

Halifax Today

STEPHEN'S FAREWELL TO ELECTRICITY BILLS

By Suzanne Rutter

EVER thought about doing your bit for the environment?

Stephen Welsh, 48, has certainly contributed his fair share.

He has installed a domestic wind turbine on his land at Lower Mount Farm, Kears Road, Todmorden. The 12-metre turbine cost Mr Welsh and his wife, Kate, £15,000, plus a £5,000 grant from the Government's Low Carbon Buildings Programme.

It took nine months to research, apply for planning permission and install it.

It is capable of generating five kilowatts every hour. The average home uses only half a kilowatt an hour, so the surplus units are being bought by NPower at 10.4p a unit.

Almost 70 interested people attended an open day at the farm that has bid farewell for ever to electricity bills.

They asked questions about gaining planning permission, grants and the effectiveness of the turbine.

Mr Welsh said: "This is a good way of using sustainable energy.

"If you have the wind, then why not use it?"

"I hope that people will act on the interest they have shown because it's a way of doing their bit for global warming.

"In 10 years the world will be very different, so we have to act.

"The average household uses half a kilowatt of electricity per hour, so the rest is all going back into the national grid.

"We think we will have earned our money back in six or seven years.

"Fifteen thousand pounds is the price of a good car, but in comparison this is a long-term investment that also adds value to our house."

The wind turbines are manufactured by Iskra Ltd, based in Loughborough, and are installed by a firm called Segen Ltd.

Segen area manager Jim Robertson attended the open day.

He said: "This is one of the windiest spots in the north so it's ideal for generating electricity by wind.

"There are already five wind turbines in Todmorden and there's a good deal of interest here.

"People here are sensible about what will happen if they don't take care of their environment.

"It's quite easy to get planning permission here because Calderdale Council is very keen to encourage sustainable energy sources."

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