

**Friday April 10 2009, Western Gazette**  
**Residents learn about biomass energy**

CASTLE Cary residents, opposed to the prospect of a large-scale biomass power plant on the town's outskirts, have attended a talk to discover how it works.

Local interest was heightened in the form of energy after the release of initial plans to build a 25 megawatt plant on land at Dimmer.

Information in a planning document, dated November 2008 and put together by Bronzeoak Thermal, fell into the public domain a few months ago.

It indicated the proposed biomass station, capable of powering thousands of homes, would stand 60 metres high, twice the height of the nearby Crown Pet Foods factory.

On Monday, residents and a newly formed protest group called Care4Cary attended a talk entitled Biomass Heat And Power – A Balanced View at Caryford Hall in Ansford.

The meeting was organised by Somerset Wildlife Trust and featured Mark Letcher, director of Climate Works Ltd, a Bristol consultancy and design company working in the fields of sustainable energy, low carbon and climate change.

The talk aimed to provide an objective view of biomass and explore how it works, fits into climate change and government policy, and the opportunities and threats for communities.

Resident and Care4Cary action group member Felicity Smith said: "It was very interesting. Biomass power stations, when they are co-located with a source of biomass and sited where the heat and the power can be used, seem to be a good idea.

"Badly sited power stations, though, are most definitely not green. They appear to be cynical exercises in subsidy-harvesting and political targets; it's all about quota capture, not carbon capture."

Bronzeoak Thermal has indicated it would like to develop a biomass project at Dimmer, but the information in the November document is no longer valid and it cannot confirm exactly what it wants to develop on the site.

Protesters have expressed concern about the project's size and impact on roads.

Helen Cleaveland, chairman of Care4Cary, said: "I'm not surprised the talk was well-attended. The depth of local concern is immense."

She disputed reports that Bronzeoak has made no official contact with either South Somerset District Council's planning department or the Environment Agency on the plans.

She said: "Despite what they say, we know Bronzeoak took their 25MW proposal to South Somerset District Council planners in January, canvassing support. Bronzeoak's own website until recently stated the company was planning a 25 MW power station at Dimmer.

"Its website still makes it clear the company would like to put up a power station on the land.

"Is it surprising people are suspicious that advanced plans will be foisted on them with only cosmetic consultation?"

A spokesman for Bronzeoak said: "We have always said we have had a preliminary meeting with planners at the district council. We have never denied that. We have spoken in an informal meeting.

"We have not made any formal application to the Environment Agency."

Care4Cary was formed last month after a meeting of more than 100 residents from the Castle Cary area, in which they voted unanimously to set up a group to protect local interests in the face of the proposals.

For more information about the group, email [care4cary@live.co.uk](mailto:care4cary@live.co.uk)