

Saxmundham Town Council

Committee Meeting	Town Council
Meeting Date	11 September 2023
Item Number	6c
Report Title	Energy Projects
Report Author	Sharon Smith, Acting Town Clerk

National Grid Electricity Transmission – Sea Link

In August, an update leaflet was distributed to all addresses who are in Sea Link's non-statutory primary consultation zone. The leaflet detailed NGET's ongoing surveys and engagement with statutory stakeholders.

They are due to hold a statutory consultation where they will present their refined proposals as well as feedback received during their non-statutory consultation. The consultation will be open for eight weeks from 24 October to 18 December 2023.

The NGET project team have invited the Town Council to attend one of the following briefings to outline how they plan to consult, to ensure that members of the community are clear on how to engage with their proposals and give their feedback:

- Briefing 1 – Tuesday 26 September 2023, 4pm-5pm
- Briefing 2 – Thursday 28 September 2023, 4pm-5pm

The Acting Town Clerk has registered to attend the second briefing. If you would also like to attend, please inform her by 8th September 2023.

The Market Hall has been booked for a consultation exhibition on 24th and 25th November 2023.

In the last few months, NGET have conducted surveys in Saxmundham and Sternfield. Two noise monitoring surveys were conducted over seven days, a common bird survey was undertaken to map vegetation and species, and a landscape viewpoint survey was conducted to support the landscape mitigation design and the layout of the proposed convertor station and substation infrastructure.

As a reminder, the proposed site for the convertor station in Saxmundham is on agricultural land between the B1121 and the B1119 near Wood Farm.

National Grid Ventures – Lion Link

NGV are holding a supplementary non-statutory public consultation from 6th September to 3 November 2023. They have carried out additional environmental and technical assessments as part of the options refinement process which have identified an alternative corridor for the underground cables to the north of Southwold which may reduce impacts on designated sites of ecological importance. They have also identified an alternative landfall site at Walberswick which could reduce access constraints and traffic impacts.

NGV are holding the following in-person exhibition events to receive feedback to help identify preferred locations for cable corridors, landfall sites and convertor stations.

- Exhibition 1 – Friday 22 September 2023, 2pm-8pm, Raydon Village Hall
- Exhibition 2 – Saturday 23 September 2023, 10am-4pm, Walberswick Village Hall
- Exhibition 3 – Friday 6 October 2023, 2pm-8pm, Leiston Community Centre

They are also holding two webinars where the project team will provide an overview of the proposals. The Acting Town Clerk will attend the first webinar.

- Webinar 1 – Tuesday 7 October 2023, 7pm-8pm
- Webinar 2 – Wednesday 18 October 2023, 7pm-8pm

National Grid Ventures – Nautilus

NGV are now expecting Nautilus to landfall at the Isle of Grain in Essex and no further work or consideration is underway for the previously mooted Suffolk landfall sites. They expect that by the end of 2023, once seabed surveys are conducted, that Suffolk landfall will be permanently off the table.

EDF – Sizewell C

Richard Knight, Senior Community Relations Manager and Zoe Botton, Community Relations Manager, will attend the Town Council meeting on 9th October 2023 to provide updates regarding the schedule of works and to answer any questions.

EDF provided the following update about activity near Goose Hill: Earlier this year the site team commenced vegetation clearance to the north of the Kenton Hills car park to create a temporary access road to the Sizewell C site. The creation of this temporary access road has enabled the project to remove traffic from Bridleway 19 and improve conditions for visitors. To continue the work on the temporary access route, vegetation clearance will recommence in September and, from 14th August 2023, part of the permissive walk through Sandlings Walk will be closed, temporarily restricting access to and from the beach along this route. Weather permitting, it is anticipated this area will be reopened in early November. We appreciate that Sandlings is a popular walk and the decision to close this area is considered essential to ensure the safety of the public and site teams, while enabling Sizewell C to focus on improvements to the condition of the path ahead of the winter. All necessary work will be conducted under the supervision of an Ecological Clerk of Works, including surveys for nesting birds, bats and badgers, which will be carried out in accordance with protected species licence conditions where they apply.

A judicial review appeal of the DCO has been submitted by Together Against Sizewell C, supported by Stop Sizewell C and Suffolk Coastal Friends of the Earth.

Anglian Energy Planning Alliance

AEPA has invited the Town Council to join local Town and Parish Councils to discuss the cumulative impact of the proposed energy projects in East Suffolk. The meeting will be held at the Riverside Centre, Stratford St Andrew on Wednesday 4th October 2023 from 6:30pm to 7:45pm. The invitation is extended to two representatives from the Town Council from 6pm for a glass of wine before the meeting start time. The Acting Town Clerk will attend, please inform her if you would also like to attend.

Short presentations will be given by campaigners pressing for an offshore grid as an alternative to the proposed onshore infrastructure for windfarms and interconnectors, plus updates on the statutory consultations coming for Sealink this autumn and Lionlink next spring and the need for a single planning process for them. There will also be the latest information from those working on Sizewell C. After a Q&A session, AEPA will discuss next steps to bring councils together more closely on these issues.

AEPA are also requesting all East Suffolk Town and Parish Councils to sign a letter to Andrew Bowie MP, Energy Minister, requesting him to prioritise a revisit to Suffolk and make good on his commitment to engage more widely. Minister Bowie visited Suffolk in May, during which he met selected campaigners and a limited number of Town and Parish Council representatives. His promise to return before the parliamentary recess, for more inclusive engagement with council representatives, never materialised. AEPA have asked for a response by 21st September.

Meeting with Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

Earlier this month, the Acting Town Clerk attended a meeting with representatives from Suffolk County Council, SALC, NALC, Theberton and Eastbridge Parish Council and Aldeburgh Town Council with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to discuss Town and Parish Councils engagement and expertise with Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.