

TURBINE PLAN CUT VALUE OF OUR HOME BY A THIRD

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A Westcountry farming couple have seen the value of their home slashed by a third since controversial plans were submitted to build three giant wind turbines in one of the region's beauty spots, it has been revealed.

Richard and Lynne Lethbridge say they discovered the devastating news after deciding to sell the home their family has farmed from for decades, because of the plans for the turbines.

Two independent agricultural valuers, which visited the large four bedroom bungalow in East Allington last week, both concluded that since the planning application for the turbines at Goveton was submitted earlier this year, the price of the Lethbridge's near £500,000 home had fallen by £165,000.

NPower's plans, which have been submitted to South Hams District Council, are for three generators, each 100 metres high, to be built on land off the A381 between Kingsbridge and Totnes, next to the turning for Goveton.

Mrs Lethbridge, 57, whose property is the closest to the proposals at just 540 metres away from the development, said she had envisioned living in the area with her husband Richard, 58, for the rest of their lives.

But she said that it looked extremely likely they would have to move on.

"If the plans go through we will have to sell," she said.

"We're upset because it's detrimental to our health and we are so close that we would hear them and to me it would also be a great eyesore.

"We decided to have the house valued with a view to selling because we're concerned about our livelihood.

"Richard is a farmer and has been all his life and for the last 15 years or so I've been a farmer's wife.

"His parents have been here for over 60 years and he was born here and built the home we are in at the moment on the same land in the early 1970s.

"I thought we would live here all of our lives and this would then go to our family.

"We would not have thought of moving but we feel we are being forced out because of this."

Mrs Lethbridge said the only way the family would consider staying at their home would be if the plans did not go ahead.

And she said that the couple and many people in the area had been struggling to sleep because of their worries and concerns about the proposals.

"We're not sleeping at the moment and I don't think many other people are either," she said.

"The first and last thing in the morning we look at is the view we have because we've always said it's a view you couldn't buy.

"But if the plans go ahead everything would face the turbines.

"When we found out about the application we realised it was just 540 metres away. It's too close to us.

"If the plans go ahead we will move. I don't think anyone could change our minds, which is really sad."

Her husband Richard added: "I don't really want to leave here, but the noise will be a big problem and with the health issues and the loss of view it will be too much.

"I doesn't matter how much compensation we would get, if any, because it would be the view and the way of life we would lose, which they can't compensate for."

NPower were unavailable to comment when contacted yesterday.

Meanwhile, tomorrow marks the deadline for letters for or against the scheme to be submitted to South Hams District Council.

But members of action group South Hams Opposed to Unsightly Turbines - SHOUT - are urging people to write in after that as they say the council's officers will take account of letters until they make their recommendation to councillors.

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