

OULTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – 16th April 2024

MINUTES

At the meeting of the Oulton Parish Council held at the Old Congregational Chapel Oulton on Tuesday 16th April 2024 the following members were present:

Mrs S Mather (chair)

Mr P Killigback Mr Greg Peck, Mr A Windross. Ms A Shaw, Mr A Nash

In Attendance

Mrs W Murphy (Clerk of the Council)

Adam Curtis – National Trust

Angela Brook National Trust

Lilly Dowe - Orsted Community Liaison Officer

William Coxon - Orsted Community Relations Officer

Mick Creagh -VolkerFitzpatrick: responsible for cable deliveries

Claire Smith - Orsted Consents Manager

Rob Dowe – VolkerFitzPatrick

Julie Rankin - Bluefield Solar (JR)

Marlies Koutstaal - Y-Factory (MK)

6 Members of the public

1. To receive apologies for absence.

Cllr Sue Catchpole

2. To receive members' declarations of interest in agenda items and requests for dispensation

None

3. To confirm minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council

The minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 5th March 2024 having previously been circulated to all members, were APPROVED as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. To receive information on matters arising not listed elsewhere on the agenda

The chair has sent an email to NCC regarding speeding on Blickling Road and is awaiting a response

5. To adjourn the meeting to receive

a. reports from police, district and county councillors

No reports received

b. questions from the public

No reports received

c. to welcome and receive reports from:-

Bluefield Solar Oulton Airfield Solar Farm

Julie Rankin - Bluefield Solar (JR)

Marlies Koutstaal - Y-Factory (MK)

Oulton Parish Council (OPC)

JR reported that Phase 2 of the Airfield Solar Farm is about to be constructed. It is hoped that construction could begin sometime in the summer 2024, start date still to be confirmed. The construction should be completed in a 6-month period. There is an intention to have a further meeting in which fuller details will be given, and today they are here to introduce themselves.

Bluefield are talking with Orsted Hornsea Three, as their compound is currently restricting access to the Phase 2 site.

MK will deal with the community engagement and liaise with the Parish Council and residents.

OPC asked about the current application BDC 2024/0825 which is for an access track for 40 years. Why 40 years? The original application BDC 20150952 was granted permission for 25 years, and this was part of the approval conditions.

JR: The 40 years is in order to potentially extend the Solar Farm lease, and access will be required.

OPC asked whether Bluefield have been allocated an electricity grid connection, as other projects have stalled due to queues in the system to connect.

JR replied that the original application included grid connections for both phases 1 and 2, and as phase 1 is operational, connection to the grid for phase 2 is not an issue.

OPC asked whether there were plans to install battery storage, as the other solar farm, recently granted approval in Oulton to the south of Bluefield's site, had originally applied for battery storage but had withdrawn that element from the final application, in recognition of local concerns about the risk of fire.

JR As far as she is aware Bluefield do not intend to add battery storage.

OPC agreed to further meetings as and when final details are available, there is concern from residents about yet more construction traffic cumulatively with other projects in the area. Apart from Hornsea Three, Bluefield were not aware of any of the other projects currently consented in the immediate vicinity.

OPC suggested they contact forth with Vattenfall, Equinor and the developer of the other solar farm to the south.

JR and MK will contact OPC to meet and also review issues highlighted.

Orsted Hornsea Three Q A and Updates

Lighting

Following the implementation of the lighting on Compound C, Orsted still requires that lighting be on at night for security purposes. Orsted confirmed that there were security personnel onsite at night.

Orsted is stating that there is no requirement as part of their DCO to have the lighting plan for the Compound be signed off by the Local Planning Authority and OPC asked whether Broadland DC agree with them on this. Orsted stated that they have consulted their legal team about this and that is their final position. Orsted confirms however that there are still ongoing discussions with Broadland District Council over this matter. They also confirmed that they have no plans to submit a new application for the discharge of requirements. Residents nonetheless highlighted that although the carpark end of the compound (A & B) have been reduced to some extent, the cable drum storage area (Compound C) is still causing excessive light to be seen from some distance away and is causing light pollution. The Chair showed Orsted a recent photo, taken by the PC, of the light at night time from the compound. Orsted will look into this matter further and consider whether downlit, directional and movement-sensitive lighting can be implemented.

Abnormal Loads

OPC repeated their request that they need to be informed of the dates of the cable drum deliveries as far ahead of the dates as possible, since currently The Chair is having to look on the Norfolk Police Abnormal Loads website for information and this is a waste of her (unpaid) time. Orsted confirmed that they will now try to do this.

Despite a councillor describing an incident with one of the convoys when there was apparently only one police outrider at the front, Orsted stated that there are always two police bike outriders with each delivery, along with escort vehicles.

It is expected that each batch will be delivered in 2 - 3 week slots until December 2024. Orsted confirmed that there are currently 34 cable drums on site, with a total of 212 to be delivered in all. OPC then pointed out that these cable drums would subsequently have to leave the site to go out to the various locations along the cable corridor.

OPC noted that there is considerable damage to the road surface outside of the entrance to the compound, which is being gradually eroded by the abnormal loads, along with over-run of the vehicles on the verge. OPC asked who is responsible for maintaining the road after damage by project vehicles? Councillors referred to a meeting with the Project Manager last year, who had stated that the upkeep of the access road (compound entrance to the Holt Road) was the responsibility of Orsted to maintain for the duration of the project.

Residents voiced concerns over the speed of vehicles exiting the compound along what is now a 30mph stretch of road. It was also noted that the 30mph signs have only just been installed in the last few weeks.

OPC also queried the speed limit along the section of the Holt Rd (B1149) from Cawston roundabout to the junction with The Street. According to Norfolk County Council Highways map there is still in place a 40mph speed limit, yet no signs to say this. OPC asked whether Orsted could explain this - Orsted thought it was probably only in place for the duration of the bridge survey. OPC pointed out that according to the NCC highways map the speed limit was in force until July 2025. There needs to be clarification on this issue - Orsted to find out and communicate to OPC.

River Glaven and River Bure updates

In answer to the Parish Council's questions, Orsted stated that they were "learning the lessons" from their catastrophic silting of the River Glaven and were "taking measures to ensure that it didn't happen again". OPC sought further reassurance about what these 'measures' might mean, to which Orsted replied that, after the accidental silting of the Glaven, they are now working with the Norfolk Rivers Trust, in an attempt to prevent another silting episode. Measures taken would consist of the use of straw bales and silt nets, where possible, across the entrance to watercourses draining into the rivers. They are also intending now to re-instate the topsoil earlier than they had originally intended. This would presumably allow landowners to consider drilling new crops again more quickly, which would help to retain topsoil's and therefore protect rivers, given the likelihood of continuing heavy rains. Orsted have recently drilled under the River Bure and are currently working on the River Wensum, both of which are globally rare chalk streams.

Residents pointed out that although Orsted see this as their jobs, it is residents' lives that are impacted, on a daily basis.

The Old Railway Gatehouse still has outstanding highways issues which relate to their ability to exit from, and return safely to, their property. Orsted needs to come back to them on this, as a matter of urgency.

Orsted summarized by saying that, though they had attended a PC meeting 6 months earlier, not very much had changed and "this is not good enough". They then offered to return for another meeting at any time, to resolve outstanding issues.

OPC thanked them for their attendance.

6. Finance

a. To agree NALC Membership

It was proposed and seconded and all in favour to renew the membership

b. To agree the Insurance renewal

It was proposed and seconded and all in favour to renew with Zurich

c. To approve payments

Cheque Number 100683 NALC Membership £113.77

Cheque Number 100684 Zurich Insurance £349.82
Cheque Number 100685 Countryside Recycling £42.00

7. To consider planning matters

a. Planning applications received before 16th April 2024 & updates

Planning Application 20240657 Whitefoot Lodge – New garage and workshop with studio accommodation – It was proposed and seconded and all in favour to record a No Objection to this application

8. To review the following policies and documents

- a. Data Protection Privacy Notice
- b. GDPR Policy
- c. Co – Option Policy
- d. Members Code of Conduct
- e. Complaints Procedure
- f. Financial Regs
- g. OPC Standing Orders
- h. Civility & Respect

It was proposed by A Windross and seconded by S Mather and all in favour to accept the renewal of the above policies with no changes made

9. To consider adopting a Biodiversity Policy

This will be considered at the meeting held after the Annual Parish Council Meeting

10. Playground swing and Allotment gate update -

The swing has been ordered and A Nash will go and source quotes for a gate

11. To consider an Emergency Plan for Oulton Parish Council

This item will be deferred until July

12. To note items of information / future agenda

Blickling Bus

Pedestrian gate at the playground

13. To confirm the date of the Annual Parish Meeting and Annual meeting of the Parish Council

14th May 2024 7pm Annual Meeting of the Parish Council

8pm Annual Parish Meeting

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIR THANKED EVERYONE FOR ATTENDING AND DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 21.13