

Bin bag 'tax' shocker

By Paul Christian

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One bag free – then it's 28p a time

BROXBOURNE Borough residents have reacted with outrage at council plans to charge households for filling more than one sack in what is being described as a "bin bag tax".

The borough is piloting the scheme, which could be adopted by other local authorities across the UK. The council will issue each household with just one free purple bin bag each week, additional sacks will retail at 28p – at least three times the cost of traditional black bags which the council will refuse to collect.

Supporters of the scheme claim that it encourages recycling but a typical family who produce four sacks of rubbish a week could end up paying £40 a year on top of their council tax.

The scheme will be rolled out at the beginning of November to a total of 3,000 homes in the Goffs Oak and Rye Park areas and will run for six months. The council describes the plan as an effort to "reach out to residents' hearts and minds and encourage the twin aims of increasing recycling and reducing waste."

But a resident, who did not wish to be named, said: "It won't work will it? There is no way that it will work we have about four bags a week. They can't just arbitrarily say that people can have one bag a week. I would expect to see a significant reduction in my rate bills."

"The area will be swarming with rats in the space of two weeks because people won't pay, this is just another tax. If they are worried about landfill space why don't they just level the Town Hall and use that to put rubbish in?"

Another resident said: "This is madness, we already have several different bags for different rubbish, and now we have to pay extra. I don't know what they use our council tax for."

Residents can get further advice from Broxbourne Borough council by visiting www.broxbourne.gov.uk or calling 01992 785577.

What do you think? Email herald.news@archant.co.uk

Best seller Freddie joins village wind farm protest

BEST-SELLING novelist and Hertford resident Frederick Forsyth joined over 200 wind farm protesters on a march.

The planned wind farm would put turbines on 120 metres masts at High Elms Lane in the Beane Valley.

The plans have met with fierce resistance from locals and the Stop Benington Wind Farm group, who organised the four mile walk and object to the impact the turbines will have on the landscape, and the rural nature of the area.

Their concerns are shared by *Day of the Jackal* author Frederick Forsyth, who lives in East End Green.

He said: "If a national competition were held to find the most utterly unsuitable place for three gigantic eyese windmills, over 400 hundred feet high, the prize would have to go to the historic village of Benington in the ancient and dreamy Beane Valley."

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"For one thing, this means despoiling forever a truly magical part of medieval England; for another, the wind hardly ever blows here beyond a gentle breeze. The project is madness on stilts – literally!"

Tory MP for North East Hertfordshire, Oliver Heald, who was also on the march, said: "Many of us support wind energy, but in the right place."

"This does not mean damaging one of the prettiest valleys in Hertfordshire with three structures almost the height of the London Eye. This is a precious small-scale landscape in the most populated county."

"Hundreds including my constituents in Watton-at-Stone have contacted me to object. The message is a loud 'No' to this scheme."

The walk was filmed by an ITV cam-



Oliver Heald MP leads the applause as Frederick Forsyth declaims his opposition to the wind farm

era crew for a forthcoming programme on building projects within the Green Belt, and was also attended by Kevin Fitzgerald of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE).

He said: "The CPRE acknowledges the contribution that renewable energy can make to reducing climate change, but this should not be achieved by ruining our landscape."

Car park cash short of target

INCOME from parking is "significantly lower" than the council expected according to a report.

The findings, in a Broxbourne Council report, show a shortfall in fees and charges of £60,691.

The council blamed miscalculation on more free parking spaces being available.

A spokesman for the council said: "There have been significant, consistent improvements over 2006/07 on penalty charge notice (PCN) income in recent months and it is now ahead of the revised targets set earlier in the year, although it will continue to run well below the overly optimistic budget originally set in 2006."

"Pay and display income also falls below budget and last year's performance due partially, at least, to the increased availability of alternative free parking in the town centres. This issue is currently being addressed."

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