

FARNHAM WITH STRATFORD ST ANDREW PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 11 December 2023 at the Riverside Centre

Councillors present: Ian Norman (Chair), Rosemary Conibeer (Vice Chair), Richard Ayres, Jill Pass, Richard Sayer, Annabel Warne and Jeremy Williams

In attendance: Katherine Abbott (Parish Clerk)

On behalf of the Parish Council, the Chairman welcomed the members of the public present and the four representatives from EDF Energy present for item 3.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and approved from Councillor Tim Plant.

2 Declarations of Interest for items on the agenda

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Presentation on the detailed development process of the two-villages by-pass and timescales for implementation

Representatives of EDF Energy provided a presentation to the meeting.

It was proposed to trigger the Development Consent Order (DCO) in 2024 and so enable the next stage of the project. The decision on the final investment was also anticipated in 2024 and this would see the project proceed in earnest, including the associated development to support local infrastructure.

Details of the Site's overview included two kilometres of new highway; two new roundabouts on the A12; two twin culverts; one bridge over the River Alde; one footbridge; one main compound on the A12 (west) and one satellite compound at Friday Street. The meeting was shown the proposed design of the bridge over the River Alde. This would include ground improvement work and underground engineering to provide stable foundations. The work at Friday Street would commence with archaeological conservation works as a key early part of the project. The meeting was advised that most of the structure would be built off-site to minimise periods of traffic management, The main construction works were scheduled for quarter one of 2025 and the opening of the by-pass was scheduled for quarter one/two of 2027.

There were several members of the public as well as Councillors who expressed disappointment with the timeframe for the opening of the by-pass. EDF Energy's representatives said this would be noted and fed back.

Signed(Chair)

Date.....

EDF Energy stated that it was looking to coordinate with other power projects working in the area to minimise disruption.

The Chairman invited questions from the public and Councillors.

Q: Will EDF Energy be monitoring its traffic? Previously, we have been promised that you would avoid 'rat runs' – how will you do this?

A: There are prescribed routes within the transport plan, and these will have extensive signage from the commencement of the construction phase. EDF Energy's official site vehicles would be required to follow specific routes via GPS.

Q: With reference to the site clearance and archaeological works, what will happen to the spoils?

A: There will be extensive landscaping, including sound proofing with a bund of approximately 2 metres initially during the excavation, and hydroseeding to help protect the area from erosion.

Q: Will the relief road and roundabout proposed for Yoxford happen consecutively?

A: Works at Friday Street and the by-pass will be undertaken early. The work at Yoxford will start at around the same time but this will be offline to minimise disruption and is coordinated with Suffolk County Council.

Q: Are the speed cameras on the A12 as you leave Farnham (northbound) operating?

A: Yes. They are in position as part of the work on the habitat in Benhall. This had been delayed due to the recent adverse weather. The meeting was promised an update if the lights were to be taken down while work on the site was suspended.

Q: Are you going to do anything to stop traffic coming through the village while the by-pass is being built?

A: A detailed answer was promised outside of the meeting. This was subsequently provided as "Sizewell C is committed to a series of road improvement measures under the Development Consent Order and respective Deed of Obligation. Additionally, where temporary road measures are required including diversion routes, these are being developed with, and permitted by, Suffolk County Council as the Highways Authority. Details of these measures will be advised prior to the works being undertaken. Wherever possible feedback will be considered with a view to minimising impact.".

Q: If there is a change of Government and policy, is there the potential for a change similar to the cessation of HighSpeed2?

A: The DCO is now legislation, so delivery of the infrastructure is legally binding. The future political picture cannot be predicted but assets are being constructed at the front end of the project before the budget is changed, if it is.

Q: When is the final investment decision expected?

A: There is no deadline, but the Government seeks this by the end of this Parliament.

Signed

(Chair)

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Q: The public would like the by-pass implemented as soon as possible and it is disappointing to see it will not start until mid-2027.

A: The by-pass is an important part of traffic mitigation and to minimise the impact of HGVs and workers' vehicles (approximately 40% of traffic to the site is by road).

Q: Which elements of the project are dependent on the financial investment decision?

A: The project is fully funded. The final investment decision provides security and capability.

Q: If there is a delay, then could the project be pushed back further?

A: It is a fair question, but speculative. We continue to work to the current timeline.

Q: It is already very difficult to turn right on to the A12 from Stratford St Andrew, how will this be impacted when the work starts?

A: We are currently in the pre-commencement stage working on ecological, archaeological aspects and clearance to get ready for the next stage when the DCO is triggered. We will work to minimise disruption.

Q: Will Scottish Power be constructing before EDF Energy?

A: It is more than likely that our scheme will go ahead first but we will coordinate and build in synergy.

Q: Will you provide alternative footpaths to replace those lost during the work?

A: There is a management plan to provide temporary alternate footpath routes during the construction and these will be advertised.

Q: Great Glemham Road is currently used as a diversion route if there is an incident on the A12. This is a single lane rural road which does not work for a two-way diversion. What will you do about diversion routes?

A: For our planned and managed works, we will put signs up to say that this is not a suitable diversion route, suitable for HGVs etc. It isn't possible to fully control where people drive.

Q: Can a diversion route be enforced?

A: It is not legally enforceable. We will use signage to state it is not a suitable diversion route.

Q: The bridge over the River Alde is quite urban in design for a rural location – can its appearance be softened?

A: We will landscape the bridge.

There being no further questions, the Chairman thanked the representatives from EDF Energy and the residents who had attended the meeting for their contribution.

4 Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2023

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2023 were unanimously approved and signed as a correct record.

Signed(Chair)

Date.....

5 Matters arising from the last meeting.

The main items of business raised at the last meeting were reviewed and updated, where appropriate.

An advert for an ecology volunteer had received one response but the person had subsequently withdrawn their interest. The advert would be more widely circulated.

A letter had been sent to a local landowner regarding a large branch which had fallen on to their land close to a footpath, though not actually blocking it. They had been asked to remove it when convenient.

Suffolk Highways had responded to the report of a misspelt sign for Great Glemham in Farnham which also had very sharp edges to its supporting poles; a new sign and replacement post had been ordered but no indication of timescales had been given.

6 Reports from County and District Councillors

Written reports had been received from Councillor Andrew Reid, County Councillor and from Sally Noble, East Suffolk District Council, and both had been circulated.

The main points of Councillor Reid's report were, in summary:

- £10m new funding approved to resurface residential roads.
- Government backs A12 road improvements with funding commitment.
- SCC concerns for Lionlink's impact on Suffolk coastline.
- £1m committed to investigate significant flooding.
- 4.7 litres/8412 drains cleared since Storm Babet
- Adult Social Care Services rated Good by CQC

The main points of Councillor Noble's report were, in summary:

- Visit to Adastral Park to view innovative work and related opportunities for local business.
- Visit to The George Pub in Wickham Market which is being rebuilt. To include a health and well-being hub.
- Wild about Wickham event on 6 February 2024.

The two reports were received, with thanks, and noted.

7 Questions from members of the public

There were no questions on matters on the agenda from the members of the public present, nor by email before the meeting.

Signed(Chair)

Date.....

Councillor Williams asked why the results of the water sampling and analysis were not in the public domain and if the readings could be explained to the Council in simple terms. The Clerk undertook to write to the Alde and Ore Association.

8 To receive the Clerk's verbal report and the correspondence log.

The Council noted the circulated correspondence log. The Clerk had nothing further to report.

9 To receive the Responsible Finance Officer's verbal report, including balances and invoices for approval.

The Council noted that the Responsible Finance Officer had attended SALCs training for new Officer at the end of November.

The Responsible Financial Officer updated the Council on the latest position regarding the change of mandate.

The balance, before payment of the five invoices submitted for approval, was £7081.91.

Item	Payee	Amount	Legal power
Clerk's salary	K Abbott	£630.84	Local Government Act (LGA) 1972 s.112
PAYE	HMRC	£157.60	LGA 1972 s.112
Gov.uk email/domain	One Suffolk	£168.00	LGA 1972 s.111
Device security	McAfee	£60.99	LGA 1972 s.111
Water sampling and analysis	Alde & Ore Association	£30.00	LGA 1972 s.111

The four invoices were approved for payment. The balance after the invoices were paid would be £6034.48.

10 Representation at the Sizewell C Southern Transport Forum, the Sizewell C Forum and the Air Quality Monitoring. Steering Group

Invitations had been received for a representative of the Council to attend external meetings, as listed, in the new year.

Following discussion, it was agreed that Councillor Norman would attend the Sizewell C Southern Transport Forum in February, Councillor Ayres would provisionally attend the Sizewell C Forum in April, and the Clerk would attend the Air Quality Monitoring Steering Group on a date yet to be advised.

Signed(Chair)

Date.....

11 Urgent business for discussion

Councillor Sayer raised a query about how best to communicate with residents. It was agreed that the Clerk would speak with the editor of *Ebb and Flow* to see if a regular spot was possible and, if so, to negotiate a contribution to printing costs.

12 Items for future meetings

January 2024: To set the budget. To set the precept. To review the Community Emergency Plan.

The Chairman advised members of the public present that the following item was exempt under the Local Government Act 1972 and, therefore, would be discussed in private.

13 Subject to the satisfactory completion of the probation period, to resolve to formally appoint the Clerk/RFO and to propose the related terms of employment for consideration.

The Council agreed to formally appoint Katherine Abbott as Clerk and as Responsible Finance Officer for the Parish.

The Council offered Mrs Abbott point SCP 26 on the 2023/24 pay scale, as received in November following the acceptance of the national pay award. Mrs Abbott accepted the Council's offer and thanked it for appointing her.

The meeting concluded at 21.25hrs.

Signed(Chair)

Date.....