

## Jack's Lane Community Liaison Group (CLG) Minutes, 26 August 2010

### In attendance:

Cllr Terry Austin (TA)  
Cllr Pamela Austin (PA)  
Cllr Robin Maslin (RM)  
Cllr Ann Harvey (AH)  
Cllr Nick Ullswater (NU)  
Simon Peltenburg (SP) – RES  
Jon Knight (JK) - RES  
Phil Briscoe (PB) - Bellenden  
Matthew Horn (MH) – Bellenden

Seven members of the public

**Venue:** Stanhoe Village Hall

### Apologies:

Cllr Gary Sandell  
Cllr Brian Poulson  
Cllr Gerry Taylor  
Mr Jonathan Powell

**Date:** Thursday, 26 August 2010

#### 1. Apologies for Absence

The Chairman gave apologies for Cllr Brian Poulson and Cllr Gary Sandell. Apologies were given for Cllr Gerry Taylor and Mr Jonathan Powell.

#### 2. Welcome and Introduction

The Chairman asked the Group to introduce themselves for the benefit of the public. JK was introduced as a representative from RES to help contribute to the evening's discussion.

#### 3. Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting

The Group were asked if they had any amendments to the previous set of minutes. The minutes were approved.

#### 4. Matters Arising

The Chairman asked if there were any matters arising from the previous meeting. None were articulated. A member of the public asked how many Parish Councillors were represented at the last meeting. TA outlined that there were five Parish Councillors present, representing three out of the four parish councils on the group, and one member from CAPE.

## 5. Public Questions

The Chairman introduced the first period of public questions and went through five pre-submitted questions posed to RES.

Q.1: Is RES keen to get approval for Jack's Lane wind farm because opposition is growing to onshore wind farms in mainland Europe?

SP responded that he was not sure about the point of the question. He stated that RES were not interesting in getting approval due to the fact that opposition in mainland Europe may or may not be rising, but because the UK needs to meet its obligations for increased energy supplies from renewable energy and to help reduce the effects of climate change. The member of the public who submitted the question stated that opposition groups were forming in countries such as Portugal, France, Denmark and Germany and that France is halting wind farm development.

Q.2: Why are wind farm manufacturers shedding staff at present?

SP stated that he had no idea about staff shedding by wind farm manufacturers. The member of the public stated that because turbine manufacturers cannot sell the turbines they are manufacturing they are therefore reducing staff. SP stated that he did not believe this to be true. JK outlined that Vestas stopped producing turbines on the Isle of White, however, the increasing interest in manufacturing turbines in places such as China is taking much of the market away from other manufacturers. He stated that, if anything, production of turbines was increasing on a global level.

Q3: Denmark can produce 20% of the country's power, but only 5% is used. Why is this?

SP stated that he had investigated this and that 18.9% of the electricity demand in Denmark is supplied by wind power. The member of the public stated that only 5% of this supply is being used and that the use of hydro-electric power generation is being pursued.

Q4: Why is the Barwick landowner not being asked to offer more environmental improvements?

SP stated that, as part of the Jack's Lane proposal, various environmental improvement works are being pursued including conservation headlands, installation of hedgerows and thinning of hundred acre plantation to encourage understory growth. The member of the public asked who would be providing the upgrades. SP stated that RES would. The member of the public asked what the landowner was doing. SP stated that RES were implementing the environmental improvements on the land owner's land. He went on to state that all the details about the environmental improvements could be found in Appendix 6.3 – Ecological Mitigation and Enhancement Strategy in the ES.

Q5: How much will Stanhoe receive in payments from RES if the wind farm is approved?

SP stated that a community fund had been proposed by RES at £2,000 per installed MW, which would work out at about £27,000 per annum for the life of the wind farm. SP went on to state

that, if the proposed development was successful, a community fund committee would need to be set up. He went on to state that if the community felt that the fund should be higher than £2,000 per Mw then this would have to be discussed.

A member of the public asked how many parishes would have access to the community fund. SP stated that he was unsure but it would probably consist of the four core parishes involved with the community liaison group (Syderstone, Stanhoe, North Creake and South Creake), however, it would up to the community to decide. AH asked if there would be any parameters in regards to conditions or stipulations for distributing and using the money. SP stated that typically the only stipulation would be that the fund should not be used for the purposes of campaigning against a wind farm development.

A member of the public asked what the fund was for and why it was being issued at all. SP stated that the fund is a means of the wind farm contributing something directly to the community that is hosting the development. He stated that RES would be a business located in the local community and would be giving something back. He went on to question what would be said if a community fund had not been offered for the proposed development.

A member of the public stated that the figure for the community fund needs to be discussed. SP outlined that if the Group wanted to raise the issue of the community fund then RES would be happy to discuss it in more detail. He went on to state that the community fund was not part of the planning process and therefore the CLG had not discussed it as it could be seen as unduly influencing members of the CLG who are also Parish Councillors. He also went on to mention that he had avoided raising the issue due to comments that it could be perceived as a bribe. The member of the public asked how the figure could therefore be discussed. The Chairman suggested that an individual issue-led, community fund meeting could be pursued by the CLG at a later date, he went on to highlight that it is not a planning issue and had therefore not been discussed by the CLG.

TA outlined that the prospect of a community fund had had an influencing effect on residents at an early stage which might work in RES' favour but is not something that is relevant when people decide either to support or reject the wind farm development. SP went on to highlight that if the fund had been discussed at the early stages and had then increased the suggested figure it would be perceived as RES buying out the local community.

A member of the public expressed concern that other projects had not followed through on their promise of distributing a community fund. SP stated that the Section 106 agreements between a developer and a local authority would ensure that the fund would be delivered. A Section 106 is a legally binding agreement between the developer/landowner and a local planning authority to enter in to a planning agreement or obligation if the development is consented. The landowner is typically included in the agreement so that if RES were to sell the project the obligations in the agreement would stay with the land. A member of the public asked if the fund would be £27,000 every year for 25 years. Another member of the public asked if the fund would be index linked. SP stated that the fund would be issued per annum for the life of the wind farm and that it would be index linked.

SP was given a written question/request submitted by CAPE. SP read out the request for the benefit of the Group and members of the public. SP stated that RES had been requested to allow CAPE to fly a balloon at the location of proposed turbine number 1 on a Saturday and at turbine number six on the following Sunday. The balloon had been requested to fly at tip height. SP stated that this was a common activity on English sites, however, it can be difficult as sites are normally very windy and it is difficult for them to stay in the right position. SP stated that he would be interested to know when CAPE would want this to be done, for example if the site was to go to appeal and the inspector was going to visit the location. A member of the public stated that, from what he understood, CAPE hoped to fly the balloon and take photos for their case against the development. SP stated that RES has produced photomontages of the proposed site. The member of the public stated that they would like to take their own photos. SP stated that he knew a reputable company who could fly a balloon at the site.

A member of the public asked if the Group agreed that a balloon should be flown at the site. SP reiterated that a balloon does not give a visualisation of what a wind turbine would look like. He stated that it can be interesting to see a balloon but, if anybody wanted to see what a wind farm would look like at the Jack's Lane site, they should look at the photomontages and wireline images in the Environmental Statement (ES). TA stated that he would support a balloon being flown but believed that the photomontages would be more beneficial for an accurate representation of what a wind farm would look like. SP confirmed he would be in touch with CAPE directly to clarify their requirements and to see if it would be practical to do.

#### **6. Jack's Lane Project Update**

The Chairman asked SP to give the Group an update about the project. SP stated that the application for the Jack's Lane wind farm had been submitted to King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council on 16 August, application number: **10/01419/FM**. He stated that RES will be issuing a newsletter about the proposed development that will reference the application number. SP stated that in all representations to the council about the project this number should be referenced.

SP stated that the Borough Council will look at the ES as will all the statutory consultees - including English Heritage, Natural England, RSPB, Parish Councils etc - to consider the pros and cons of the development. A member of the public asked how long a normal consultation process was for a wind farm. SP stated that 16 weeks is the statutory determination period for a wind farm and normally goes on for longer. TA outlined that the expiry date for standard consultations is 8 September and for neighbour consultations is 14 September. TA went on to state that, having consulted with the Borough Council they had stated that they had issued out the documentation for consideration by the statutory consultees on 18 August, however, it appears that the issuance of the documentation had been delayed. TA articulated his concern at the reduction in the timescale for comment on the application. He stated that he was unsure what the difference was between a standard and a neighbour consultation. SP stated that this did seem to be very short notice. He highlighted that the newsletter will clearly indicate the timescale for representation. He stated that he would follow up with the Borough council about the consultation period and will try and get some clarity on the dates.

A member of the public stated that he hoped the Parish Councils would complain about the short consultation period and that the CLG should write a letter to the Borough council. AH outlined that a lot of work had gone into the ES and that the CLG had fed into this document. SP reiterated that he would contact Gillian Richardson at the council about the timelines.

TA outlined that the whole application was on the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council web site, that Stanhoe Parish Council has a hard copy and that he has at least three copies on CD. AH asked how much the documentation costs RES to produce. SP stated that it costs RES a lot of money for each copy, the volume figures alone are at least £350 per copy to produce.

AH outlined that a Bill was being discussed in the House of Lords proposing that turbines would not be permitted to be developed within a 2km perimeter of houses. AH went on to ask how this would affect those living on the Barwick Hall farm estate. SP stated that he was unaware of this Bill, typically these distances relate to policies which seek to guide the locations of strategic areas for wind farms, such as set out in a Scottish policy which states that wind farms should be 2km from settlements, referring to towns not individual homes. These strategic areas are not set out for individual wind farms but collections of turbines within an area. In Wales there is one Strategic Search Area that is earmarked for 300Mw of wind generated power being produced - which equates to about 150 turbines. SP stated that the area around Jack's Lane cannot be considered similar to such large scale wind power development. AH stated that the people living within the local area will be affected by the Jack's Lane site. SP stated that there was only one property within 1km of the development and that was owned by the landowner. He stated that the next nearest development, apart from Buildings Farm and Barmer Farm, was 1.6km away. TA outlined that, although he did not want to appear to be supportive of wind farms, the North Pickenham turbines are located within 1km of the village. NU outlined that the Bill discussed by AH is actually a Private Members Bill and was not sure if government would take up the proposals. JK outlined that, having done some research into the available sites for wind farms using a 2km buffer, the country would not succeed in reaching its onshore wind farm renewable energy generation obligations.

A member of the public stated that the area of the site boundary for the proposed wind farm was about twice the size of the actual development. He asked if this was so that RES could put more turbines on the site at a later date. SP stated that no it wasn't and that the boundary merely follows the field boundaries. He asked if the member of the public believed that RES would try and sneak more turbines in to the development. The member of the public stated that yes he did. SP refuted this claim.

The same member of the public stated that RES had alluded to the Jack's Lane as not being a public right of way and not classified as such. He stated that having consulted with a rights of way officer that the lane is actually a County road (C479). SP stated that RES had always treated the lane as a right of way and was pleased the member of the public had confirmed this fact.

## **7. Environmental Statement Update**

SP asked if any members of the Group had any questions regarding the ES that he might try to answer. AH asked if RES had discussed with English Heritage and CPRE about the impact of the

proposed development on Barmer church. SP stated that Rosemary Bryan from the CPRE had been to the Council offices to read the ES and we will have to wait to see what her comments are.

### **8. Public Questions**

TA asked if turbines are still for an extended period of time would they need turning. JK stated that, no, they did not and that the actual time turbines are rotating is about 90%. He went on to state that turbines do not need power to turn them.

TA outlined that the statistic that he was most concerned with was in relation to noise. He highlighted the 35 db limit and asked if the turbines would be heard if an individual was 2km downwind of a development. SP stated that they might be able to hear them depending on weather conditions, in the same way as any noise might be perceptible under certain conditions. A member of the public highlighted that there was a drying unit in the local village that had to be turned off due to noise disturbance. SP stated that, at 2km, the turbines would not produce enough sound to be considered a nuisance. TA mentioned that the turbines wouldn't be heard if the wind was blowing hard and wouldn't if it wasn't blowing at all. PA informed the group that having read a publication by the BWEA (now RenewableUK) on noise produced by turbines, that the noise would be equivalent to an urban environment. SP stated that that statement makes it sound as though the development would turn the area in to an urban environment and that wouldn't be the case.

### **9. Future Meeting Dates**

Future meeting dates were discussed by the group. SP asked if the group would want to continue to meet on a monthly basis. TA highlighted that many councillors would be away throughout the month of September. The next meeting date was set for Wednesday 6 October at a location to be confirmed. SP outlined that he would still be available either via telephone or email if anybody had any questions in the meantime.

### **10. Any Other Business**

The Chairman asked if there was any other business for the evening. AH outlined that she had spoken to a lady who had had a sale on her house fall through due to the proposed wind farm and was very upset. A member of the public stated that the same thing had happened to the sale of his home. SP stated that it was a very difficult situation and that such occurrences can happen when a development is at the proposal stage. He stated that it was easier when a wind farm was actually erected as people's fears are not always realised, especially regarding noise concerns.

SP stated that polls suggest that 80% of the country was in favour of wind farms but when proposed for a specific area that this figure might reduce for that area. AH stated that at a recent poll about the wind farm at South Creake, 85% of the residents voted against the development. SP stated that 85% of the 24% turnout voted against the development. A member of the public stated that only a limited percentage of the population were asked about their views on wind farms but that RES still used the figure of 80% supporting such developments. SP stated that surveys done by Ipsos Mori are done on sample sizes and then the results are extrapolated, the South Creake poll was open to every resident and only 24% of

the residential population attended. A member of the public stated that such a figure suggests that 75% don't care if the development is built or not.

**The meeting finished at 8.05pm**

**The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 6 October at 7pm at a location to be confirmed.**