

# MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON  
TUESDAY 30<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2021 AT 6:00 PM VIA ZOOM MEETINGS

## 1. Attendance and Apologies

### Attendees:

Cllr. Nigel Smith – Chair  
Cllr. Roy Dowding – Vice-Chair  
Cllr. Lynda Whitbread  
Cllr. Colin Whitbread  
Cllr. Julian Cusack  
Cllr. Steve Thorpe  
Cllr. Lesley Taylor  
Cllr. Chris Reynolds

### Apologies for absence:

None.

### In attendance:

County Cllr. Richard Smith  
Sharon Smith – Clerk/RFO  
17 members of the public

## 2. Councillors' Declarations of Interest

None.

## 3. Public Forum – Sizewell C

a) Cllr. Nigel Smith opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. Cllr. Smith explained that the Council did not intend to take any decision at the meeting as they were in listening mode and wished to carefully consider the matters raised by residents. Cllr. Smith invited residents to submit any written evidence, or to telephone him, after the meeting to amplify, correct or reply to any of the matters raised and he will circulate these to the Council. Cllr. Smith informed those present that the meeting with EDF has been rescheduled from 6<sup>th</sup> April to 29<sup>th</sup> April therefore the Council will take a view on the matters raised at their next Ordinary meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> April to which all residents are welcome to attend.

b) Cllr. Smith said he had received a number of good written reports regarding the dredging of the New Cut, all of which were against the idea, therefore Cllr. Smith proposed that the Council drops this matter during its discussions with EDF.

c) County Cllr. Richard Smith introduced himself and said he was present to hear what residents had to say and he will make notes. He said he hoped his position was fairly well known - that he was against the Sizewell C development and that he wishes to help everyone in the Blything division.

d) Cllr. Nigel Smith invited those present to speak on the following agenda items:

- removal or retention of the Sizewell Link Road following the construction period.
- keeping Fordley Road open;
- removal of the link from the B1122/B1125 junction to the SLR;
- speed limits and enforcement;
- compensation for affected properties;
- complaints procedures and liaison between the PC and EDF;
- construction of a footpath/cycle route along the B1125 from Westleton to its junction with the B1122;
- a new roof for the Village Hall from any Community Fund.

Speaker 1:

- disappointing that only eight residents had registered to speak;
- development of Sizewell C will have a devastating and disastrous effect on the village;
- does not want Sizewell C and preferred route is obviously D2;
- however if Link Road is imposed on us its future will depend on the usage in years to come;

- showed slides and summarised the various energy projects planned for the area;
- these projects will mean a fairly big number of workers to build and maintain;
- useless triangles will be created and these will not be used for agriculture but for industry and housing;
- upshot in 20-25 years' time will be lots of people and lots of traffic;
- the designated route for the Friston sub-station from the north and west is the B1122;
- the known energy projects are not coordinated and all add up to a terrific workload on the road supplying the area;
- the Link Road should not be dug up as many Moor cottages are only two feet from the road;
- if the decision is to remove the road, these cottages will be next to a road 10 or 20 times busier;
- if the Link Road is dug up, should insist that the road is set back from these cottages, a new lay-by and pavement is constructed along the southern side of the B1122;
- the discussion about whether to dig up the Link Road or not is premature as we do not know what the future holds.

#### Speaker 2:

- speaking as a landowner as to the effect the Link Road will have in his future;
- small family farm which relies on agriculture for income;
- the road will take over 20 acres, just from them, which is 7.5% of their current farmed area;
- serious effect on their viability going forward;
- odd triangles of land will be left which will mean another 10% of unviable farmland;
- understand that two cottages are close to the B1122 however it is not a sensible option to sacrifice hundreds of acres of good arable land for two cottages when, as the first speaker suggested, the road could be moved to give them a footpath.

#### Speaker 3:

- referred to the questionnaire circulated with the newsletter;
- distributed to Middleton, Theberton and Kelsale to give a regional viewpoint for all the land affected by the proposed Link Road and B1122;
- 47 responses received from Middleton and, thus far, nobody wishes the Link Road to remain after the construction phase;
- acknowledges not 100% representative of the population but it is 47 more people than did not bother to reply;
- he is losing 140 acres of arable land, he will have the Link Road and the Theberton by-pass crossing his land which makes the farm totally unviable;
- the concept of having two roads from Yoxford to Leiston beggars belief - can stand in the middle of the B1122 at night for 15 minutes and not be hit by a car;
- we do not get the volume of traffic now and even during the construction of Sizewell B the volumes were higher but not critical and fear is great driver;
- for people from Theberton and Middleton wishing to access the amenities of Saxmundham (and blue light services) they will have to use the Link Road, as EDF's current proposals are to close Fordley Road and Pretty Road, they will need to go over the Moor to access the Link Road;
- this means the design itself is flawed as traffic will be increased through the Moor several times a day to access Saxmundham;
- genuine disincentive to EDF. Our MP, Therese Coffey and Suffolk County Council want the road taken up post-construction. If the Planning Inspectorate or the Secretary of State force EDF to remove the road then the construction and deconstruction costs virtually doubles which will bring the costs of £47m as opposed to £26m now;
- EDF may refuse to do that which is a soft option as the first two years of the construction phase are very freight intensive so the B1122 will be considerably abused by that traffic;
- we are trying to dissuade EDF as the cost will be prohibitive and ask them to look to alternative routes such as the D2/Route W;
- they are commissioning a comparative report into alternative routes which will be shared with Therese Coffey;
- EDF may find themselves over-budget and refuse to build the Link Road.

Speaker 4:

- residents who live alongside the B1122;
- pleased meeting is being held to enable all the residents to give their position, particularly those that live along the B1122;
- their stance, should the Sizewell C project go ahead, is that the Link Road needs to stay in place as a public amenity;
- we will have Sizewell B, C, D operating and every 18 months the rods will need recharging;
- it is highly likely they will alternate recharging of C and D every year so effectively they will be working continuously for the life of the two new reactors;
- at the same time A and B will be decommissioning;
- this will create additional vehicles running up and down the B1122 if the Link Road is removed;
- other energy projects will also come on-stream;
- EDF are proposing to produce hydrogen onsite but we have no specific details;
- this will create a huge distribution network of many lorries;
- EDF estimate they will require a couple of hundred more operators than the 800-900 they are currently using;
- no-one knows if the park and rides will stay in place after the construction phase, it seems unimaginable that they will stay in place which means everything will come back on to the B1122;
- ludicrous to think that the B1122 will be a quiet country lane post-construction;
- the B1122 is not capable of carrying this traffic therefore the Link Road should remain;
- attended the Examining Authority's first preliminary meeting, where the emergency services clearly expressed their concern as EDF have still not put forward how they will service and manage this particular area during construction;
- EDF have a history of doing as little as possible at the cheapest possible budget and the RAB scheme and government handouts are the only way this scheme will be funded therefore ultimately we will pay for this;
- deeply concerned at giving EDF any hint that as an opposition we are split, as they will go to the Examining Authority and say that the Parish Councils agree with all that they say and do;
- if EDF are persuaded to remove the Link Road, then they will omit from building the Link Road south of Yoxford so all the traffic will come on to the B1122 via the new roundabout;
- with regard to the pretty lanes, we need to be more active on the Examining Authority's specific hearings and hopefully we have achieved a specific hearing on road and transport as this is where we can try to ensure we get bridges, underpasses incorporated into the Link Road for local residents to help maintain the peace, quiet, flora, fauna and access to Saxmundham;
- it is not borne out that if we do not do a deal with EDF we will lose money. At Hinkley Point, groups that held out for longest, caused the most trouble and the most local challenges came up financially far better than those who settled early;
- money in the form of mitigation from EDF should be on the form of reality and potential actions to our village rather than a set figure;
- understood that the long-term view of the parish was against the building of Sizewell C and that should be our long-term aim;
- If the project goes ahead, the Link Road should remain in place and the B1122 should be protected;
- the Chairman confirmed that the long-term aim is to object to Sizewell C and he explained that the Council did agree with EDF that the proposal to dig up the Link Road was subject to consultation with residents.

Speaker 5:

- chairs a group called the B1122 Action Group and is on the executive group of Stop Sizewell C;
- the B1122 AG has not taken a formal vote on this issue yet nor has Stop Sizewell C;
- the Link Road will be a scar across the landscape across Middleton parish;
- 80% of the Link Road is on cuttings or on embankments, it will completely change the look of the landscape of the area;
- there is appeal in the idea of asking that it be removed after the event,
- assessing the value of the Link Road after the event for those subsequent projects and maintenance of the existing Sizewell B and C, like many he is quite torn;
- what is the best solution that we want, as a parish, in the future after this is all over?

- what is the shape of the parish and the landscape around it that we want?
- both in terms of a road network and the traffic that passes over it;
- those on the cusp of an opinion need to bear this in mind.

Speaker 6:

- his view about the desirability about maintaining the Link Road in the longer term, if the EDF build actually goes ahead, he is not sure what the longer term traffic predictions are;
- extremely fearful of the B1122 being a fall-back after the construction period;
- making a comment just on the desirability of maintaining a more robust road for whatever traffic we have to endure in the coming years;
- he is in favour of maintaining the Link Road in the longer-term as he would hate to think the B1122 would have to suffer quite extraordinary levels of traffic.

Cllr. Colin Whitbread:

- as a Parish Councillor and resident of the Moor, his view is that the Link Road should remain;
- has full sympathy with the landowners whose land will be lost either permanently or temporarily whichever way the vote goes;
- if the Link Road is built it could become the new B1122, built to an engineering standard where they bridge all the country lanes and it will take all the traffic down into Leiston and the Sizewell plant;
- the Suffolk and Norfolk constabularies have raised issues about attending the site in an emergency as seen at Chernobyl and Fukushima;
- in favour of the road staying but it must be of the engineering standard that warrants it, not a dirt track which EDF are trying to get away with, it must be adopted by the County Council;
- in his opinion, everyone in the area would benefit from the Link Road remaining.

Speaker 7:

- Chair of Theberton and Eastbridge Parish Council;
- to allay some people's fears he clarified that the Office for Nuclear Regulation will not allow a hydrogen plant on the Sizewell C site, it will have to be at some distance;
- Theberton and Eastbridge Parish Council are in protracted negotiations with EDF about a crossing over Pretty Road.;
- he is interested to hear everyone's diverse views about the Link Road.

Speaker 8:

- lives within 6 paces of the B1122 in a nearly 500 year old house;
- it may be a surprise that he would like to see the arable farming continue around here so he would like the Link Road removed;
- surprised that more people have not mentioned the other road. We should not be talking about the relief road or the B1122 as neither are acceptable in his opinion.
- both roads are the wrong answer and D2/W, which he is not sure if it is still supported by the County Council but it was in the advance of the building of Sizewell B;
- every one of us should ensure that County Cllr. Richard Smith knows that neither of the options are acceptable.
- the Chairman confirmed that this was well understood by EDF, our negotiations are that, if they get planning consent, what can they do in the way of small works to mitigate the awfulness of the whole project. They recognise that we are implacably opposed to the development and we think the Link Road is mad.

Cllr. Roy Dowding:

- in the early negotiations with EDF, which is only the first meeting in a round of several meetings, we launched the concept that if they build the Link Road there is an opinion that it should be removed afterwards;
- one of the reasons for this is to play devil's advocate, which is what he thinks the County Council and our MP are doing, if they have to build the road at great expense (as the road will be up in the air or in a vale) it will be even more difficult to remove it and restore the landscape;

- the cost will therefore vastly exceed building D2/W even though EDF say this option has dreadful problems and would cost more than the Link Road;
- the whole persuasive act of asking for the Link Road to be removed is to make it more expensive than building D2/W, which anyone with any sense would say is the best option;
- we must bear in mind that the possible financing of Sizewell C is that we collectively will pay for it to be built and for all the mitigation that it requires.

Speaker 1:

- the survey seemed to be parachuted into the village magazine and he did not reply as he did not think that the information for and against was provided for the electorate to tick the boxes one way or the other;
- this approach negates the survey and he does not think any weight can be given to a 47-0 score;
- the Chairman noted that some residents said they have not seen the survey and he advised that it is available from the farm shop.

Speaker 2:

- fully appreciates the comments about the survey;
- in their fourth consultation, EDF asked for responses in relation to the permanency of the Link Road and in their fifth consultation they gave fairly wishy-washy results from the responses received;
- this is what happens when you send out 8,500 consultations over a wide area;
- we provided a form which gave you a visual of the Link Road and the B1122, we could have had a 15 point question for people, but we wanted to keep it simple and prove to EDF that of the 47 people who have taken the trouble to respond that all are pro-removal of the road;
- he looks forward to receiving further responses.

Cllr. Lesley Taylor:

- understands and has listened to the comments regarding the removal of the Link Road;
- concerned that, during the early stages when the Link Road was proposed, she spoke to TEAGS and they suggested that EDF wish to do the minimum, but it concerns her that we are attempting to get them to commit to something in an effort to persuade them to build the D2 or something else;
- if we make it too difficult their option may be to do nothing and they may delay it and we will end up having to take all the increased traffic on the B1122;
- concerned whether we are approaching this wanting the right outcome, whether we approaching this for a maneuverability point as opposed to getting the road removed for other reasons.

Cllr. Nigel Smith:

- the Link Road will sever virtually all the lanes, footpaths and tracks that cross it and if it is dug up they could be reinstated;
- the Council is pushing for, as a minimum, an overpass or underpass at Fordley Road;
- also suggested that the small link road from the B1125 to the Link Road is not put in as that will encourage vehicles to come down the B1125;
- the construction of the various energy projects will mean an increase of people and vehicular traffic but, aside from Sizewell C, the operation will require minimal people land-side at Sizewell;
- substations will only probably only require one man (and his dog);
- the offshore wind-farms will be serviced from Felixstowe and Lowestoft.

Speaker 1:

- I don't think you are right.
- Other speakers have said there will probably be dozens of redundant triangles and we know what will happen to these – light industry or housing – which adds up to a multitude of traffic moving along this road in 20-25 years from now;
- Chairman – you mention little triangles and I accept that but I do not think there will be a lot of light industry. There may be infill housing as seen when larger towns are bypassed;
- Or solar ray farms.

Speaker 9:

- Co-Chair of Stop Sizewell C and Theberton and Eastbridge Parish Councillor – our efforts have gone towards trying to push EDF to D2 as this is our preferred route;
- but we are faced with the dilemma of the SLR which is in the DCO;
- he has been in the discussions with EDF about whether to remove the Link Road, their commitment to building it, and opening up Pretty Road and making it a full bridge instead of a foot bridge;
- Middleton should push for Fordley Road to be opened up as well and EDF may capitulate;
- if Pretty Road is the only route open, Theberton will become inundated with traffic but it is vital that that access is kept open if the Link Road is built;
- concerned that if EDF are then persuaded to make the Link Road semi-permanent then they may not wish to bridge Pretty Road;
- there are all kinds of quid pro quos but our objective is to show that EDF have not paid enough attention to the D2, that they have not evaluated it properly as an alternative;
- we have a problem as the District Council are happy with the Link Road whereas they are not happy with the D2 as it went straight through their Saxmundham village proposal;
- D2 can only be discussed inside the examination as EDF have not looked at it in a sensible way and we are waiting for the comparison report to come out;
- If there are three operational nuclear power plants there, as Sizewell B will be extended by 20 years, there will be an outage every six months for two months.

Speaker 2:

- if we ask for the Link Road to be removed, we are effectively pushing for a haul route which is a different entity;
- it would only be for the use of Sizewell traffic and no-one else;
- this is a very different proposition to the one proposed with the need for overpasses and underpasses and the rat-run through Westleton down the B1125;
- a haul route would be the only access to the Sizewell site and they would not have access to the B1122, post early years.

Speaker 10:

- supports the comments made by the landowners in as much as the D2 is the preferable solution;
- if the Link Road is a proposal he would like it removed on completion;
- many landowners, that he fully supports, are losing lots of income as they cannot viably farm their land as the Link Road splits the situation.

Speaker 11:

- re the suggestion that the by-pass will end up making us like Saxmundham, the by-pass there and at Wickham Market are going by two already established towns and are just an extension of those towns, we do not have a town which would attract a building development;
- we are already almost part of the A1120, getting out onto Middleton Moor is already dangerous and this will only get worse, therefore the whole development is very dangerous.

Cllr. Nigel Smith

- we are also asking for a footpath/cycleway along the B1125;
- following suggestions made by speakers at this meeting, we will push strongly for the early installation of a footpath from the Moor to at least Mill Street; this is important during the early years when the relief road has not been built.

#### **4. Planning**

- a) The Council agreed to support planning application DC/21/1182/FUL – creation of a new vehicular access and internal driveway to improve highway safety as existing access is sub-standard – Heath View, Leiston Road.
- b) The Council agreed to support planning application DC/21/1102/FUL – replacement and extension of existing dilapidated barn. Existing building is a mixture of concrete block work, timber, cement and corrugated iron roof, supported by telegraph poles, which are rotting in the ground. The replacement

building has been designed with traditional corrugated panels for cladding and roof, not modern box-profile. The front elevation will be rendered blockwork. The building will occupy the current footprint with the extended portion at the rear – Hill House Barn, Title Road.

**ACTION: Clerk to inform the planning department.**

The meeting closed at 7:10 pm.