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Sent: 31 May 2007 16.01  
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Subject: Turbine Installation

I started looking into purchasing a wind turbine eighteen months ago, and my first thoughts were along the lines of placing two 1kW machines on the chimney stacks of my old cob and stone built farmhouse. After a very expensive structural survey, which came to the conclusion, that not only was the construction most unsuitable, but several very large trees in close proximity would have to be removed.

This proved to be a blessing in disguise, as during the time awaiting the survey and report, I spent many hours on the web looking at alternative small wind turbines manufactured by a variety of companies. The manufacturer that stood out in my opinion, far above the rest, was Proven a firm who had its base in Scotland. The deciding factor as far as I was concerned was Proven's patented and unique down wind system, which allowed the blades to furl in very high winds, a system that was proved to work in the extreme conditions on the Falkland Isles when other turbines were destroyed within a few months.

It was also at this stage that I started to investigate the financial implications, as my preference for a Proven 6kW turbine on a 15m mast, was a far cry from my original thoughts and costings. As I am in my seventies, to be honest the stated pay back time was of little interest to me, but what I was concerned with, was the return on capital. In other words could I get the same or better return on a turbine than I could with existing investments, and I came to the conclusion that I could, always providing that I found the correct site. The fact that I could inflation-proof my electricity supply for the future, was also an important consideration. A government grant was an added incentive, but I disregarded this factor in my calculations for if the proposal could not stand alone it would not be sound. Having calculated that even at the lowest anticipated output I would get the minimum return I was prepared to accept, I then contacted a Proven agent for a firm quotation, and at the same time took my first steps to obtaining planning approval.

Getting planning was rather a low-key affair really, and the planning pack supplied by Proven provided most of the answers to the few queries raised by members of the public, noise being of the greatest concern.

The agent I approached in the first instance was to say in the least, a big disappointment and he failed to come up to my expectations in many instances, and I was also in some doubt if he had the necessary experience. Fortunately at my request Proven provided me with an alternative agent and I met Mike Field of Natural Generation who proved to be an excellent choice, being both knowledgeable and helpful in every way.

After getting both planning and grant approval I placed a firm order with Mike just before Christmas 2006.

Delivery of the tower foundations came eight weeks later and delivery of the tower and turbine fifteen weeks after I first placed my order. The electrics had been installed to a very high standard the previous week.

The installation of the turbine and tower was made to look very easy by the Natural Generation team, and I am delighted to say all went smoothly, and the following day with a favourable wind, it was up and running.

The only problem encountered was with the foundations. I had already decided with the help of a digger driver to install the mast foundation and the 135m of underground cable myself, which was attempted in the most atrocious wet weather conditions imaginable. My fault entirely and I know now that I should have waited, for as soon as I had finished, the weather changed completely for the better. But I do suggest that before anyone attempts to do it him or herself, they do talk to someone who has already completed the exercise.

At the time of writing and it has now been four weeks since the turbine was commissioned, during which time I have entered into an agreement with Npower to buy my surplus power, and applied to Ofgem to register as a small power generator so that I can be allocated my ROC's. The output of my 6kW Proven turbine during this first month has exceeded all my expectations and the generation meter shows the first Megawatt produced.

It is early days yet, but if this is a fairly typical month, with several days when hardly any power was produced at all and others when it was quite windy, my turbine should produce at the very least 9,000 kilowatt-hours and could even possibly reach 12,000 kilowatt-hours, which is the maximum output that I could expect at this location especially as I have several large trees in excess of 18m within a 100m radius.

To sum up: yes I am very pleased both with the build quality and performance of my Proven turbine, it was expertly and efficiently assembled and commissioned by Mike Field and his Natural Generation team exactly to the penny of his original quotation. It is even quieter than I had hoped for, and there have been no adverse comments on the visual aspects.

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