

**Viking Link
Community Liaison Group
Minutes of the first meeting
1 October 2020**

Presenters:	Mike Elmer	Viking Link
	Amy Crabtree	Viking Link
	Adrian Pierssene	Viking Link
	Craig Silcock	Viking Link
	Carl Simms	Viking Link
	Phil Spain	Viking Link
	Amrit Viridi	Viking Link
	Aaron Ward	Viking Link
	Alison Critchley	Balfour Beatty
	Brendan Maloney	Balfour Beatty
	Colette Flynn	Siemens
	Scott Williams	Siemens
	Carole Riley	BECG, Chairperson
	Alex George	BECG, Secretary
Attendees:	Adrian Benjamin	East Lindsey District Council
	Henry Bingham	South Holland District Council
	Geoff Boxer	East Keal Parish Council
	Michael Brookes	Lincolnshire County Council
	Louise Edney	West Fen Parish Council
	Elizabeth Gadd	Amber Hill Parish Council
	Paul Ireland	Little Hale Parish Council
	Kathryn Kelly	Bicker Parish Council
	David Mangion	East Lindsey District Council
	Graham Marsh	East Lindsey District Council
	Christopher Pavely	Stickney Parish Council
	Marlene Sylvester	Huttoft Parish Council
	Sally Tarry	North Kesteven District Council
	Robin Walker	Huttoft Parish Council
	Simon Walsh	South Holland District Council
	Chris Wray	Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board
	Elizabeth Wray	Donington Parish Council

1. Welcome and introductions

- 1.1 Carole Riley welcomed everyone to the inaugural Viking Link Community Liaison Group (CLG) meeting, which due to the COVID-19 restrictions was taking place online via GoToWebinar. She outlined how attendees could raise a virtual hand and ask questions at the end of each of the presentations and that there would be further opportunities to ask questions later on during the meeting.

2. Appointment of Chairperson and Secretary

- 2.1 Viking Link has nominated Carole Riley to be appointed as Chairperson for the CLG and Alex George as Secretary. Carole and Alex work for BECG, the company that is providing communications support during the construction of Viking Link.

3. Terms of Reference

- 3.1 All attendees had been provided with a copy of the draft terms of reference for the CLG and were asked to provide any comments they had by email to vikinglink@communityfeedback.co.uk.

Action: All Attendees

4. Project updates

4.1 Mike Elmer, Project Director, Viking Link

- 4.1.1 Mike Elmer thanked everyone for attending the meeting and expressed his disappointment at not being able to meet in person.
- 4.1.2 Mr Elmer provided an overview of the project including key statistics about the project. He outlined the benefits that interconnectors provide and how they help the drive towards decarbonisation.
- 4.1.3 He went on to explain the roles and responsibilities of the three main contractors – Siemens Energy, Balfour Beatty and Prysmian.
- 4.1.4 As part of the initial works, Viking Link has undertaken archaeological surveys of the converter station site, the cable route and the landfall site. Mr Elmer showed images of some recent finds, which included a Pagan Roman burial ground and various pieces of pottery and jewellery.
- 4.1.5 Preserving ecology is high on the agenda for Viking Link and various works had taken place to avoid badger setts and vegetation clearance outside of the bird nesting season. Mr Elmer said that he and his team were keen to perform the works respectfully and sensitively.
- 4.1.6 Mr Elmer described some of the offshore survey works taking place between the UK and Denmark and the types of vessels used to perform these surveys.
- 4.1.7 Some of the survey work had identified unexploded ordnance (UXOs) and these had been carefully removed and disposed of safely.

4.2 Phil Spain, Senior Project Manager, Viking Link

- 4.2.1 Phil Spain introduced himself explained his role within the company. His overall responsibility was overseeing the construction of the converter station and the grid connection into Bicker Fen Substation.

4.3 Scott Williams, Senior Project Manager, Siemens Energy

- 4.3.1 Siemens Energy is responsible for the construction of the converter station and the grid connection into Bicker Fen Substation. Mr Scott provided an update on work that had been undertaken to date. He showed a computer generated image (CGI) of how the converter station would look in around two years-time.
- 4.3.2 Mr Scott went onto provide details of Siemens commitment to reducing their carbon footprint. Measures included:

- Re-use of stone from the previous Triton Knoll project, which would reduce number of lorry deliveries by around 700 along the A17 and A52
- Installation of a hydrogen plant to provide heat and power – emission free for their site facilities

4.3.3 During September, Siemens has successfully installed a bridge over the Hammond Beck as part of the main access road works.

4.3.4 Mr Scott showed before and after images of archaeological excavations on the converter station site and explained that these works were still progressing.

4.3.5 It is anticipated that the main civil works on the converter station buildings will commence in early 2021. By 2022 the buildings would be ready to be fitted out with equipment and work would commence on the AC cable works.

4.4 Aaron Ward, Lead Project Manager – Cables, Viking Link

4.4.1 Mr Ward explained his role within the project. Aaron would be liaising with the civils contractor Balfour Beatty and the offshore cable contractor Prysmian.

4.4.2 Sea trials were shortly to commence on the specially constructed cable laying vessel - Leonardo Da Vinci. The subsea cable for the Viking Link project was currently being manufactured in Italy.

4.4.3 Over the next few weeks horizontal directional drilling (HDD) from under the beach to the first transition joint bay would be commencing at the landfall site at Sandilands. This would enable the subsea cable to be brought ashore.

4.4.4 Finally, Mr Ward explained that the onshore cable involved:

- Circa 100 HDD points
- 65km of onshore cabling
- Negotiations with over 100 landowners
- Crossing through four local authority jurisdictions

4.4.5 Councillor Marsh asked if Viking Link was sure that the works to the landfall area would not damage the sea defences and if this type of work had been carried out before and if there had been any negative impacts.

4.4.5 Mr Ward replied that Viking Link had performed extensive survey works and considered historical records to determine methodology for the HDD.

4.4.6 Mr Simms explained that the proposed methodology for undertaking this work required approval from the Environment Agency. He added that the drilling passed a significant distance under the sea defence wall.

4.4.7 In answer to the second part of Councillor Marsh's question, Mr Ward commented that this type of work had been done before, particularly by other interconnector projects. Triton Knoll for the offshore wind farm, nearby, had used a similar technique. Viking Link is not aware of any other projects encountering issues with this process.

4.4.8 Councillor Marsh added that he was pleased Viking Link was working with Triton Knoll to co-ordinate works and the re-use of the stone was commendable.

4.5 Brendan Maloney, Senior Project Manager, Balfour Beatty

- 4.5.1 Mr Maloney explained that survey work was ongoing to inform the detailed design for the construction of the onshore cable.
- 4.5.2 Work was progressing on the construction of the main compound at East Keal, which would shortly become the main site office for the duration of the project. Mr Maloney also showed where work was underway to create an access for the landfall drill at Sandilands.
- 4.5.3 Mr Maloney provided details of how HDD works and said that there were around 100 points where HDD would be used to protect above ground installations such as roads, railway tracks and environmental assets, such as the River Witham. He shared a cross section of a railway track being monitored with the drill underground to bore the hole for the cable.
- 4.5.4 Mr Maloney highlighted some of the local benefits attributed to the project in terms of jobs and contracts for local people. This included:
- 19 new members of staff at Balfour Beatty, of which nine are from the local area
 - Contracts for drainage and civil works – DMJ, family owned local business
 - Contracts for traffic management – Amberon
 - Contracts for aggregate supplies – Walton Quarry
- 4.5.5 Finally Mr Maloney detailed the works scheduled to take place over the next four months including:
- Access to the landfall area
 - Staff moving into the main site office at East Keal
 - Civil access works around Well High Lane, near Alford
 - Archaeological evaluation works to be completed at Fenlands
 - HDD work to commence on the cable route

4.6 Amrit Virdi, Compliance and Communications Manager, Viking Link

- 4.6.1 Ms Virdi provided an overview of her role within the project. Amrit was responsible for community engagement and community contributions.
- 4.6.2 Two Community Matters newsletters had been issued to around 8,000 households and businesses along the cable route in Summer 2019 and Spring 2020. These highlighted the projects progress and key milestones. The next issue would be sent out in November.
- 4.6.3 Councillor Kathleen Kelly asked if people not on the distribution list of the newsletters could be provided with one. Ms Virdi said people interested in receiving the newsletters could be added to the circulation list and to email any addresses through to the project email. The newsletter were also posted on the project website.

Action: Cllr Kathleen Kelly

- 4.6.4 Community engagement would focus on the community liaison groups and parish council forums to keep local stakeholders updated on the project and to create a forum for discussion.

- 4.6.5 It had been Viking Links intention to host four community liaison groups spread across the cable route to enable representatives to receive information about the project's progress in their area and to ask questions and/or raise concerns. Once it is safe to do so Viking Link's aim to set up the four CLGs for face to face meetings. The parish council (PC) forums would also be set up to provide information to PC members.
- 4.6.6 Ms Viridi said that Viking Link is keen to contribute to the communities in which it works. There are three main areas that the team is focused on:
- Loneliness
 - The environment
 - Education.
- 4.6.7 This year, Viking link has donated PPE equipment to AgeUK. Discussions were also underway to provide food donations for coffee mornings and welfare packs that AgeUK distribute to Lincolnshire residents.
- 4.6.8 Councillor David Mangion asked if the community contributions applied to every parish in the area or were there restrictions. He asked what contribution can Spilsby Town Council ask for?
- 4.6.9 Ms Viridi responded that Viking Link open to any suggestions from across the Lincolnshire area, that is close to the cable. She said that anyone can submit their suggestions via the project email address. She added that Viking Link is focused on the three areas highlighted i.e. loneliness, the environment and education.
- 4.6.10 Mr Wray asked if there was an annual scheme for funding or was it paid out as and when opportunities are presented and if there was a financial bracket for contributions?
- 4.6.11 Ms Viridi replied that is no annual fund in place and that Viking Link would consider requests as they come in. The contribution would be based more about providing time and recycling of materials, supporting projects across Lincolnshire. Funding is an option, but Viking Link does not have set funding parameters.
- 4.6.12 Councillor David Mangion asked what contribution would be possible from Viking Link, for example, setting up a Men's Shed?
- 4.6.13 Viking Link sees Men's Sheds as an important cause to support and is looking at ways to get involved in the future.
- 4.6.14 Councillor Elizabeth Wray mentioned that much of the discussion of supporting loneliness seemed focused around AgeUK. She asked if Viking Link would be open to getting involved with other agencies and schemes?
- 4.6.15 Ms Viridi said if there are other schemes and agencies then yes, Viking Link would be willing to get involved and would be open to supporting them as well. She suggested that Cllr Wray forward any ideas/information she had to the project email.

Action: Cllr Elizabeth Wray

- 4.6.16 One of the main areas that Viking Link was getting involved with was education. Viking Link has set up an education programme that provides STEM based workshops linked to the National Curriculum. The first set of workshops at three secondary schools and seven primary schools took place in January and were well received. The workshops provided an insight into careers in engineering and science. The intention had been to run two workshops per annum for a three-year period, but this had been put on hold in recent times.
- 4.6.17 Viking Link would soon be publishing an education booklet that covered science and electricity as a teaching resource for key stage 2 pupils. The booklet has been designed around the National Curriculum and features ideas for careers in the energy sector.
- 4.6.18 Councillor Elizabeth Wray asked if particular schools had been identified and could this involve the local school at Donington if they were interested?
- 4.6.19 Ms Viridi commented that Viking Link had contacted a number of schools in the area and ten of these selected schools had wanted to get involved. She added that if Councillor Wray knew of a school that would be particularly interested in getting involved in the programme, to let us know and we can contact them and help them with resources.

Action: Cllr Elizabeth Wray

5. Questions and Answers

- 5.1 Attendees were invited to ask questions of the project team.
- 5.2 Councillor Graham Marsh asked if members of the team were aware of the TED project in East Lindsey and they dealt with loneliness?
- 5.3 Ms Viridi said that this group was mentioned during a meeting with the council leader in early 2020 and Viking Link would undertake some research into the TED project.

Action: Ms Amrit Viridi

- 5.4 Councillor David Mangion asked how much disruption should the community reasonably expect with horizontal drilling, although he appreciated it was different to fracking?
- 5.5 Mr Maloney responded the HDD was a different methodology to fracking in that the drill went horizontally underground and that stabilising liquid was used to preserve the ground around the drill area.
- 5.6 Councillor David Mangion asked if this method had been tried elsewhere and if there had been any issues?
- 5.7 Mr Maloney said that HDD had been used many times in this and other industries and saved disruption to 3rd party assets, such as roads and railway lines and in a lot of circumstances is the preferred method of drilling.

6. Format of future meetings

- 6.1 Ms Riley put forward choices for the format of future meetings and asked attendees to provide their feedback, by email, on the following options:
- Single online meeting for all four CLGs

- Separate online meetings for each of the four CLGs
- Face to face meetings once it was safe to do so

Action: All Attendees

7. Next Meeting

- 7.1 Ms Riley explained that the frequency of the CLG meetings was currently every 4 months. Attendees were asked to email their views on the frequency of future meetings.

Action: All Attendees

8. Any other business

8.1 Terms of Reference

- 8.1.1 Attendees were reminded to provide any comments they had on the draft terms of reference for the CLGs via the project email – vikinglink@communityfeedback.co.uk.

Action: All Attendees

8.2 Closing Remarks

- 8.2.1 Mr Elmer thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He commented on the progress of the project and stated his team were privileged to be working on it. Their desire is to leave a positive lasting legacy in the region, including in relation to contributing to the community.
- 8.2.2 Reducing carbon emissions is important to the project team and although carbon emissions will be produced during construction, these would be paid back by the project within 18 months of operation. Mr Elmer commented that every year for the first 25 years of operation, the carbon saved by the project was the equivalent of 212 wind turbines.
- 8.2.3 Finally Mr Elmer thanked the local community for embracing the project team in the area and that the intention is to continue to support local businesses and the community wherever possible.