
Grange Community Liaison Group (CLG) Meeting note, 19th October 2011

In attendance: Bobbie Ashton (BA) – Long Sutton Parish Council
Adrian Back (AB) – Tydd St Mary Parish Council
Cllr Simon Booth (SB) – South Holland District Council
Nicolette Evans (NE) – Tydd St Mary Parish Council
John Grimwood (JG) – Sutton Bridge Parish Council
Mary Preston (MP) – Sutton Bridge Parish Council
Karen Treacher (KT) – Long Sutton and Tydd St Mary Parish Councils
Jack Tyrell (JT) – Long Sutton Parish Council
Helen Hall (HH) – RES
Sue Fortune (SF) – Lincolnshire Community Foundation
Phil Briscoe (PB) - Bellenden
Rosemary Day (RD) – Bellenden

Venue: Tydd St Mary village hall

Date: 19th October 2011, 19.00 – 20.15

Apologies:

Apologies were received from Cllrs D. Tennant and D. Wilkinson who were attending another meeting.

1. Welcome and introduction

PB welcomed the Grange Community Liaison Group (CLG) to its first formal meeting to discuss the construction of Grange Wind Farm and its associated community benefit fund. He asked the members to introduce themselves for the benefit of the meeting and explained that the principle purpose of the Group was as an information sharing forum.

Notes from the previous (informal) meeting of the CLG were circulated. PB explained that any suggested amendments to the text should be raised with Bellenden – otherwise they would be published on RES' Grange website by the time of the next meeting.

He explained that the Group will discuss a number of issues in this evening's meeting, including the community benefit fund.

2. Election of Chairman

PB asked if any member of the Group would like to put themselves forward for the position of Chairman. No member offered to take the role so PB agreed to act as an independent Chairman of the CLG. He explained that the Chairman could be changed at any point if decided by the Group.

PB will be referred to as Chairman for the remainder of the Minutes.

3. Role of Liaison Group & Terms of Reference

The draft Terms of Reference (ToR) were circulated to the Group and PB ran through its contents. He explained that the ToR had been drafted to be as straightforward and flexible as possible.

JG queried how regularly the CLG meetings would take place. The Chairman outlined that the group could meet on an ad hoc basis as the project progresses. The next meeting date would be scheduled at the end of every meeting for a time convenient for sitting members – and would go ahead as long as there was enough new information from RES or the community fund panel to sanction a full meeting. He said that RES was not interested in having regular meetings which wasted the councillors time, but instead would be scheduled for when there would be real topics to discuss.

The ToR were agreed by the members of the CLG.

4. Membership of Liaison Group

NE asked why members of Little Sutton and Tydd St Giles parish councils were not in attendance tonight. PB explained that they had been invited and would continue to be invited to every CLG meeting which was scheduled.

The Chairman outlined that the membership of the Group had been based on the elected representatives in the vicinity of the Grange site. However, he explained that current members would be very welcome to nominate other, unelected members of the local community for membership of the CLG.

5. Grange Site Update

HH gave a presentation to the group about the various stages of construction work on the Grange Wind Farm project.

The first stage would be improving the access routes to the wind farm site. HH confirmed that road closure would be taking place from mid-November or December for an 18 month period on North Road, Long Road and leading up to the site entrance.. Although North Road and Long Road are officially public roads, they are both in a very poor condition. The A1101 would see the installation of temporary traffic lights which may cause slight delays to traffic flows solely during the access works to that junction.

As soon as RES has further information on the exact dates and details regarding road closures and traffic lights, they will use the CLG, as well as local mail shots and posters on parish notice boards to update the community.

The second stage of construction will be site enabling works with security presence at night. This will be followed by the laying of tracks for the turbines. Foundation work for the turbines will take place in spring 2012. This will be followed by turbine erection.

For each stage of the wind farm construction process, RES will give updates on the timings and other details of the work, as well as answering queries and addressing concerns through the CLG forum.

HH confirmed the working hours on the site will be restricted from 06.00 to 20.00 on Monday to Saturday with no civil works taking place on Sundays. Turbine erection may occur on Sundays, but this is very quiet work.

At the request of attending parish councillors, HH will provide copies of her Powerpoint presentation to the five parish councils invited to the CLG (Tydd St Mary, Sutton Bridge, Long Sutton, Little Sutton and Tydd St Giles) as well as information packs on the for reference at parish council meetings

6. Community Benefit Fund discussion (Sue Fortune – Lincolnshire Community Foundation)

SF began her presentation by giving a background to the Lincolnshire Community Foundation, which was set up as a registered charity in 2002 and is now the premier grant making trust in the local area.

She gave examples of current and previous projects, including the management of a community fund associated with the Bicker Wind Farm in the Fenlands. More information on the Foundation can be found at their website www.lincolnshirecf.co.uk

SF explained that the Grange community benefit fund would be offered to community projects within a 10 mile radius of the site but priority would be given to projects closest to Grange. RES has offered an initial, pre-construction community pot of £5,000 which would be match funded to make £10,000 available for local projects from early next year.

Once the wind farm was generating electricity, £28,000 would be put into the community benefit fund every year.

With an initial £10,000 being available so soon, SF was keen to set up a community benefit panel to manage the fund as soon as possible.

She has already set up events and consulted with local people to promote membership of the panel. SF said she would also send invitations the parish councils attending this evening – to encourage elected members to sit, as well as recommending residents to the panel. Ideally, the panel would be made up of a mix of local residents, community activists and parish councillors from a broad area around the wind farm.

SF took questions from the CLG about how the panel system would work. She explained that as soon as the panel is set up, they will collectively agree the criteria for judging community funding bids. Although candidates will not necessarily be expected to carry out professional business plans for their bids, a 'sound management structure' could be set as a criterion. Unless the panel members stipulate otherwise, the money can be used for revenue costs e.g. maintenance of a village hall roof.

She went on to explain that a limit on funding for an individual project is usually £5,000 per group, per year - however, this limit could be changed by agreement of the fund panel. There would be numerous 'rounds' of distributing annual funding pot throughout the year. Parish councils will not usually be the recipient of community fund money, but again, this may be changed by the Grange fund panel.

HH confirmed that money which had not been spent in one year would be rolled on to the next.

KT asked HH whether any funding, over and above the community fund pot, could be made available for a specific local project for which it would not be convenient to regularly bid for funding. HH said she would be happy to meet separately to discuss the project in question.

7. Future meeting dates

The next CLG meeting date was set for 19.00 on Thursday 1st December 2011.

KT requested that the meeting would take place at Tydd St Mary parish hall if the venue is available on that night – as this location would be more convenient for residents who live closest to the wind farm site to attend and is easily accessible from neighbouring villages.

HH said that as SF could not confirm her availability for the 1st December, this CLG meeting would focus on construction process for the wind farm project. By this date RES should have more information about the construction road works and closures. The following CLG (in January or February 2012) would re-focus on progress with the community benefit fund.