

# March 2018 - Agenda supporting information

## 4. Reports

Susan Falch-Lovesey, Local Liaison Officer, Norfolk Vanguard and Boreas: providing an update on project. Vattenfall have published an updated Project Design for Vattenfall Norfolk Vanguard and Boreas that takes into account the information and input that was received from stakeholders during the Vanguard Statutory Consultation and the continuing field work that has been undertaken. They have also published a new newsletter and the project website has been updated.

Mrs Falch-Lovesey will present a short report on these revised proposals and is willing to respond to questions from the floor.

## 6 Vattenfall Substation development

### 6.1 To report on outcome of meeting with Mr George Freeman and Vattenfall, held 23 February

This meeting, chaired by Mr George Freeman, MP for mid-Norfolk was attended by four representatives from Vattenfall, two representatives from Necton Substation Action Group, seven Necton Parish Councillors, Cllr Wilkin of Breckland Council, Cllr Kiddle-Morris of Norfolk County Council and the Clerk.

The key outcomes are summarised as follows:

3 significant items of uncommon ground between parties

- Extra height of DC version on high ground – requires significant mitigation / community benefit measures
- Flood risk associated with large scale development (attenuation ponds cited as mitigation measures)
- Technical restraints of alternative site options not clearly identified

Next steps

- Another meeting of same group to convene 5-6 weeks (arrangements in progress)
- Parish Council to produce a list of community benefits (wish-list) as identified by the community – to bring to the next meeting (if possible)
- Process should involve contributions from the wider community – especially representation from young people and families.

Vattenfall's revised proposals and how they address the Parish Council's concerns as identified in their consultation response:

- HVDC transmission confirmed – addressing point 2.23 on consultation response
- HVDC transmission will result in higher infrastructure; however, it will enable buildings to be used to contain most of the infrastructure, thereby providing opportunities for instant screening. This addresses in part, point 2.3 on consultation response.
- A commitment to enhanced substation screening – addressing points 2.2 and 2.3 in consultation response.
- Access to the new site will be at Spicer's corner, ensuring no construction traffic within Necton or Ivy Todd. This addresses in part, point 2.18 on consultation response.

- Other points of the Council's consultation response have yet to be addressed, probably through the forum (identified above) and within the DCO application.

## **6.2 To consider how to engage with residents to identify desired community benefits**

Members will be aware that work began on the Council 3-year Action Plan (April 2018 to March 2021) back in August 2017. It was agreed that a resident's survey would help inform this plan – this survey was undertaken and collated results were presented to Council in November 2017, the item was deferred and has yet to be re-scheduled. There was no guidance from Council at that time as to next action. The survey results are **circulated** again with this report.

Given the outcomes from the meeting on Friday, it would appear to be an opportune time for Council to now consider the resident survey results and identify if another engagement event would be useful to help define a community benefit list to bring into the Vattenfall communication forum. Such an event is ideally suited to being on the agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting.

### **Recommendations:**

1. That Council agree to undertake an engagement event at the Annual Parish Meeting
2. That Council establish a small work group to co-ordinate this event

An alternative recommendation to item 2 above – that Council commission the services of a Consultant to co-ordinate the event and produce findings

## **7 Planning Matters**

### **7.1 Results & updates of existing applications**

- 3PL/2017/1204/O, 63 Hale Road – this has gone to appeal against a non-determination of the planning application within a statutory period by Breckland council.
- 3PL/2018/0035/VAR, 23 Chantry Lane – the variation has been approved (reduction of footprint)
- 3PL/2017/1553/O, 45 Kett's Hill, revised drawing of site plan. Invitation to comment further was circulated to members on 14 Feb (deadline 28 Feb). Comments received from Cllr Bateman, supported by Cllr Bass. Comments fed back to Breckland Council on 26 February.

### **7.2 To receive new planning applications and make comment**

No new applications received at time of this report & production of agenda.

## **8 Finance**

### **8.1. To agree payments this month – see circulated listing.**

### **8.2 Current statement**

- Actual income yr. to date: £93,005.12. Actual outgoings yr. to 27 February: £64,561.56. Bank reconciliation to 27 February 2018 is **circulated** with this report.
- Insurance claim for (9116) damaged light column settled, with £2,138.53 net of the £250.00 policy excess received on 13 February 2018.
- This is the financial year-end and work will be progressing on closing the accounts.

### **8.3 To confirm the grant of £350 be awarded to Necton**

This item seeks to correct an error in the item presented in February, which stated the application request was for £300. It is actually for £350, which is the same amount as was requested and granted in previous years.

This application still complies with our small grant policy and the grant if awarded would be paid in April, from next year's budget. (Only one grant per organisation per year)

### **8.4 Internal audit for year ending 31 March 2018 – to confirm auditor & scope of audit**

In accordance with Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015, our Financial Regulations and Internal Control Policy, we commission an independent person to undertake an internal audit each year. For the past few years, we have commissioned the services of the Parish Clerk of Mattishall. Council reviewed this service last year and agreed to remain with Ms Cantera. There is no change to circumstances that would identify a review of service again this year.

**Recommendation:** that Ms Cantera be appointed as Internal Auditor for yr-end 2017/18 and that the scope of audit be as outlined in Ms Cantera's letter.

### **8.5 To consider & agree scope of audit for 2018/19**

As the new financial year will see a change in personnel and a new Responsible Financial Officer, who might be unfamiliar with the regulatory systems of local authorities, it would be prudent to seek an mid-year audit in addition to the year-end for 2018/19. Details of costings for this are outlined in Ms Cantera's letter.

**Recommendation:** that Ms Cantera be commissioned for 2018/19 and that a mid-year audit be included in the commission.

**Appendix to this report:** letter (content) from Ms Cantera confirming the service she offers in relation to internal audit.

## **9 Community Star Awards 2018 – to receive update & to agree to support this year's awards with funds from the Council's grant budget**

Advertising of these awards has been ongoing through the Parish Link and Facebook and it has resulted in nominations coming from residents. The deadline is advertised as 26 March – to ensure all nominations are guaranteed to be included. Last year, as it was the launch of this community initiative, the level of nominations was low and so required the assistance of an independent panel to select the 'Stars'. This year, the community nominations are proving to be self-sufficient with selection of 'Stars' as we have received more than one nomination for the same people. A complete report of nominations and numbers of community 'votes' will be produced.

We currently have a small remaining balance (£700) in our Grant budget which cannot be carried forward to next year. Members are invited to consider utilising £80 of this balance to support the costs of this year's awards.

## **10. Highway matters**

**10.1 Completed repairs:** North Pickenham Road pothole repairs undertaken on 21 February. The sunken trench has also been repaired, probably by the developer.

**10.2 Standard of highway maintenance evidenced in recent works.** The repairs to potholes in North Pickenham Road is poor and unlikely to survive the current extreme weather conditions. A resident contacted us about this. They also brought the matter to the attention of Cllr Kiddle-Morris, who responded as follows: *“...The temporary patching of potholes in the winter months is an operation that is necessary to prevent accidents and damage to vehicles. Proper repairs and sealing of the repair can only take place in relatively dry and warm weather. I appreciate that any patching applied now might seem a waste of time and money but to attempt a permanent repair at the moment would be more costly and probably not fix the problem. I will see when North Pickenham Road is due to be surface dressed. We do have an historical problem with the majority of our road’s in that they were originally gravel tracks which have been smoothed and a wearing course of tarmac applied and then tarred and chipped on an occasional basis. They lack the foundations of crushed limestone, hoggin, lean mix concrete and base course and wearing course layers of tarmac that modern roads enjoy. The old construction allows water to penetrate, freeze, and cause potholes.....”*

Cllr Kiddle-Morris will advise on any update about the schedule of surface dressing for North Pickenham Road.

## **11 GDPR – to report update on preparation for compliance**

NALC have now published their GDPR Toolkit – a comprehensive document that aims to provide Council with the knowledge and resources to work towards compliance. This report has been circulated electronically to members (28 February) and will be available in paper copy at the office. The GDPR work group are invited to utilise this document to progress actions.

Regarding the role of Data Protection Officer – the toolkit suggests that in most cases the Clerk will be an inappropriate person to hold this statutory post; *“...This is because although they may satisfy some requirements of the DPO job, they will not satisfy all of them. There can also be a conflict of interest between the role of a clerk and RFO and that of a DPO and these types of conflicts should be avoided. More information about the role of DPOs can be found in Appendix 5 – The role of Data Protection Officers....”* (Point 26 of the toolkit)

Work has started on rationalisation of existing paper files and documents.

## **12 Policies**

### **12.1 To adopt a new casual vacancy co-option policy**

The proposed policy, circulated on 23 February, aims to formalise custom and practice into a written policy, ensuring consistency, professionalism and legal compliance when filling casual vacancies. This policy once formally adopted will be published on the Council’s website.

**Recommendation:** that this policy be adopted.

### **12.2 To adopt a revised Internal Control Policy**

This policy sets out the Council’s procedures for ensuring internal control of its finances, supporting legal compliance in management of public finance. The current policy adopted in July 2016 has been revised with the only changes proposed being reference to updated Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 and Practitioner’s guide March 2017.

**Recommendation:** that the circulated revised policy be adopted.

**15. Annual Parish Meeting** – date change to Wednesday, 25 April 2018 – to accommodate a successful regular booking. The Community Spirit Awards will be held at this meeting.

**17. To receive an update on matters relating to maintenance services contract & consider action**

The Clerk will provide a verbal update on this item. If the matter progress further before the meeting, a written report will be circulated to members for consideration at the meeting.

Report prepared by Gabrielle Joyce, Clerk to Necton Parish Council. Circulated to Members on 28 February 2018.

Appendix

Gabrielle Joyce  
Clerk to Necton Parish Council  
11 February 2018

### **Internal Audit for Necton Parish Council**

Dear Gabby

I am pleased to confirm that I would be willing to undertake an internal audit for Necton Parish Council for the financial year ending 31 March 2018. You have also asked for a quotation for an interim internal audit and year-end internal audit for 2018-19.

The Parish Council is responsible for ensuring that the proper accounting records are maintained and for establishing appropriate accounting and internal control systems.

In undertaking an internal audit, I will:

- Check the books of account have been properly kept throughout the year.
- Check a sample of payments to ensure that the Council's Financial Regulations have been met, payments are supported by invoices, expenditure is approved and VAT is correctly accounted for.
- Review the accounting and internal control systems noting that their establishment and alteration is the responsibility of the Council.
- Check income records ensuring that the correct price has been charged, income has been received, recorded and promptly banked, and VAT is correctly accounted for.
- Review expense records to ensure that payments are supported by receipts, expenditure is approved and VAT is correctly accounted for.
- Check salaries to employees have been paid in accordance with Council approvals and that Income Tax requirements have been applied, checking the contract of employment of the clerk.
- Test accuracy and timeliness of periodic and year end bank account reconciliation.
- Test accuracy and completeness of year end financial statements.
- Be reassured that the risk of fraud being committed has been adequately covered in the Financial Risk Assessment.
- Review council minutes to ensure council decisions in relation to finances are being made properly and are transparent to the public.
- Verify that the annual precept request is the result of a proper budgetary process, that budget process has been regularly monitored and that the Council's reserves are appropriate.
- Check that asset registers are maintained and updated appropriately.
- Report, in writing, to the Council on the results of checks that are carried out.
- Complete an Internal Auditor's Report and (if appropriate) the Annual Return.

Just by way of my background, I am the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to Mattishall Parish Council (a similar-sized council to Necton) and Partner of Norfolk Parish Training & Support. I undertook internal audits for four Norfolk parishes during 2016-17, including Necton Parish Council. I am fully insured to undertake this work and would be happy to provide a copy of the insurance certificate.

Internal audit work will be charged at the rate of £17.50 per hour, and I anticipate it will take around 6-8 hours to complete at year end for your size of council (last year's took 6.5 hours). For the interim audit (at the half-year point – October 2018), I would expect approximately 3 hours of work with the year-end taking around 4-5 hours.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Kind regards  
Luisa Cantera