
Jack's Lane Community Liaison Group Minutes, 03 Feb 2010

In attendance: Cllr Len Ringwood (LR)
Cllr Anne Harvey (AH)
Cllr Adam Bunkle (AB)
Cllr Jeremy Brettingham Smith (JBS)
Cllr Gerald Taylor (GT)
Cllr Terry Austin (TA)
Cllr Pamela Austin (PA)
Simon Peltenburg (SP), Amy Bambridge - RES
Phil Briscoe (PB, Chair), Matthew Horn - BPA

Venue: North Creake Village Hall

Apologies: Cllr Brian Poulson
Cllr Gary Sandell
Cllr Nicholas Ullswater
Mrs Gillian Richardson – King's Lynn and West Norfolk Council Planning Officer

Date: Wednesday 3 February 2010

Apologies for absence

GT gave his apologies for Syderstone Parish Council Vice-Chair. PB gave his apologies for Cllr Gary Sandell, Cllr Nicholas Ullswater and Mrs Gillian Richardson.

Welcome and introduction

Phil Briscoe welcomed the Group to the first meeting to discuss the proposed Jack's Lane wind farm. He outlined that involvement in the Community Liaison Group (CLG) in no way implied support for the development of the proposed wind farm. The meetings of the CLG are an avenue for the local community to ask questions, receive updates and have key concerns addressed about the proposed development. The committee will be active throughout the length of the planning process and, if successful, throughout the construction and operation phases.

Election of Chairman

Phil Briscoe requested that the Group decide who is to Chair future meetings of the CLG. He highlighted that RES would not be permitted to Chair the Group and that two options could be considered:

- 1) That Bellenden Chairs in an independent capacity or;
- 2) The preferred option, having a member of the Group Chair future meetings

Each member of the Group stated that they would prefer not to Chair the Group and GT emphasised that as elected representatives they had to be aware of external perspectives if they were to be positioned as Chair of the CLG.

It was agreed that:

Phil Briscoe will Chair future CLG meetings.

Role of Liaison Group & Terms of Reference

The Chair outlined that the CLG is an opportunity for the community to be represented and reported back to. He referenced the membership and aims of the Group as set out in the constitution. JBS stated that one, unnamed, councillor did not wish to be included on the Group as he sits on the Borough Planning Committee and believes there would be a conflict of interest. He went on to question who would be a suitable replacement for the councillor.

The Chair suggested that meetings should be carried out in a public forum but questions should be vectored through the CLG members. He went on to state that detailed minutes will also be made available to the public.

AB believed that the terms of reference were broad enough to move forward as a Group. LR expressed concern over the lack of opportunity for the public to speak at each meeting, he went on to highlight that the public have an opportunity to speak at each Parish Council meeting during an allotted time in which the meeting is adjourned. GT stated that the public can raise a question at a Parish Council meeting but the issue cannot be debated unless it is on the agenda. He went on to state that it was positive to include the public at the CLG meetings but a limited timescale for questions needs to be imposed.

GT emphasised that any questions raised by the public would merely be hypothetical as RES has not submitted an application and the project may or may not go ahead. He went on to state that, although he believed the CLG meetings are useful, answers to questions cannot be made on the assumption that the development will go ahead.

GT stated that the minutes for each meeting should be sent to each Parish Council and Parish Council notice board at least seven days in advance of the next CLG meeting. TA highlighted that the minutes for Parish Council meetings are approved at the next meeting before being issued. LR stated that if minutes are intended to be released prior to the next meeting then they should be clearly labelled as 'unconfirmed' minutes. GT stated that minutes must be made available within 21 days of the previous meeting.

It was agreed that:

Amendments to the constitution will be made stating that future meetings will be adjourned for 15 minutes for the public to raise questions, which will be debated at that meeting if on the pre-issued agenda or, if not, will be discussed at a future meeting. A new constitution will be sent to the CLG and published for public viewing.

Minutes of each meeting will be sent to the Parish Councils at least one week in advance of the next CLG meeting. The minutes will be clearly labelled as 'unconfirmed' minutes.

Membership of Liaison Group

GT suggested that any two members of a relevant Parish Council should be included in the CLG group as there may be the potential that neither named members could attend. LR agreed but stated that two named members should be used to initiate the Group, however, these can be replaced if necessary. SP agreed but stated that he hoped for consistency within the Group.

AB suggested a member of Creakes Action for Protecting the Environment (CAPE) sit on the CLG as an opportunity for CAPE to be incorporated in a controlled environment. He stated that he has sent an agenda for the meeting to CAPE representative Jonathan Powell. The group discussion followed that any vested group (for or against) would skew the neutral purpose of the group. It was highlighted that anyone can attend meetings as all members of the public are permitted and will be able to view any minutes.

It was agreed that:

The membership of the CLG will remain the same going forward but other members of each relevant Parish may be permitted to attend in case of absentees.

Jack's Lane Site Update

SP highlighted that RES is having a final round of meetings with the RSPB, National Trust and Natural England and will be sending out a newsletter with key details about the proposed Jack's Lane site with dates and locations for public exhibitions. JBS asked how far the newsletters would be distributed. SP stated that the distribution zone would be around 5km. GT reinforced that coverage for the site needs to be sensibly extensive. JBS questioned if the proposed development could be publicised on radio Norfolk.

RES were asked if permission had been granted by the landowners to erect turbines at the proposed site. SP stated that RES had reached agreement for the proposed turbines.

TA questioned if there was the potential for the project to expand at a later date. SP answered that it was a possibility, as another developer might propose a project on adjacent land. Should RES try to develop more turbines they would need to apply for planning permission and would need to do various surveys to demonstrate whether such expansion had acceptable environmental effects. SP informed the Group that if it is considered that the expansion was not acceptable then planning permission would not be granted.

GT reinforced to the Group that all comments made at the meeting are not based on the assumption that the site will receive planning permission or not and that he is merely offering a view regarding issues being raised.

It was agreed that:

The newsletter will be issued to a wider area and other avenues for issuing information will be pursued.

Planning Timetable

SP stated that if feedback from stakeholders and the local community after the exhibitions is positive then RES will be submitting a planning application in potentially June but probably July. TA asked when the public exhibitions will take place. (Please see Newsletter and Exhibition Plans for further details about exhibition dates and times).

Wind farm Visits

Amy Bambridge introduced the possibility of site visits to working wind farms to allay noise and visual impact concerns and to stimulate further questions. Amy offered two possible options for a site visit:

- 1) A coach to be arranged and paid for by RES to take any interested people to a nearby working wind farm and then taken back to the public exhibition at Syderstone village hall on Sunday 11 April.
- 2) An individual tour with the CLG and every member of each relevant Parish Council who would like to visit a wind farm.

GT highlighted that he backed the idea of a site visit so long as the site was representative of the site that would be pursued by RES and that the visitors would need to have access to the site. GT, AB and LR supported the idea of a trip with both the CLG members and the respective Parish Councils. AB suggested a tour of a wind farm be pursued at a weekend. The Chair stated that potential dates would be sent through to each CLG member and Parish Council.

It was agreed that:

Two tours of a working wind farm will be arranged for both the CLG and general public. Dates for a weekend tour of a wind farm will be forwarded to each member of the CLG.

Liaison Group Work Plan

The Chair outlined that an agenda for each CLG meeting will be issued but questioned what specific issues may want to be addressed at individual issue based CLG meetings.

GT stated that he had two issues he would like to be addressed. Firstly, transport arrangements and necessary alterations to the road network and secondly, how the wind farm would be connected to the National Grid. GT expressed concerns that any connections would be pursued overground.

AB raised the issue of noise generated by the turbines and in particular the work of Dr Nina Pierpont. SP highlighted that Dr Pierpont is a paediatrician and not a noise expert. He went on to emphasise that her research appears to be based on ten individual families around the world that have complained about noise issues surrounding wind farms. SP highlighted that to his knowledge, of the 250 wind farms in the UK there is only one ongoing case surrounding noise. Amy Bambridge emphasised that Dr Pierpont's research does not stand up to scientific scrutiny highlighting that the study has a sample of only ten individual cases. Amy suggested a special meeting with RES' noise experts. The issue of a well know noise concern near a wind farm in Lincolnshire was addressed by the Group. SP informed the CLG that RES noise experts had requested to make noise measurements in the home of the individual in Lincolnshire but were refused permission. SP emphasised that to his knowledge only one member of the community near the Lincolnshire site had issued a concern about noise generated by the wind farm. GT suggested that the CLG ask the community around the Bicker Fen wind farm about their experiences. SP highlighted that the Bicker wind farm was located on a completely different topography to the Jack's Lane site which has a rolling landscape. GT stated that the onus should be up to individuals to go to a wind farm site and listen to it working.

AH questioned the potential effects of shadow flicker at the site. SP stated that RES would be conditioned to avoid shadow flicker effects and that the proposed turbines are over 950m from all houses - this is more than ten rotor diameters distance and so shadow flicker will not occur.

SP stated that the connection would not be implemented overground and has agreement from EDF Energy for an underground route. The route will likely follow the road network and will link in to the overground cabling network that is already in place. AB questioned if a substation would need to be constructed. SP assured the Group that there would be no need for a new substation to be built off-site.

It was agreed that:

The CLG will attend a visit to a wind farm site prior to a special CLG meeting on noise issues. A special CLG meeting with one of RES' noise experts will be arranged.

Newsletter & Exhibition Plans

Amy Bambridge issued the current dates and locations for the public exhibitions as follows:

- Tuesday 30 March, 3pm – 8pm at North Creake Village Hall
- Wednesday 31 March, 10am – 4pm at Stanhoe Village Hall
- Sunday 11 April, All Day at Syderstone Village Hall

JBS stated that the newsletters should highlight that the meetings are staggered for the convenience of the community and that all meetings will be identical.

Future Meeting Dates

The frequency of the CLG meeting was discussed. It was put forward by the Chair that the Group met once every two months. GT emphasised that the next CLG meeting should take place prior to the public meetings. JBS suggested that the meeting took place after the next round of Parish Council meetings. The Chair highlighted that it would be a good opportunity to address issues raised at the Parish Council meetings.

The location for the meetings was discussed. AB emphasised that the location needed to offer space for the public to attend. Monday 15 March was proposed as a potential date. GT suggested that the meeting takes place in the afternoon. JBS highlighted that if the meeting took place in the afternoon then many members of the community would be at work and could not attend.

It was agreed that:

The next meeting will be held at 7pm on Monday 15 March, the location is yet to be confirmed. It was agreed that the venue for the CLG would rotate between the Parish village halls.

Any Other Business

The meeting closed at 8:45pm.

The next meeting will be held at 7pm on Monday 15 March, location to be confirmed.