

Draft Minutes

The Annual Parish Meeting Held on 14th May 2024 In the Congregational Chapel, Hall Road, Oulton

Attendees: -

Oulton Parish Council - Mrs S Mather (Chair), Ms A Shaw, Mr G Peck, Mr A Windross, Mr A Nash, Mr P Killingback (Minute Taker)

National Trust - Mr A Curtis

Norfolk Neutrality - Mr D Wood - Harrison Civils

Church - Rev A Whitehead

12 Parishioners

Apologies:-

Mrs Sue Catchpole - BDC Councillor

1. The Chair thanked everyone for attending.
2. The minutes of the last meeting held on 9th May 2023 were agreed and signed.
3. Chairs annual report: -

OPC held 8 meetings during the year.

2 new Defibrillators are now set up and available in the Parish - thanks to financial assistance from local businesses and grants.

Playground - new hedge planting achieved - thanks to NT for their assistance. Repairs to small gate and allotment site gate planned for this year.

Planning Applications: -

- Domestic garage build - OPC had no objection.
- Two other applications are connected to the consented airfield solar farm (BDC 20150952) which was consented in 2015.

Last year the airfield Solar Farm was granted funding in the Contract for Difference auction for Phase 2 of the project, this is the mechanism by which renewable projects receive payment for generating energy.

This has resulted in two planning applications for Phase 2 and for Phases 1 & 2.

Phase 2 is looking to construct a new access track to the site, this is due to Orsted's Compound blocking access, this access track is due to be in situ for 40 years. OPC responded with a query over the need for 40 years, as the original consent which went to the Planning Committee for a decision was granted temporary consent for 25 years.

Broadland have approved the access track for 40 years.

- The third application which OPC received last week was again for the **Airfield Solar Farm** seeking to extend the temporary life of the solar farm for both phases from 25 years to 40 years. This would mean phase 1 could potentially be in situ until **2056** and Phase 2 until **2065**.

The difference in finish dates is due to when each phase generated power.

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Phase 1 - 2016

Phase 2 - expected to generate in 2025.

OPC feel this is pushing the boundary of what in planning terms is temporary.

- Poultry Unit on Parish Boundary

The Poultry unit planning application (**NNDC PF/21/0317**) on the village boundary with Corpusty, Heydon and Oulton has still not been determined. The delay was caused by any application containing a residential property requiring further assessment in regards to water potentially getting into rivers and water ways. Natural England had halted application until Nutrient Neutrality could be assessed.

However there is a poultry unit in operation at this particular site, with mobile units, but no residential property. OPC has been informed of this change of use by residents and NNDC are aware of the situation. NNDC had flagged it as a potential enforcement issue, they carried out a harm assessment, and their legal team determined that there was not enough evidence to consider there was harm from the current activities on the site, The enforcement case has been closed. The planning application is as far as OPC are aware, still pending consideration.

Events: -

- Box Day 2023 Lack of volunteers meant a much smaller community picnic held. No date for 2024 currently planned. Community events such as this need fresh volunteers.

4. Presentation by Darren Wood -Harrison Civils.

- Harrison Civils are a company experienced in installation of modern septic tank systems.
- Approved by BDC
- Nutrient Neutrality - i.e ensuring pollution of water courses is minimised by new development has given existing septic tank owners an opportunity to upgrade their tanks for free.
- Scheme is an offset arrangement giving developers who pay for this work credits against new development.
- Modern plant (such as the 'Graf' system is installed at suitable sites free to homeowner.
- Water out of these plants into land drains/soakaways is much cleaner.
- Scheme seeks to find groups of homeowners in same area so that installation costs are minimised.
- No current timescale, - need to match with developers but interested homeowners are encouraged to register their interest and for an initial survey.
- Running costs of a Graf system (estimated) - electricity £56pa, Annual inspection £150+VAT pa plus periodic emptying cost.
- Normal installation costs around £13,000
- Survey should identify suitable properties - may include soil test for land drains etc

A parishioner commented that he was unhappy that offsetting new developers pollution in this way and was mortally dubious.

Another parishioner felt that developers should be more responsible for the waste coming from their developments but Mr Wood countered that the infrastructure these developments connect to is not owned by them but the large water companies.

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5. Offshore Wind Developments around Oulton.

The Chair gave an update on the progress and various issues relating to the Orstead, Vattenfall (now PWE) and Equinor wind farm projects that are/will affect the Parish.

The main impact on the village over the last 12 months was the start of the pre-construction works for **Orsted and Vattenfall**.

The southern end of the street from the junction with B1149 and **Orsted's** Main Construction compound had mitigation works carried out. However this turned out to be slightly protracted as there were issues with installation works.

Early this year saw the arrival of the first cable drums to the compound which OPC observed. There were a few teething problems, the journey took two days rather than one as the escort vehicles had to make sure there were no obstacles they had not planned for! As well as in the final stretch finding out that the height of the low loaders going over the newly smoother old railway hump needed a bit more pre thought to get all vehicles to the compound.

Since that first delivery the convoys have been arriving at a rate of about two /three vehicles a day for approximately 12 days, a break of about two weeks then the deliveries will start again, this will be repeated until the end of December this year. The cable drums will then go out of the compound to the respective areas along the cable route. We have been told the total number of cable drums required for the project is 212

Lighting has been an issue on the main Compound with residents reporting the loss of dark skies at night and intrusion of light into properties. Orsted have attended two meetings to try and address these issues along with abnormal loads and other concerns related to the project.

The lighting although reduced to start with by Orsted agreeing to reduce the car park lighting by 75%. This was short lived as just before the first cable drum deliveries the lighting was again back up to the same levels and intrusive. To date this is still an ongoing issue with BDC and Orsted as well as OPC.

Community funding for Hornsea Three opened with £700,000 being made available each year however £100,000 is earmarked for the Skills Fund (education and engineering scholarships etc) and £100,000 for the legacy fund (community buildings, sports facilities etc)

This leaves £500,000 for local communities to bid for, the first deadline closed on the 8th May with the second bid closing on the 27th November, with a decision date at the end of February 2025.

The other main news was that **Vattenfall Norfolk Vanguard (also known as Norfolk Offshore Wind Zone)** would be built, however the sister project, **Boreas** would be paused for the moment due to rising costs.

Towards the end of the year we found out that Vattenfall had not applied for the Contract for Difference, for Vanguard, this is the funding mechanism for generating the electricity, This was due to the bid price from earlier auctions having fallen in price and offshore wind developers opted to not bid in 2023, only bidding again when a fairer price could be obtained.

In *December 2023* we heard that Vattenfall had sold the **Norfolk Offshore Wind Zone projects to RWE** a German company. However Vattenfall would continue as planned with pre construction works and the same work contacts until such time the take over was finalised. RWE have now taken over the project, with the workforce still in place we are told,

J Murphy and Sons will still be the contractors for the project.

The parish Council attended a meeting with Cawston PC to discuss the project and RWE.

It is expected that work in this area will start at the end of 2024 with the access to the mobilisation areas, this will be followed with the installation of the ducting in 2025.

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Vanguard will enter this years bid for the Contract for difference.

RWE informed the parish Council that they intend to construct Boreas but that it will towards the end of the vanguard construction, importantly they will be installing the ducts for Boreas at the same time as Vanguard. There will be no digging up twice.

RWE intend to minimise the amount of aggregate used on the haul roads, restricting it to when the cables are installed at the jointing pit locations only.

Equinor Sheringham and Dudgeon Extension Project finished their Examination process in the summer of 2023, OPC having again attended hearings and responses to the ExA questions. The final decision had been due on 17th October however the Secretary of State had highlighted some issues, which OPC along with other Stakeholders were asked to give further information on.

OPC replied by the closing date of 20th December 2023.

The final decision by the Secretary of State was made on the 17th April and granted Equinor their DCO. This went against the ExA recommendation to refuse permission.

6. National Trust Report - Adam Curtis

- Silvergate stream/reservoir improvements meant that the main house was not flooded last winter for the first time in many years!
- Outdoor events in 2024 similar to previous years - no more than usual
- Park Runs remain very popular.
- A number of significant textile restorations have been carried out in the NT Studio.
- TV filming of cookery program with Ainsley Harriot at the Hall - out soon.
- Bus service from Aylsham to Hall now introduced for Mondays and Fridays.
- All estate buildings continue to be surveyed.
- Pay and Display car park machines may be upgraded. Car Park maintenance improved.
- Accessibility around the estate is being improved where possible.
- NT firewood sales stopped due to regulations. Now via trusted partners.
- Craft spaces improved.
- Significant forestry management ongoing. Specifically Tree Safety Management
- Blickling providing much of the timber for the Sutton Hoo longboat project.
- Significant hedge planting being carried out.
- Grants obtained for stocks of (expensive) new disease resistant elm tree saplings to be planted in the woods.

A parishioner raised the issue of traffic management on Park Run days with the roads around the Hall being congested.

7. Church - Rev Andrew Whitehead.

- The team has changed and Andrew is now in charge of 9 parishes. Oulton still maintains 4 services a month with Vanessas Coffee morning on the first Wednesday of the month continuing to go from strength to strength, and is very well attended.
- The plans for the toilet and server had a set back as the Architect retired, however a new one has been appointed and plans are being drawn up. This means there will be a push to fund raise along with applying for grants.
- Sue Hall gave information on remaining Events Planned for 2024 as follows:-

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Oulton Hall National Garden Scheme 2nd June (Church providing Teas)

Oulton Open Gardens 24th June 11-5pm (cakes, helpers, ticket sellers required)

NT have provided their car park at the conservation Studio, residents will provide refreshments and toilets.

August Art Exhibitions in the Church

September Harvest Supper

October Oulton Entertains

- After the successful RAF 100 Group reunion at the weekend to which Andrew thanked Chris Lambert for organising along with the other helpers.

Andrew is keen for younger people to get involved. He is to be installed as the Chaplain to the RAF 100 group.

Residents Questions

- **Potholes** - Concerns over a number of potholes were raised. It seems that although potholes were reported and filled, it was often short lived as large agricultural vehicles soon open up the potholes again. It was noted that the quality of the repairs were not good. The Chair requested that residents continue to report potholes direct to BDC, provide photos and measurements in addition letting the Parish Council know.
- Concerns about traffic accidents on the Blickling Road along a narrow section as well as at the Bend by The Old Forge (Pitmans Arms). The Chair requested that a record is kept of any incidents as not all accidents are recorded. The Chair asked to be kept informed and would seek further advice from NCC highways once evidence is provided.

The meeting closed at 9.34pm.