

**From:** [Jillina Gardiner](#)  
**To:** [Brechfa Connection](#)  
**Subject:** 151109 EN020016 Gilfach Wen Barn  
**Date:** 09 November 2015 12:23:25  
**Attachments:** [WPD-GW.docx](#)

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Please find attached the submission on behalf of Gilfach Wen Barn with regard to the brechfa forest connection.

Jillie Gardiner  
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**From:** Brechfa Connection [BrechfaConnection@pins.gsi.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 05 November 2015 16:56  
**To:** Jillina Gardiner  
**Subject:** Brechfa Forest Connection (EN020016)

Dear Sir/Madam

### **Brechfa Forest Connection (EN020016)**

Your reference: 10031884

Please follow the link below to view the 'Rule 13 and Rule 16' letter, giving notice of the Hearings and Accompanied Site Inspection:

<http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk/document/3490828>

If this link does not open automatically, please cut and paste it into your browser.

Please note that **all deadlines are at noon** on the specified date, as stated in the Examination Timetable provided at Annex B of the Rule 8 letter of 13 October 2015. This was incorrectly identified as "All deadlines are 11:59pm on the date stated" within the letter itself.

Yours faithfully

Internal Power Generation Enhancement for Port Talbot Steelworks  
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Web: [www.planningportal.gov.uk/planninginspectorate](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planninginspectorate) (Planning Inspectorate casework and appeals)

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Jillina Gardiner

Gilfach Wen Barn

Gilfach Wen

Brechfa

Carmarthenshire

SA32 7QL

8th November 2015

Brechfa Forest Connection Infrastructure Planning Examination

### **Brechfa Forest Connection (EN020016)**

Your reference: 10031884

Having discussed the implications of this grid connection to Brechfa Forest for my business with the others employed by that business and with my customers I feel it appropriate to submit a response reflecting the impact this development will have on my business, the other businesses dependant on my business and the local economy.

I have worked hard to build up a business which not only supports myself but also supports the local economy. I restored and converted a derelict stone barn on my property to provide holiday accommodation for groups of up to 32 people visiting Brechfa Forest. I have invested £260,000 in this project and used local builders. I received a grant from Carmarthenshire County Council regeneration department for the building work linked to the jobs created. The business plan identified the need for accommodation for groups of friends or extended families visiting Brechfa Forest West for walking, cycling or riding holidays. This grant application was audited by the Welsh Assembly before EU funds were made available to support the development.

In addition to the direct employment created by my business, the provision of accommodation for groups also supports other enterprises in the area.

- Guests often purchase locally produced food and drink, particularly from the community stores in Brechfa.
- Groups often combine walking through the forest with visiting a pub for lunch. Or they go out for an evening meal at a local pub. With an expenditure ranging between £640 (32 x £20) to £1280 (32 x £40) each time a group visits a local pub my business makes a major contribution to the survival of those businesses.
- I advertise the services of a local catering company to all groups. Some book an evening meal prepared by the caterers using meat from my own flock of sheep, others book the caterers to provide a buffet, or provide all meals for their stay.
- I sell cards with photographs of the forest and mountain scenes produced by a local person to guests.
- Guests often book a local minibus company to transport them to one of the local pubs when going out for the evening.
- Some groups hire mountain bikes from a local company and that company has recently expanded into providing a bike mechanic service. Guests do not necessarily

to go to the mountain bike trails, one of the market sectors I advertise to are tri-athlete clubs who use Brechfa West for training camps.

The property is a barn conversion on a farm on the opposite side of the valley from the western side of Brechfa Forest. The property overlooks Brechfa Forest West from the lounge, garden, and some of the bedrooms. The property is popular with groups of friends and extended families meeting for a reunion with the attractive landscape and freedom of the right to roam through Brechfa Forest West including visiting local heritage sites forming an important part of the marketing of the property, that has generated a high level of repeat visits. There has been research published on the reduction in the price guests are willing to pay for holiday accommodation when the views include power lines, but this research has not been referenced or incorporated in the WPD application for this power line.

The current proposal requires the creation of a wide gash across the forest to take the power line through to the far side of the forest from the rest of the grid route. This wide gash will have to be maintained for the life of the wind farm, and will be very intrusive in the views from my business, and to holiday makers in general travelling along the B4310 between Carmarthen and Brechfa. Whereas the grid connection could be terminated on the western side of the Brechfa Forest West (BFW) site, instead of being taken across the forest to the eastern edge.

I have been unable to locate in the documentation provided by WPD any analysis of why there has been no attempt to mitigate the impact of this development by minimising the length of power line needed. I understand from the documents submitted by Western Power Distribution that it is not only local residents who have questioned why the substation in the forest cannot be constructed on the western side of the forest, but that Carmarthenshire County Council have also raised this issue with WPD.

I believe that this lack of mitigation is one example of the rush to push this planning application through the system for the financial benefit of their clients without considering the implications for the community. Is the placement of the substation and running the cabling across the forest a symptom of not revising the design of the power line now that it is only required for a single wind farm? It simply does not make sense to claim that cutting a swathe through the forest, constructing a power line along its length and constructing a substation at the end of the line including maintaining that swathe through the forest and the power line for the duration of the wind farm, costs less and has less environmental impact than constructing just the substation closer to the grid connection.

I do not consider that WPD has considered, and has certainly not provided the evidence of consideration of the costs and benefits of mitigation by putting the power line underground in sensitive locations.

If there are undocumented technical reasons for the position of the substation, then an audited independent costing for putting the power line underground to reduce the visual and environmental impact of cutting a wide gash through the forest visible from properties and

the road to Brechfa should have been provided as well as justification on claims that it would be environmentally negative.

A common thread in guests requests for assistance in making plans for their stay is that for the duration of their stay they prefer to go on walks, cycle rides or horse rides starting from the property rather than travelling in a car to a different part of the forest. During the period of construction, and subsequently, guests who would have used Brechfa Forest West for recreation who are looking for peace and quiet and attractive views will be forced onto the local right of way (footpath, bridleway and byway) network. WPD acknowledge in their application that the power line will be visible from rights of way on the western side of the forest. I wish to highlight that their assessment of the impact they have failed to take into account the opinion of the tourists using these routes who are seeking peaceful routes in an attractive landscape.

I have been one of the volunteers working on a community led project to encourage visitors to explore the heritage of the area, focusing on promoting the sites contained in the historical environment database, which contains a considerably wider range of sites than is mentioned in the application by WPD. The database funded by the Welsh Government and managed by Dyfed Archaeology contains records of sites where there is a requirement to consider the impact on those sites during planning applications. This project has been grant funded by Carmarthenshire County Council and Natural Resources Wales, with match funding based on volunteers time. The local tourism cluster group will be providing evidence on the impact on the whole project and I will not duplicate that here. However, I raised this issue with WPD during a meeting with them, but there is no mention of the project, or any mitigation in the planning application.

I would like to add that I have put in the work to build on this project for the benefit of my guests, developing walks from my property to link to these heritage sites, so find it doubly disappointed that there is no mitigation for the impact on sites important to the communities heritage. I believe that a failure to consider the impact on the cultural heritage means the application for this grid connection does not comply with the EU directive on environmental impact assessments which states

### **Article 3**

***The environmental impact assessment shall identify, describe and assess in an appropriate manner, in the light of each individual case and in accordance with Articles 4 to 11, the direct and indirect effects of a project on the following factors:***

- (a) human beings, fauna and flora;***
- (b) soil, water, air, climate and the landscape;***
- (c) material assets and the cultural heritage;***
- (d) the interaction between the factors referred to in points (a), (b), and (c).***

Yours truly

Jillina Gardiner.