

# Green light for green site

Borough's first domestic wind turbine will power a new eco-friendly home

By **LOUISE GAW**

[louisekaw@bracknellnews.co.uk](mailto:louisekaw@bracknellnews.co.uk)

THE first domestic wind turbine in the borough has been given the green light.

Bracknell Forest's first wind-powered electricity generator will be built on Smoothfield Farm in Winkfield Lane, Winkfield, and will power a ground-breaking new passive house – a type of eco-friendly home.

Bracknell Forest Borough Council's planning committee granted permission for the 15 metre tall windmill at its meeting on Thursday last week.

The £18,000 turbine is part of large project by Monty Gershon, who is building the home for him and his family.

He said: "It will have three times

better insulation than a normal home and it will have solar panels.

"It will have walls that will keep the house warm in the winter and cool in the summer.

"The wind turbine is just a small part of the whole project. It has got about six to seven years before you start to get your money back."

Mr Gershon said the demand for eco-friendly homes is getting stronger as global warming is in on people's minds.

He added: "I think that we all feel responsible for the environment as we all want to lower emissions.

"Soon when people come to buy a house they will be asking how much it costs and what its carbon footprint is."

Architect Tobias Schaffrin of Bere Associates designed the tur-



The future's green: An artist's impression of the turbine.

bine for Mr Gershon's home.

He said: "The wind turbine will generate on average 9,400 kilowatt-hours of electricity per year, saving an equivalent of more than 5,000kg of CO<sub>2</sub>."

Smoothfield Farm sits close to Lakeview Mobile Home Park, and there were initial concerns that the turbine would create a lot of noise for residents. However, an environmental survey showed the sound generated would be minimal.

Bracknell Forest Borough Council's planning committee was satisfied with the environ-

mental officer's report which compared the noise generated from the turbine to noise created in a library.

Planners also agreed that the 15 metre turbine would not have an impact on the character of the green belt.

Borough planner Martin Bourne said: "The proposed site is next to a horse exercise track and is set back in trees.

"The site has been moved a further 10 metres from the mobile homes since the first application and is now 65 metres from the homes."

## A PASSIVE HOUSE IN PROFILE

- The term passive house (Passivhaus in German) refers to the rigorous, voluntary standard for energy use in buildings. It results in ultra-low energy buildings that require little energy for heating.
- The first passive buildings were built in Darmstadt, Germany, in 1990.
- Since then more than 6,000 Passivhaus buildings have been constructed in Europe – most of them in Germany and Austria.
- The Smoothfield Farm house will have improved energy conservation measures

include 600mm thick walls packed with 330mm of insulation.

- It will have mainly south facing triple glazed windows with insulated frames and two mechanical ventilation units with heat-recovery to replace the stale air with fresh pre-warmed air.
- The wind turbine together with the evacuated glass tube solar panels and the ground source heat pump will provide all remaining energy required in the house making it one of the first truly zero-carbon developments in the country.