

# Onshore wind farms and our energy strategy

Sir, The government's changing positions on wind farms ("Growth Shock", leading article, Nov 28) are yet another example of a settled practice of recent governments to take big decisions on the hoof in response to random expressions of public opinion and objections from some MPs. Reactive populism is no way to take enormous and complex decisions affecting fundamental aspects of the country's future, such as our relationship to the EU, our response to climate change, the future of the NHS, HS2, fracking, Scottish independence, rearmament and many others.

Good representative government should show courageous leadership in taking such decisions carefully, on the basis of proper consultation, including consultation with the permanent civil service and with outside bodies able to contribute expert knowledge and experience, and in the light of thoughtful public opinion. Politics may be the art of the possible. It should not be the art of the careless.

**Professor Philip Allott**  
Trinity College, Cambridge

Sir, Further to Libby Purves's article "Village hall reveals our national

power failure" (Nov 26), I was at the public meeting at which Dr Thérèse Coffey spoke to 120-plus constituents about the Eurolink and Nautilus projects. Five years ago the Danish Energy Agency (DEA) began work to create a man-made energy centre offshore. We could have done the same. Four other European countries have now joined the Danes, but our government is not among them.

I visited the DEA (at my own cost) three weeks ago — and was the first Briton to do so. My disappointment with this government is that not a single politician, civil servant or right-wing think tank individual has bothered to visit the agency in Copenhagen. It is a stain on our national reputation and shows the world how third-rate we have become.

**Derek Wyatt**  
Former MP; Aldeburgh, Suffolk

Sir, Libby Purves says that having "six cabinet ministers in six years with 'energy' in their title" has not aided the creation of a coherent energy policy. Neither has the civil service "gifted amateur" approach. This rotates staff around departments rather than developing in-depth understanding at management level,

which would promote long-term solutions. The present approach leaves government departments far too reliant on importing industry experts without having the knowledge to control them.

**Jim Jewell**  
Loxwood, W Sussex

Sir, I wonder how many of the "more than 75 per cent of voters [who] back onshore wind" mentioned in your leading article live in the countryside, where their lives could be wrecked, both visually, and aurally, by proximity to wind turbines.

I am all in favour, too, as long as they are somewhere else.

**Rupert Godfrey**  
Heytesbury, Wilts

Sir, Many of the retired and old in this threatened area of the Suffolk coast offer their skills and talents voluntarily to support local organisations and charities that do much to sustain their environment, communities and businesses. The dismissal of these contributions is among the many dispiriting aspects of the lack of a coherent energy or planning policy.

**Simon Ive**  
Friston, Suffolk