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Giant wind farm built in partnership with Saudi-backed firm could blight Bronte country, with 65 towering turbines to be erected on heath that inspired Wuthering Heights

• The project could see 65 turbines each taller than Blackpool Tower on the heath

By TASH MOSHEIM

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Businessman Richard Bannister – a Lancastrian – is in partnership with a Saudi Arabia-backed company to transform the moors between West Yorkshire's Haworth and Hebden Bridge into England's largest onshore windfarm.

The project would see 65 towering turbines – each taller than Blackpool Tower – erected on the heath said to have inspired Emily Bronte to write her 1847 classic.

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of carbon emissions.

Developers submitted a 'scoping' document for the windfarm in September, but a comprehensive environmental impact assessment must be made before they can apply for planning.



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But fervent opposition within the local community is gaining momentum. Critics say the plans could damage the moorland's carbon-trapping peat bogs, threatening the flood-prone valleys below.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has voiced concerns over the impact on nesting curlews, lapwings and golden plovers.

The Bronte Society has also raised objections, arguing the development would have 'a significant and detrimental impact on an iconic local viewpoint and world-renowned landscape' that inspired Bronte's literary masterpiece.

Lydia Macpherson and Nick MacKinnon, poets living on the Haworth side of the moor, told the Guardian they feared the alleged insensitivity of the developers toward the wildlife and cultural significance of the area.

'People come from all over the world to see where Cathy and Heathcliff lived,' said Mr MacKinnon. The developers are Saudis, so what do they know of curlews and Heathcliff, and why should they care?'

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The stunning landscape that inspired Wuthering Heights is the battleground in a showdown between literature lovers and a shopping tycoon



The project would see 65 towering turbines – each taller than Blackpool Tower (Pictured: Stock image of windfarm)

Mr MacKinnon said Mr Bannister – who owns a chain of discount shopping centres in the area – should 'know better'.

He added: 'At best, this application is criminally negligent about wildlife, flooding and heritage. At worst, it shows contempt for the people in the Worth and Calder valleys, and the imaginations of millions elsewhere, by entitled and selfish owners.'

A spokesman for Saudi-owned Calderdale Windfarm Ltd said: 'We are committed to responsible development that respects the landscape, minimises disruption to wildlife habitats and mitigates potential impacts on the local environment.'

'We recognise that concerns have been raised about heritage preservation and have appointed experts in cultural heritage, such as Wessex Archaeology, to guide us in preserving local heritage sites, including the Bronte heritage, and are committed to considering these concerns as part of our ongoing design process.'

The spokesman added that although funding for the planning phase had come from Saudi investment, if given planning permission, most shares would be sold to UK-based investment funds.

Saudi Arabia

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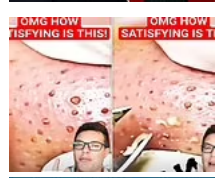
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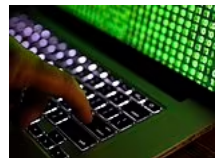
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