

## **Problems encountered on the road to energy efficiency**

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**W**ind turbines are capable of dramatically reducing a person's carbon footprint, however there are still many problems people face when it comes to acquiring and installing one, despite becoming increasingly popular within the domestic market the problems seem to be the same today as when the first person in the UK attempted an installation.

This is exactly what Donnachadh McCarthy, the first person in London to install a wind turbine on his property experienced in his attempt to reduce his carbon footprint.

Back in October 2005, Mr. Donnachadh McCarthy made a conscious decision to install a wind turbine to help the environment to reduce the effects of global warming. He faced problems common to today's issues including the 'objecting neighbour' who believed that the wind turbine would kill her cat, which was an obscure but humorous myth. She was also concerned about the size of the turbine itself, believing it would be almost double the size then it actually is, and this led to his planning application being rejected by Southwark Council.

Is this sounding familiar? Today's applications suffer from the same problems and probably caused by bad media cover or just a plain non understanding of what is being proposed. Consultation with neighbours' is paramount to getting general issues resolved, a neighbour complaining that the 'sonic resonance' can hold up planning even when it's completely false.



After Mr. McCarthy assuring the neighbour that it would not harm any animals, Donnachadh McCarthy asked Southwark Council to change their minds. However another problem lay here, the council was wary of granting him permission as if they let him have one, then anyone else who requested one in the area would have to be permitted to have one too. Councils are becoming more environmentally friendly but the attitude above is being adopted by some of the public who without thinking assume one will be on all of our roofs and generate untold noise.



So after applied again, Mr. McCarthy was finally given the planning permission he required, making Southwark the first place in London to approve plans for a domestic model to be installed and his neighbours (and their pets) are pleased with the decision and are even inspired by his commitment to the community and environment as a whole.

Mr. McCarthy assumed that it would be the norm for everybody to have a wind turbine in the future and that there will be masses of domestic wind turbines throughout the country. There are already about 81,000 homes in the UK that use domestic renewable power generation units. The hope is that more people nationwide will contribute to combating global warming.

Despite the installation of Mr. McCarthy's turbine being almost two years old, we still see the same problems are widespread when it comes to other people making the decision to become more energy efficient. This is not only because of the lack of experience planning authorities have with this type of situation and product, but furthermore the lack of knowledge the public have on this subject.

So how do we start the process of looking at using renewable systems, Energy Connect UK are developing new ways to help from energy efficient equipment to micro generators for residential and business. Reducing our carbon footprint is not someone else's problem to solve, dedication by designers and governments will make available the tools, it's from their on we make our own decisions.

Mr. McCarthy own carbon footprint is less than half a ton a lot lower than EU average of 8.5 metric tons demonstrating that he is making a difference and can be an inspiration to us all.