

# **JOB CREATION VERSUS JOB DESTRUCTION**

**A RESEARCH DOCUMENT PREPARED BY THE  
BISHOP'S CASTLE GROUP  
ON THE POTENTIAL EFFECTS A BIOMASS PLANT COULD  
HAVE TO THE BISHOP'S CASTLE AREA  
AND IT'S LOCAL ECONOMY**

## Introduction

The Bishop's Castle Group have looked at the possible effects a plant such as the one proposed for the Town would have on the local economy.

In particular, the main emphasis of this research is to look at the impact on residents of the town and tourism, as well as trying to identify the types of businesses which could be affected by such a development.

## Number of jobs available

The Bishop's Castle Biomass Power Project says it would create 4 or 7 or 12 or 20 or 25 jobs (figures quoted at different presentations or press releases). It is not clear if any of these jobs would be 'new' jobs or whether they would be allocated to people already in the employ of the directors behind the proposal.

It is also not clear exactly which types of jobs which would be created by the development. The most concrete indication we were given was Mr Day's statement that they would all be specialised jobs, and there would be no one in Bishop's Castle qualified to carry out the work required by the plant (Town Hall, April 3rd 2007)

The most consistent estimate for the number of jobs potentially created by the project is for 4 jobs, with 1 or 2 part time jobs. We believe the other jobs could be in agriculture concerned with crop growing; this will **not create any new jobs** but might, however, secure some existing jobs.

## Number of jobs which could be affected

This plant would have the capacity to **lose the following jobs and services in the area** through businesses relocating from Bishop's Castle and surrounding area because of worries linked to pollution. Some businesses who have expressed concerns are as follows

- Crowgate Child Care Centre – **9 jobs** and a 64 place child care nursery are threatened.
- Parents who have children at Crow Gate may feel an impact from the development as there are no other facilities of this type in Bishop's Castle, therefore jobs may indirectly be threatened due to lack of child care.
- A local company employs **7 staff** and would certainly consider their presence in the town if such a development takes place.
- A Lydbury North company has expressed concerns about their future, mainly linked to traffic movements through the village to the site in Bishop's Castle. They employ **15 staff**, some full time and some part time.
- A local company based in Challenge Court has purchased land on the Crowgate site and has indicated that phase 2 of their development plans may be put on hold. This would equate to at least **6 new jobs**.
- Oakeley – plans for the development of buildings at Oakeley may not be viable if the plant is built. It is difficult to estimate job losses with this development as it is new, however it is safe to estimate that if it does not go

ahead the work for the development i.e. builders, carpenters, electricians, etc would not be available which would be a net loss to the local economy, along with jobs which would be created through the development going ahead. The following statement has been provided to us from Mrs P Middleton, the owner:

“In order to run the set up at Oakeley at full capacity (5 x 3-bedroom units, including rooms for the disabled) we should be able to employ two to three people to maintain the accommodation and assist with secretarial duties, apart from ourselves and one more person in the grounds. We had planned to make one building into an education room for school groups and walkers to use as a base. It will house the history of the farm and its inhabitants as well as artefacts and information for visitors. The intention is that it would be used also for craft tuition and therapies for guests, such as reflexology and yoga. I intended to let the space to the therapists on a daily basis, but it would enable craftspeople and therapists and their customers to use quiet facilities in a peaceful and attractive location.

One part of the project is demonstration of farmhouse bread making using the bread oven. That would possibly be an ideal part-time interesting job for a retired baker. I have been in discussions with a retired teacher about setting up school activities connected with the National Curriculum, to tie in with the new government ideas about farm/school links. If we do decide to do this, we will probably employ some extra part-time helpers too, but that has to be considered in more depth yet.

I have not made any final decisions on this.”

Mrs Middleton indicated that her decision about this development will be linked to the decision made at District Council’s Planning Department about the biomass plant and is certain that should the biomass plant be built then her plans would not come to fruition.

This development could have a far reaching effect on the area and could increase tourism figures and add significantly to the local economy. We cannot afford to lose this opportunity locally, and in place have the biomass plant. The gain to the local economy by this project cannot be ignored.

If pollution takes place it is possible that farmers would not be able to sell their milk which may lead to job losses.

The farmers we have identified locally are Beamonds at The Cottage, Roger Evans at the Dairy, Sykes (2 herds), W Plowden Farms, H Jones at Brockton, Clive Pugh and Kemp Brook Farm, and there are others i.e. a new herd being established in nearby Brockton.

It is accepted as a general rule that every 80 cattle equate to 1 job. It is estimated that there are at least 2000 dairy cattle in the area; this means **25 jobs at risk**.

## Affects on Tourism

It is also anticipated that tourism would suffer because of people's worries about pollution deterring them from visiting our beautiful region. Tourism is a major source of income in Bishop's Castle. We have identified a number of businesses offering accommodation or camping facilities which could be affected locally in a way which would contribute to job losses. They are as follows:

- ❖ The Boars Head
- ❖ The Castle Hotel
- ❖ Foggy Bottom Camp Site
- ❖ The Porch House
- ❖ Claremont Bed and Breakfast
- ❖ Claremont Holiday Cottages
- ❖ The Old Brick Guest House and Old Brick Cottage
- ❖ Magnolia Bed and Breakfast
- ❖ Old Time
- ❖ Various holiday cottages in and around Bishop's Castle, including Castle Cottage, Elvan Cottage, Bakehouse Cottage, Bailey End and many others
- ❖ The Foxholes Castle Camping site (opening May 2007)
- ❖ The Inn on the Green
- ❖ The Crown at Wentnor
- ❖ The Green Caravan and Camping site
- ❖ Daisy Bank at the Snead
- ❖ Oakeley development (as above)

Businesses linked to tourism based in Bishop's Castle which offer eating and/or drinking facilities as well as selling food which may suffer if less people visit the region are as follows:

- ❖ The Boars Head
- ❖ The Castle Hotel
- ❖ The Three Tuns
- ❖ The Six Bells
- ❖ The Vaults
- ❖ The Kings Head (closed at present but intending to reopen)
- ❖ Just Jill's - Café
- ❖ Café by Porch House
- ❖ Pugh's Takeaway
- ❖ The Poppy House
- ❖ Yarborough House
- ❖ Caprichio
- ❖ Castle Fish Bar
- ❖ The Ganges Indian Restaurant
- ❖ Ruby City Chinese Takeaway
- ❖ Co-op
- ❖ Burds
- ❖ Stars

❖ Whittalls

It is possible that Estate Agents may suffer with people not wishing to purchase houses in the area:

- ❖ Halls
- ❖ McCartney's
- ❖ Norman Lloyd and Co

It has also been mentioned that people could lack the motivation to recycle feeling that there is no point if this plant were to be implemented and would be producing emissions; this would impact upon **income to the Wasteless Society**.

Union Street Garage could stop selling bio diesel. The bio diesel this garage sells contributes a far greater net saving of CO2 emissions into the atmosphere than the figures quoted by the BCBP Ltd from their plant.

Union Street Garage has always made it clear that they will not sell bio diesel made from palm oil due to the destruction of the rain forests.

Other impacts may be felt by

- ❖ Bishop's Castle Community College (some parents have already indicated concern and may consider sending their child to another school)
- ❖ Bishop's Castle Primary School (again some parents are concerned now as these children will be attending the community college in the future and parents might consider withdrawing their child now so that they can attend a school which links to a secondary school away from Bishop's Castle).
- ❖ Crowgate Child Care Centre – 64 place nursery with 9 staff
- ❖ The Allotment Holders (recently formed, indicated at a meeting with the Bishop's Castle Group they would not want to continue if this plant was approved)
- ❖ Businesses on the Industrial Estate next to the plant
- ❖ The Skateboard Park
- ❖ The Tennis Club
- ❖ Various football and rugby clubs
- ❖ The Cricket Club

The other real impact will be felt by the people living in Bishop's Castle; in particular the group has spoken to Brick Meadow residents who have indicated unanimously they are not in favour of this proposal and have very real concerns which are echoed by majority of people living in the town and the local area.

From research undertaken it is felt that the impact felt if this development does go ahead would be very subtle to start with. It will only be after the plant has been operating for a while that the effects would be felt within the local community.

Refer to previous section regarding the development at Oakeley. This could have a major impact on tourism in this area and there could be a great deal of financial gain

to the local economy and this will be lost if the plans submitted by BCBP are approved.

### Effects of the Development

We believe that the **first effect** would be felt by the people who live locally, and become concerned about the plume coming out of the chimney with suspicion about pollutants which may be in the plume (as observed at the Eccleshall Plant). This could have an effect on local businesses wishing to move into the area, or expand their existing business. Residents may wish to move away from the area with the possibility of children being removed from local Schools or Nurseries and, at this stage, there would also be job losses. There is then the added problem of trying to sell a property in the area. It is interesting to note that there are a number of properties for sale on Brick Meadow along with other areas within the town and have been advertised for a number of weeks and months in some cases and still not been sold!

In addition, the majority of the Allotment Holders have indicated that they do not see the point of continuing with the Allotments, after fighting for them for 7 years, if this development gets the 'green light'.

These effects will be felt within the local economy.

The **second effect** would be felt by our valued tourism business. Bishop's Castle has a lot of people returning year on year because of its tranquil environment, beautiful views and clean air. The town has walking festivals, Bishop's Castle Agricultural Show, the Tandem Triathlon, the Carnival, Beer Festivals and the Michaelmas Fair to name but a few of the events held here; all currently attract many visitors and all would feel the effects should visitor numbers decline.

It has been indicated by Mr Day that there would be a 'visible plume' of potentially 100 to 250 metres high in still air conditions. This would be seen, we believe, from the town and most roads into the town. If our visitors were to see such a plume of emissions hanging over the town they would quite possibly not return to Bishop's Castle.

It is quite clear that the places to stay as well as food outlets would suffer at this point but there are many other businesses in the area linked to tourism and they too would suffer. At this stage it may be the seasonal workers who would be affected as their jobs may not be available to them,

The **third effect** could be on the dairy farmers, and this would be devastating for the whole area, with potentially 25+ jobs at risks, and farmers left with land which cannot be used for any purpose.

At this stage we need to refer to the Bolsover Incident, where 3 dairy farms were contaminated from dioxins by an incinerator which was operating outside the desired temperature as a cost cutting exercise. Those farms were contaminated for years as dioxins still have a 'half' life 10 years later. We know that an AEA research document on a 1.5 MW wood burning plant indicated that dioxins may not form in the

combustion chamber but can, however form at the top of the stack where it is much cooler.

The **fourth effect** may not be noticeable for a long time in the future when doctors start looking at high rates of certain cancers, birth defects and abnormalities in children, as well as respiratory problems. Further details of this can be found in the Bishop's Castle Group's submission to South Shropshire District Council under health and ecology.

Another effect that cannot be quantified would be the development at Oakeley not going ahead.

### Conclusion

This brief study shows how a plant such as this can actually have an affect on the whole area. We have, in the main concentrated on Bishop's Castle; however there are 'knock on' effects which could spread to a much wider area i.e. suppliers to guest houses, eating establishments, etc.

It has been pointed out that the development is within very close proximity to both the Community College sports field and other local sport clubs i.e. football, tennis and rugby club along with residential areas and there are concerns about them inhaling in particulates, etc from the plant. Within a few hundred yards of the construction site is a dairy farm. Again, these all have jobs attached to them, which may be at risk which is indicated in this brief study.

The plant would also be constructed next to a 64 place childcare centre and, if indications are correct in literature produced by the BCBP it would operate from 2008, subject to planning permission, whilst the childcare centre is located at the same site. Crowgate Childcare Co-operative indicated that they do not have the funds to move for at least 2 years, making the earliest move 2009; however, they do not have a firm location to move to at present. They are tendering for the child care facilities at the Primary School, but to date no decision has been made.

We can therefore predict that there will certainly be job losses and we believe that there will be **far more jobs lost in the area because of this plant than jobs created by the plant.**

**The Bishop's Castle Group have endeavoured to ensure the accuracy of all information given in this document, but cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions.**