

Details of email correspondence between Fiona Mcleod SNP MSP and Mrs L Ward

Sent to all MSPs with press release 28th May 2013 – see end of correspondence details

From: Lyndsey Ward
Sent: 28 May 2013 15:37
To: ";"
Subject: Safety Aspects of Turbines in School Playgrounds

Dear MSP

Please find below a press release that was sent out last week and was featured in the media. It relates to wind turbines in areas where our children play at their school and makes very disturbing reading. When you consider the game of conkers is now considered 'too dangerous' for our children to engage in on school premises one wonders how having a large piece of industrial machinery with whirling blades in school playgrounds can be appropriate.

This report looks primarily at Highland Council but could apply equally to any wind turbine constructed on school premises without due care and attention paid to health and safety.

Schools, in the main, do not have fenced off safety areas and those that do, do not have anything like the size to guarantee absolute safety for our children and school staff from turbine malfunction, blade and ice throw.

Wind turbines of all sizes malfunction and moving parts can break - as in all kinds of machinery. However, other large industrial machines are not being placed near where children are educated and play.

Every parent, of every child attending a school that hosts its own turbine, should be made aware of the very real risks involved so that they can assess the dangers for themselves.

This surely is a case for applying the 'Precautionary Principle' before a catastrophic accident occurs.

Please take the time to read the report and if you need any further details please contact the author, Stuart Young, on the contact details below.

Thank you

Mrs L Ward

Eight minutes later at 15.45 Fiona Mcleod responded:

You may not like windmills but this will drive you to a stroke!!! I nearly replied to it point-by-point, then thought – don't be silly, evidence, logic and the law don't matter to these people.

Mrs L Ward replied on 29th May at 11.24:

Dear Fiona

Thank you for your reply and thank you very much for your concern regarding my health. I am happily able to assure you that I am perfectly well and able to address serious issues such as keeping our children out of danger when they are at school. The good people of Strathkelvin and Bearsden are fortunate indeed to have an MSP who can receive, read, and absorb a detailed email, access the scores of pages of a report and supporting documentation, consider its merits, reach a conclusion and respond, all within 8 minutes of the original email being sent, and in the same time do sufficient research to form a reasoned opinion on the characters and motivation of the people who provided you with an important document which addresses such a serious situation. Very fortunate indeed. With such skills at your disposal it should not be too time consuming for you to respond to a few of the points with which you take issue. I look forward to your reply and considered opinion. If you would prefer please forward your views, and any evidence you base them on, to the author of the report, Stuart Young, at asksys@btconnect.com Best Wishes Lyndsey

Fiona Mcleod responded 29th May at 12.06

Dear Lyndsey, I am so sorry that this e-mail came across as very disrespectful – it was and I can only apologise. Having skimmed your e-mail I had meant to forward this to my husband who is a retired health and safety professional for his input so that I could give you a considered, factual response. You could see from my comments that I do not agree with the report you sent but I was intending to treat it seriously, sadly this is not the way it will have appeared to you because I hit reply instead of forward, my apologies again Fiona McLeod

Mrs L Ward replied 29th May at 12.46

Dear Fiona

Thank you for your clarification regarding your previous response. Can you confirm that you have indeed read the report by Stuart Young as you state you do not agree with it. I would be interested, as will the author, to know what aspects you don't agree with and why, or whether you don't agree with the report in its entirety and for what reasons. I am grateful that you are asking your husband for his input especially as his profession was health and safety. I will be delighted to have his considered opinion of the report in the near future. I look forward to hearing from you. Regards Lyndsey

Having had no further correspondence from Ms Mcleod Mrs Ward wrote again on 19th June 11.49

Dear Fiona

I am writing to ask if you are now in a position to reply to my previous email, below, and if your husband has completed his perusal of the documents I sent you regarding turbine safety in schools.

I look forward to your 'considered factual response' in the very near future. Thank you
Lyndsey

The response from Ms Mcleod was short and discourteous on 19th June at 14.01

Neither I or my husband have had time to read this report yet. I'll get back to you when we have if we have any comments.

Mrs L Ward replied 20th June 2013 at 3.22 – to date there has been no further response from Fiona Mcleod SNP MSP

Dear Fiona

Thank you for your email.

I have to say I am a little confused by your short response. If I can draw your attention to the email that you sent to me on 29th May 2013 - I have copied below to make reference easier.

It was very clear in that email that you fully intended to give me a 'considered factual response' to the information I had sent you about wind turbines in school playgrounds. You also said that you did not agree with the report and yet now you say you haven't read it. How can you disagree with something you haven't even read? I would have thought that the subject matter was so serious and the health of our children so important that you would be willing to look at the documents you had been sent as soon as possible.

I look forward to receiving the reply you said that you would give and I hope it will be in the not too distant future. I am sure you agree that it would be inappropriate to delay considering this matter further.

Regards Lyndsey

Dear Lyndsey, I am so sorry that this e-mail came across as very disrespectful – it was and I can only apologise. Having skimmed your e-mail I had meant to forward this to my husband who is a retired health and safety professional for his input so that I could give you a considered, factual response. You could see from my comments that I do not agree with the report you sent but I was intending to treat it seriously, sadly this is not the way it will have appeared to you because I hit reply instead of forward, my apologies again. Fiona McLeod

PRESS RELEASE SENT MAY 2013 FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

Press Release for immediate publication

Today Caithness Windfarm Information Forum (CWIF) launches a commissioned report into

**“The Safety Aspects of The Highland Council’s Practice of
Placing Small Wind Turbines in School Playgrounds”**

<http://www.caithnesswindfarms.co.uk/SchoolsReport.htm>

Headline Findings

The key findings of a report by Stuart Young Consulting are:

- **An independent expert review of the safety of putting wind turbines on school premises is essential.**
- Current control measures require head teachers to leave the classroom and venture forth to take windspeed readings and shut down turbines in **Hurricane Force** wind speeds when “*debris and unsecured objects are hurled about*”.
- Highland Council recommend exclusion zones for safety reasons - e.g. fall, topple, ejection - but none seem to have been provided.
- Turbines are to be allowed to operate in winds up to 107mph - “tropical cyclone levels”.
- The risk posed to head teachers through implementing Highland Council safety measures would be even greater than the risk posed to pupils by the turbines themselves.
- Highland Council embarked on a strategy of placing turbines in school playgrounds without a policy and without a risk assessment.
- On the Risk Assessment Matrix a scale of 1 to 3 for likelihood with 1 being “Very unlikely” is a very blunt instrument when the possible consequence of an event is the death of a child.
- Highland Council believes that halving the maintenance intervals leaves a zero residual risk of catastrophic mechanical failure. Logic and experience do not support this belief.
- Available evidence of small turbine failures points to a precautionary approach which Highland Council ignores.
- There is already evidence in Scotland that catastrophic turbine failures occur with consequent violent debris ejection. It cannot be ignored.
- “The fact that almost half a million pounds had been spent before a policy was developed or risk assessment undertaken may suggest a reason for the continuing practice of placing wind turbines in school playgrounds”.

- The report finds that “*if Highland Council had formulated a policy for turbines in school playgrounds and subjected it to rigorous risk assessment, informed by observation and experience, these turbines would almost certainly have not been installed*”.

The report was carried out by Caithness consultant Stuart Young whose [2010 Analysis of UK Wind Power Generation](#) created international headlines when it exposed for the first time the true inefficiency of windfarm output.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Highland Council, like other councils and schools all over the UK, has been installing turbines in school playgrounds **with no regard for the safety of children and teachers, or indeed visiting parents**. This has prompted CWIF to look into the safety aspects and a copy of the report has been sent to their Chief Executive, Alistair Dodds.

There is an assumption, mainly propagated by the wind industry, that turbines are “safe” despite the many and regular incidents proving otherwise. Not only have there been frequent failures of turbines, resulting in parts being thrown considerable distances or complete tower collapse, reported in the Press, a number of these have been in school playgrounds and only the chance absence of children at the time has prevented serious injury or death. Luck is not normally a major factor when carrying out risk assessments associated with fast spinning machinery.

It is also obvious from reports received that many turbine failures do not reach the media so the true risk of failure is not known and neither the wind industry, the Health & Safety Executive, nor Governments keep accurate records. Nearly every time an incident is reported, the industry describes it as “rare”.

These turbines are installed primarily to make money and secondly to influence children into believing they are saving the planet. When they cease to operate for any reason, it is loss of income that appears to be the main concern. Safety of children takes second place.

Contact Stuart Young on t: 01847 851813 m: 07717 295235 e: asksync@btconnect.com