

## The Batsworthy Cross Wind Farm and community benefit grants

The Batsworthy wind farm was commissioned in April 2016. It consists of nine turbines, three each in the parishes of Rackenford, Knowstone and Rose Ash. These parish councils joined with four others and many individuals as well as the NDDC in opposing the project, which they argued would widely affect views to and from Exmoor. However in 2013, seven years after it was first mooted, the developers eventually received permission on appeal. The wind farm has since been sold to the Blackrock fund.

Government guidelines now require wind farms to pay community benefit to the locality, at a rate of £5,000 per MW of capacity per year. This means a total of £90,000 a year from Batsworthy for the next 25 years. Locality is not defined, and Rackenford joined with the other parishes clearly affected to negotiate an acceptable plan for the spending of this money. It was agreed that the fairest way to define locality was to include all the ten parishes which have land within 3km of the turbines, but to give some priority within this circle to the nearness to the turbines of any project looking for a grant. This means in practice, when the fund is oversubscribed, to projects in the three parishes in which the turbines stand. It was also agreed to give the administration of the money to the Devon Community Foundation, who would establish a grant panel selected from among residents of the ten parishes to make the annual choices of projects to benefit. A questionnaire to all the residents of the core parishes confirmed this outline plan and also support for a very wide variety of community issues supporting rural regeneration and community sustainability. Applications can now be made to the DCF ([www.devoncf.com](http://www.devoncf.com)) whose website explains the steps to take.