

Inquiries continue into collapse of county's oldest wind turbine

Fears are raised on safety of windfarms

BY KELLY EVE

INQUIRIES are continuing into why Cumbria's oldest wind turbine collapsed over the festive period.

Meetings were held at J Stobart & Sons, an animal feed mill at Newlands near Hesketh Newmarket, on Wednesday.

The 100ft steel structure, thought to weigh around 11 tonnes, collapsed on the morning of Friday, December 28.

New pictures of the collapse have emerged showing the blades of the turbine and debris blocking a country road which runs between Hesketh Newmarket and the B5305 Wigton to Penrith road.

The incident has prompted safety concerns from anti-windfarm campaigners.

One of the family firm's directors, Peter Stobart, told *The Cumberland News*: "The turbine did land near the road and there were some parts of the blades on the road.



First of a kind: The wind turbine collapse is thought to be the first of its kind in the 29-year history of the British Wind Energy Association

"It is not a busy road but it is fortunate that no-one was injured.

"Inquiries are ongoing and

the Health and Safety Executive has talked to the wind turbine manufacturer."

Graeme Cooper, of the

British Wind Energy Association, said: "The manufacturer was there on site on Wednesday carrying out fur-

ther investigations and discussions."

The wind turbine collapse is thought to be the first of its

kind in the 29-year history of the British Wind Energy Association.

The BWEA has already pledged to act on any potential issues that could arise from the investigations.

J Stobart & Sons notified the Health and Safety Executive, which is monitoring the situation and awaiting results of an investigation by the turbine manufacturer.

The wind turbine has helped provide power for the company's mill for the past 19 years.

When it was installed it was only the second privately-owned wind turbine in the country.

Installing the turbine was an innovative development after being passed around 20 years ago.

Many companies are now looking to wind power to help harness renewable energy and to save money.

The performance of the wind turbine at the animal feed mill has been praised. It helped to produce around 4.5 million units of electricity.

One unit of electricity is equal to 1,000 watts of power used for one hour.

The BWEA says the lifetime of a turbine is around 20 years and that turbine development has changed over the years.

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