact the police by calling 101.

Alternatively email DC Emma Dodsworth on emma.dodsworth@lincs.police.uk, quoting 'Niche:24000418067.

Market set to be relaunched

A BELOVED town market is being relaunched next week as the council hopes to return it to its former glory.

East Lindsey District Council has announced an improved Spilsby Market will be returning to the town on Monday, March 3.

The market will start at 9am and will offer residents in the area access to fresher and locally sourced products, whilst also supporting the local economy. It is hoped the market will also offer visitors a more personalised shopping experience, and give people the chance to try different businesses. The district council's market team has been working with Spilsby Town Council since January to restore the market back to its former glory. The council plans to increase the number of stalls in attendance as well as footfall in the town.

Councillor Adam Grist, East Lindsey District Council portfolio holder for market towns and the rural economy, said: "I am very excited to see the relaunch of Spilsby Market. I have listened to our local communities' feedback and have decided to approve a 50 per cent reduction in market fees, which means pitches are available from just £7.50, making them the most affordable in the surrounding counties."