

By Ian Noble

ian.noble@nne.co.uk

CRITICS of plans to develop a rural airfield fear it will blight their lives,

Villagers around Bagby Airfield, near Thirsk, North Yorkshire, are fighting proposals lodged with Hambleton District Council.

The scheme calls for the building of an 18-bed hotel, primarily for airfield users, with a bar facility for flyers.

Owner Martin Scott also aims to erect a workshop and hangars, as well as extending an existing hanger and fitting four small turbines to create electricity.

But residents from nearby villages such as Bagby, Balk and Little Thirkleby fear such developments will blight their lives.

Action4Refusal, a protest group made up of more than 100 people, is fighting the scheme, which is a revised version of one entered last year.

Jonathan Tulloch, of Action4Refusal, said: "Bagby Airfield is a small enthusiasts' club and people are happy with that. But these plans will make it a commercial operation and there is a point where we have to say this can't be allowed.

"With the possibility of extra flights, people are worried about safety and the chance of an accident."

Mr Scott said: "What we are trying to achieve is a balanced development so the airfield has a future and not just as a fuelling station.

"I think these plans will be a massive benefit to the community through tourism and it won't mean a massive increase in flights. What we want to do is attract people to come here for a visit to spend their money here.

"Pilots from Bagby are under strict instructions not to fly over Bagby and we sometimes get blamed for noise from planes from elsewhere."

The application goes before the council's development control committee on April 2.