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Protest over 'green' power plant heats up

RESIDENTS fighting plans for a large biomass power plant on the outskirts of Castle Cary are setting up a campaign committee.

An application to build a 25 megawatt energy plant at Dimmer has not yet been submitted to South Somerset District Council, but initial planning documents have sparked outrage in the local community.

They show that the plant's chimney would stand 60 metres tall – taller than Wells Cathedral and almost twice the height of nearby Crown Pet Foods.

At Castle Cary Town Council's annual parish meeting on Monday night, an unusually high number of residents turned out to express their fears about the proposal by Bronzeoak Thermal.

They revealed their intention to form a committee, which will meet on Monday 23 March at the Methodist Schoolroom in Castle Cary, at 7.30pm to discuss the best way to voice objections.

A website has also been set up against the plans at www.dimmeractiongroup.co.uk.

District and county councillor Henry Hobhouse, said: "I'm so angry about it. I feel very strongly. We have to stop this in its tracks.

"If you are going to build something like this it should be at the cemetery in Yeovil, where energy can actually be used by nearby trading estates."

A combination of green and waste wood, energy crops, secondary recovered fuel and dried sewage sludge, will be processed by the plant. The electricity it produces would be capable of serving thousands of homes, enough to meet the needs of all the households of a town the size of Yeovil.

Cllr Hobhouse raised concern about the plant using treated materials and whether the chimneys would be equipped to handle the substances emitted.

Town Councillor Jim Hood said: "The temperature needs to be doubled in order to handle the toxins that will be emitted from the materials they are proposing to use."

Local resident Dave Boyer said: "We are not going to be like a quiet backwater village anymore."

Dimmer resident Ken Knight said: "In their proposal they are presenting themselves as one of the cleanest companies."

The company's reputation in the town was dented after residents complained about smells emitting from its former animal-carcass incinerator at Dimmer. It was shut down in 2006.

A spokesman at Bronzeoak said there was no further update on when the plans would be finalised but stressed it intended to communicate with the local community at that stage.

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