

**This is a genuine letter sent on 25th July 2011**  
**but before you read it here is some food for thought**

Why is the use of river water neglected after all it is a source of power, why is it not used more, is it because it is free and nobody makes any great amount of money from its use. So should we call it **People Power** and allow people to put it to good use, if what I say in the letter is correct there would be absolutely no need to have all these redundancies, taking away funding from this that and the other. I say the sky is the limit for water wheels to run generators and thought why not use them for putting back the money that is short in the pension schemes, giving students a fair deal especially if universities were allowed to have generators to make money it would mean no fees for students and make happy parents. The elderly could all be given a decent pension lets let put a smile on their faces, what about the Police and the Armed Forces these organisations cannot be run on a shoestring. I could go on and on the list is endless. I think you will get my drift, we need water mills and if it is found to be feasible it would mean a problem solved and all done by People Power.

Prime Minister  
Mr David Cameron  
10 Downing Street  
London  
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Dear Sir

I am writing to you with an idea for your Big Society that I think may well solve a lot of problems. It has the potential to make lots, and save lots of money for the government. It's all to do with green energy as I have a feeling we're going down the wrong route. In my opinion, we should be thinking of waterwheels as the way forward not: Wind power, Solar panels, Archimedes screw and Wave power because they are not efficient enough and are highly expensive to buy and run. What is needed is something simple, efficient and more aesthetically pleasing, picture this such as the idyllic scene of a Mill with a waterwheel on the river side. People are keen to photograph such things like these and a project like this would not be out of place in areas like the National parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty. Even the World Heritage site Roman Wall, because a water wheel is less likely to offend people than the monstrous wind turbines.

**The waterwheel**, I think, needs to be on a **float** so that it sits at the right level all the time, irrespective of the weather. Whatever the state of the river, whether it be in flood or low, the waterwheel will work at its maximum capacity throughout and all with a very low maintenance. In a recent article in the mail online, it was said that wind turbines only work at 27% capacity and last year this had dropped to 21% so, not very good at all really. I also read an article where a large wind turbine made £400,000 at 27% proficiency; if we could get a waterwheel to run generators a similar size to those that were in the wind turbine and it was 81% efficient, we would be making, if these figures are correct, £1,200,000 per year from each generator. I certainly don't think this is a bad return. Another perk would be that you could have even more generators, say: 8, 12, 16, 20 or 24. The development of such a beautiful feature would, of course, depend on the river conditions. Your choice of location has to be of close proximity to an electric substation or a National Grid to improve your connection to sell your electricity. The further away you are, the thicker the cable has to be to help reduce the amount of power loss.

**The way Forward**

We would need a feasibility study done, part of which has already been completed centuries ago when waterwheels were invented and their potential was acknowledged. I am aware that Southampton University have already done work on the subject, it might pay to try their websites:

<http://www.energy.soton.ac.uk/hydro/waterwheels.html> , <http://www.british-hydro.org/waterwheels.html> and <http://www.waterwheelfactory.com/poncelet.htm> .

The final link, advertising the **Poncelet waterwheel** was the favourite in France and Germany and run at 70% proficiency. It is said that it will work with a very low head (2 feet). I begin to wonder why it was not introduced in the UK; maybe Mill owners, in those days, felt it was inappropriate to use a foreigners invention especially if you were trying to sell shares in your company, or was it about the time we were having a difference of opinion with Napoleon Bonaparte.

I feel that Newcastle University Engineering Department would be a good choice for assisting with this project as they can usually find the answer to any engineering problem. Although it's not a question of will it work, as I think we know it will, it's just a question of how many electric generators it would drive because I can visualise every electric mill would have good number of electric generators in it.

Who would be the partners in every project? I visualise: the Government, whatever county council, whatever town council, and whatever community group. A possible source of funding for the project would be the Big Society Bank. I'm sure they would help to build the electric mill on river side at Haltwhistle as Northumberland county council have some land earmarked for development on the riverside and it seems an ideal spot to build a building big enough to put a water wheel on.

**WHAT IF** the government provided the money from the Big Society bank for free?

**WHAT IF** County Council gave land for free and didn't charge rates for mill?

**WHAT IF** Town / Parish Council used theirs for similar things? Like our Leisure Centre, Library, Haltwhistle & District Partnership and Cemetery but, let's be truthful what's in it for me and you? As a town council our aim has to be no rates what so ever, now that would put smile on everybody's face.

**WHAT IF** Community group used theirs for all the things the community would have loved to have done but could not get funding for like Social Housing, a proper Old People's Home, grants for University students and the like?

**WHATS IN IT FOR US?** We are Four Equal Partners so if our electric Mill had four generators each would make over a million per year but it could be more. The Government is the main beneficiary if this works because every town in the UK will want to be in on the act. As for Northumberland County Council, if every town wanted to take part they could be £239 million better off each year, this is better than a kick in the teeth.

My way of thinking is that, if the first three partners I mentioned were to use their share of proceeds for their commitments, it would allow them to: reduce rates, decrease redundancy, and there would be no need to close things like the Children's Hospital ward at Freeman, Newcastle. Now if every town in Northumberland and UK did this how much revenue would be generated? It could be billions. If this was rolled out all over the country the Big society is born.

I would like to see Haltwhistle given the chance to become one of your pilot projects under the Big Society, it could be called the River Tyne Project and all the towns along the banks of the River Tyne could take part, each community group would have its own unique name and with charity status, This could include: Alston (even though it is in Cumbria), Haltwhistle, Bardon Mill, Haydon Bridge, Hexham, Corbridge and, Prudhoe. Now these four: Newcastle, Gateshead, North Shields and South Shields are more or less at the mouth of the Tyne and are tidal so I think, to be fair, theirs would have to build higher up the river. I think that this is all of them. We could say if every

town along the Tyne do this and each one take in their local villages, they would all have a say on how the money was spent as there would be enough money for everybody. As well as this, there would be no need for hidden agendas and scoring brownie points. I could well see the countryside awash with money .

An even bigger picture, around us are Vindolanda, Roman Army Museum, the Twice Brewed project, Roman Wall, National Parks and National Trust it would be nice to help them as well, what about charities such as the Air Ambulance, Save the Children to mention but a few are all looking for funding do they not deserve a chance they're all good causes.

Prime Minister Sir I would like to think this idea would help you to solve many of our problems and put the word great back into **Great Britain** so for once lets all

**THINK BIG.**

yours sincerely

John T. Watson

Any comments **email me**