

## **ENERGY PROJECTS REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2025**

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects are not considerate of summer vacations. Recently Lion Link published their Summer *Community Newsletter* advising timings for the Statutory Consultation, East Suffolk Council (ESC) submitted their Sea Link *Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement* (PADSS), Suffolk County Council (SCC) advised the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) that a significant archaeological find will affect development in the parish of Friston. Friston Parish council continue their efforts to preserve hard won mitigations in the issue of two Development Consent Orders affecting the area and National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) apply for pre-Development Consent funding from OFGEM for the Sea Link Project. Meanwhile the consented Sizewell C continues to impact the area

### **SIZEWELL C:**

#### **Road works and road closures:**

Most parish representatives present at the Southern Area Transport Forum on 3 September voiced their concerns regarding roadworks. New schemes, the Two Village Bypass and associated roundabouts and the Sizewell Link Road, plus works on railway crossings and the new Green Rail Route are leading to road closures, diversions and miles of traffic management.

Single lane traffic from the start to the end of the Wickham Market bypass is due to the construction of a new layby for abnormal indivisible loads (AIL's). Whilst this prevented the need for installation of traffic lane merging, it was generally considered that the traffic management was excessive.

It was noted that in June there were an average of 388 daily and maximum of 494 HGV movements, with more travelling from the north than expected.

It was recorded that more communication regarding road works is required and it was acknowledged that the One Network whilst showing all works was not an easy platform to use.

#### **Rail:**

The meeting were warned of more crossing disruptions throughout the area.

Importantly for Saxmundham residents, the issue of stationery trains being held late at night in Saxmundham with the associated noise was raised. The response from Sizewell C was not satisfactory. Sizewell C informed the meeting that they had no say in where signallers hold the engine. Apparently Saxmundham is an ideal location as it has twin tracks. I said that this was not satisfactory and residents should not be subject to twelve years disturbed sleep. The Network Rail representative David Taylor agreed to look into the situation, but with a caveat, of no guarantees that he could remedy the issue. The problem was noted as a grievance that should be addressed, whether by ensuring trains do not stop in Saxmundham or by providing sound proofing mitigations.

## **LION LINK**

National Grid Ventures (NGV) *Community News, Summer 2025*, sets out the timetable for the Statutory Consultation. The Preliminary Environment Information Report will be published during winter 2025/2026 with the Statutory Consultation in January 2026. Saxmundham will need to be exceedingly pro-active as it is apparent from reading the *Community News* that NGV is concentrating much of their PR on Walberswick. Seemingly Lion Link commences when we have finished with the Sea Link examination.

## **SEA LINK:**

PINS requested named authorities including ESC to issue a PADSS – basically a statement of issues where there is disagreement with NGET. ESC's response is generally good and is worth reading. ESC highlights issues that Saxmundham Town Council have addressed in our Relevant Representation, including working hours, lack of access bridge and converter design, operational noise, tree planting and North Falls offshore wind farm, Option 3, connection. ESC have concerns that should the Norwich to Tilbury scheme be delayed or fail, 'addition onshore infrastructure.....resulting in the need for a second connection between Suffolk and Kent'. This is something we need to keep under review.

SCC has also issued their PADSS. It is another worthy document that covers the principal concerns that Saxmundham Town Council expressed; access route, Benhall Railway Bridge, River Fromus Crossing, lack of definitive design etc. Of interest is the discovery of a Neolithic hengiform monument in the Parish of Friston that has resulted in pressure for NGET to consider alternatives to the proposed cable corridor. Undoubtedly issues concerning Friston including this and maintaining the already consented mitigations for the Scottish Power Renewables (SPR) substation, should NGET instead of SPR undertake the development, will be discussed at length during the forthcoming planning examination. This could further delay any decision and jeopardise the already delayed Sea Link completion date of 31 December 2031. This is contrary to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero's (DESNEZ) deadline of 2030.

In line with endeavouring to meet the Government's 2030 Green Energy Target NGET applied to the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM) for Sea Link early funding of 48% a sum that substantially exceeds the usual default level of 20%. The application, amongst other costs, is for archaeological works, marine surveys for unexploded ordnance, purchase of land and purchase of cable and converter original equipment manufacturing. The consultation in relation to this ran in peak holiday period from 24 July to 22 August 2025. The timing could not be worse and by the time we were made aware of the consultation, there were only two days remaining to respond and gain full council agreement to the response. Due to very limited time, it was agreed not to respond as this consultation referred to funding solely.

GNB/4 September 2025