

**Viking Link  
 Community Liaison Group  
 Minutes of the third meeting  
 12 July 2021**

<b>Presenters:</b>	Mike Elmer	Viking Link
	Philip Sandy	Viking Link
	George Arvanitakis	Viking Link
	David Arrowsmith	Balfour Beatty
	Scott Williams	Siemens Energy
	Amrit Viridi	Viking Link
	Alison Critchley	Balfour Beatty
	Colette Flynn	Siemens Energy
	Carole Riley	BECG, Chairperson
<b>Others present:</b>	Adrian Morris	Viking Link
	Adrian Piersenne	Viking Link
	Phil Spain	Viking Link
	Brendan Maloney	Balfour Beatty
	Alex George	BECG, Secretary
	Michael Brookes	Lincolnshire County Council (Boston Rural ward)
	Steven Brudenell	Technical Advisor for the Alford Group of Churches
	Louise Edney	West Fen Parish Council
	Martin Foster	East Lindsey District Council (Coningsby and Mareham Ward)
	Elizabeth Gadd	Amber Hill Parish Council
	William Gray	East Lindsey District Council (Roughton ward) and Lincolnshire County Council (Horncastle and the Keals Division)
	Geoff Hotchkin	Helpringham Parish Council
	Kathryn Kelly	Bicker Parish Council
	Richard Moody	West Keal & Keal Coates Parish Council
	Brian Nowicki	East Kirkby Parish Council
	Stewart Ogden	North Kesteven District Council (Heckington Rural Ward)
	Christopher Pavely	Stickney Parish Council
	Kate Percival	Lincolnshire County Council, Environmental Services Officer, Strategy and Partnerships
	Charles Roberts	Frithville with Westville Parish Council
	Rachael Sutton	Executive Assistant to Victoria Atkins MP for Louth and Horncastle
	Marlene Sylvester	Huttoft Parish Council
	Sally Tarry	North Kesteven District Council (Heckington Rural Ward)
	Chris Wray	Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board
	Lizzie Wray	Donington Parish Council

## 1. Welcome and introductions

- 1.1 Carole Riley welcomed everyone to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Viking Link Community Liaison Group (CLG) meeting, which due to the COVID-19 restrictions was taking place online via GoToWebinar. Attendees were advised how they could ask a question and told members there would be an opportunity to ask questions at the end of each presentation and at the end of the meeting.

## 2. Apologies for Absence

- 2.1 Apologies for absence had been received from:

- Sandra Harrison – East Lindsey District Council (Withern & Theddlethorpe ward)

## 3. Approval of minutes from the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021

- 3.1 Carole Riley confirmed that no comments had been received on the minutes of the previous CLG and that if no members had any further comments, they would be regarded as 'accepted'.

### 3(a). Actions Update

- 3.2 *West Keal Compound* – Councillor Moody raised concerns regarding intrusive security lighting at the West Keal compound. This issue has been resolved, in conjunction with Smart Watch, to change the security system so that lights at the compound are not on all the time.
- 3.3 *Stickney Schools* – Councillor Paveley asked if both schools in Stickney have been invited to participate in the Viking Link schools programme. Carole Riley confirmed that both the Stickney Primary School and William Lovell school have been invited to the programme.
- 3.4 *Damaged Bicker Fen Fencing* - Cllr Kelly raised concerns of Bicker residents that there was damaged fencing on Vicarage Drove. Carole Riley outlined that this fencing was the responsibility of National Grid Electricity Transmission, but because Viking Link had the appropriate equipment and personnel in the area, they repaired the fencing as a gesture of goodwill.
- 3.5 *Land restoration* – Mr Jack queried whether Natural England would receive an update on the land restoration plan. Carole Riley confirmed that Viking Link would be liaising with Natural England to support these works.
- 3.6 *Community Contributions Criteria* – Mr Jack asked about the community contributions criteria and whether schools could get involved in tree planting. Carole Riley advised that Mr Jack had been informed that if he were to make contact, this is an option they could consider.
- 3.7 *Archaeological Finds* – Mr Jack queried about the archaeological finds during Viking Link's work and the possibility of them being displayed for public viewing. Carole Riley confirmed that Viking Link would consider a method of exhibiting any notable finds during the construction programme.
- 3.8 *Community Contributions Criteria* – Ms Fortune queried whether the community contributions criteria would be made available on the Viking Link website. Carole Riley confirmed that they are now available on the Community Liaison Group pages and that a link

would be included in the minutes of the meeting (<https://viking-link.com/media/1712/community-contribution-criteria-final.pdf>).

- 3.9 *Road sweeping* – Mr Sylvester mentioned that an increase in road sweeping activity was required. Carole Riley outlined that Viking Link had increased the regularity of sweeps and are managing the need on a continuous basis. Carole also stated that no comments on road sweeping had been received since.

#### **4. Project updates**

##### **4.1 Mike Elmer, Project Director, Viking Link**

- 4.1.1 Mike Elmer welcomed everyone to the CLG, both new and returning attendees.
- 4.1.2 Mike informed attendees that he was moving onto a new role at National Grid and introduced Phil Sandy, the new Project Director of Viking Link, who joined the project on 1<sup>st</sup> June and would take over Mike's role on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021.
- 4.1.3 Phil Sandy thanked Mike and outlined his desire to meet CLG members in-person in due course.
- 4.1.4 Mike Elmer spoke about Coronavirus and the impact that it has had on the Viking Link works. He outlined how National Grid and Viking Link have operated to government Covid guidance and have ensured the safety of their employees, contractors and the local communities through a number of means, including regular testing, social distancing restrictions and encouraging team members to get vaccinated.
- 4.1.5 Referring to the progress of the project, Mike outlined that Viking Link remains on target to complete construction activity by the end of 2023 and for the link to be operational and flow power at the start of 2024.
- 4.1.6 Since the last CLG, in February 2021, Viking Link has finished constructing the haul road for the converter station and has started work on the construction of the converter station, as well as commencing offshore works in the UK and works in Denmark.
- 4.1.7 Mike outlined that Coronavirus has prevented the Viking Link team from meeting their Danish colleagues face-to-face since early March 2020.
- 4.1.8 Mike thanked the local community for their support during these works, specifically mentioning the local hotels that have accommodated Viking Link workers in a Covid-safe manner.
- 4.1.9 Mike provided an overview of the offshore works involved with the Viking Link project, mentioning the shallow water seabed survey scanning and the deep-water trenching machine that is being used for laying the offshore cable.
- 4.1.10 Referring to the Leonardo da Vinci cable-laying vessel, Mike outlined that it will be operated by a crew of 80 people and will carry up to approximately 130km of cables. Mike went on to state that it is a new vessel, currently undergoing sea and cable trials, and will soon be docking at Middlesbrough harbour.

## **4.2 George Arvanitakis, Lead Project Manager - Cables, Viking Link**

- 4.2.1 George Arvanitakis introduced himself as the new Lead Project Manager – Cables, having taken over this role from Aaron Ward in late March. Aaron had presented at the previous two CLGs and had provided an overview of the progress of landfall works at Sandilands. This work involves connecting the offshore cable to the onshore cable by drilling underneath the sea wall.
- 4.2.2 Since February’s CLG, Viking Link has successfully completed the Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) and installation of the two cable ducts at the Sandilands landfall.
- 4.2.3 Attendees were shown images of two offshore pullback operations, which had occurred on the 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> April and on 29<sup>th</sup> May. These pullbacks involved holding a 600m duct between cranes on two barges, to connect it to the head of the HDD drill at the landfall.
- 4.2.4 George explained that additional equipment will be brought to the landfall site to allow excavation and cleaning of the offshore ducts, as well as quadrants and rollers to allow cables to be pulled onshore safely. These works will require approved documentation and risk assessments and are planned for July/August 2021.
- 4.2.5 Upcoming offshore activities include trenching to expose the ducts and allow cable to pass through them. George stated that once this work is complete, Viking Link will undertake surveys to confirm cable laid position and bury the cables to ensure long term protection. Onshore works will include demobilising at the Sandilands landfall site by the end of Summer 2021 and removing the platform by Autumn/Winter 2021.

## **4.3 David Arrowsmith, Project Director, Balfour Beatty**

- 4.3.1 David Arrowsmith outlined his responsibility for connecting the Viking Link cable from landfall at Sandilands to the converter station at Donington.
- 4.3.2 David outlined the progress made since February’s CLG, including the Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) on land along the cable route to bypass difficult areas of geography such as ditches, roads and railway lines with minimal impact and disturbance.
- 4.3.3 David and his team have completed over 12km of trenching and 14km of a temporary haul road to transport cables, allowing for safer access across the countryside. This road will be reinstated once works are complete.
- 4.3.4 David referred to the extensive archaeological works being undertaken, with up to 40 archaeologists working on the project at any given time. Viking Link is working closely with Lincolnshire County Council and all finds are sensitively handled and catalogued.
- 4.3.5 It is Viking Link’s intention to exhibit archaeological finds to the public at an appropriate time.
- 4.3.6 In June, Viking Link transported the first cable drum safely through Alford. This work has been planned and undertaken in close communication with local councils and stakeholders to minimise disruption to the community.

- 4.3.7 The work will require specialist vehicles to transport and deliver 118 cable drums over the course of the whole project to various compound locations. The cable is unloaded at the compound, laid and the empty cable drum is then transported back to Port of Boston. It is expected there will be two deliveries per week during the summer and autumn 2021.
- 4.3.8 David outlined the importance of supporting the local community and noted the local employment created, both directly by Balfour Beatty and their sub-contractors as a direct result of the Viking Link project. Employees recruited from outside of the local area also support the local economy through spending on local services such as shops, hotels, restaurants and taxis.
- 4.3.9 Over the next four months, Balfour Beatty will continue to; transport cables from the Port of Boston (installing it from east to west along the cable route); focus on archaeological mitigation; commence reinstatement works.

#### **4.4 Scott Williams, Senior Project Manager, Siemens Energy**

- 4.4.1 Scott Williams introduced himself and outlined his responsibility for the construction of the converter station at Donington.
- 4.4.2 After a year of works, starting on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020, both the main access road from the A52 to the converter site and the temporary AC cable haul road have been completed. This means there is now no need for project construction vehicles to use public roads to access the converter station site or the substation at Bicker Fen to undertake future works. Scott thanked residents of Cowbridge Road and Vicarage Drove for their patience during these road construction works.
- 4.4.3 Scott outlined that Viking Link was successfully able to use all recycled stone from the Triton Knoll project to construct the access roads. Using the recycled stone avoided approximately 500 stone lorries making return journeys on local public roads to and from the quarry and site delivering new materials.
- 4.4.4 Showcasing the site access (known as the ‘bell mouth’) connecting to the A52, Scott outlined that the welfare compound would be moved up to the converter station site, and that permission is being sought from Lincolnshire County Council to allow vehicles to right turn onto the A52 from the site access road which will reduce traffic to/from the Bicker Bar roundabout.
- 4.4.5 Siemens is undertaking enabling works at the converter station. Piling works have been completed, and foundation and drainage works are in progress. Work will soon commence on the installation of the AC cables. It is expected the converter station building will be erected by Christmas 2021.
- 4.4.6 Scott showed a list of local subcontractors working on the converter station site, the local resources and services being procured and the local firms that have been contracted by the project.

#### **4.5 Amrit Viridi, Compliance and Communications Manager, Viking Link**

- 4.5.1 Amit Viridi introduced herself and outlined that she, and other members of the Viking Link team, would provide an overview of local community engagement work and community contributions that have been made since the last CLG in February.

- 4.5.2 Alongside Danish colleagues at Energinet, Viking Link has created a project video outlining the benefits of the project. This video is available to view on the home page on [www.viking-link.com](http://www.viking-link.com).
  - 4.5.3 Viking Link regularly update their website on a monthly basis with project progress and upcoming construction works [www.viking-link.com/projectupdates](http://www.viking-link.com/projectupdates). Local communities are also notified of any significant upcoming works in their area by letter.
  - 4.5.4 Working with Balfour Beatty, Viking Link has ensured comprehensive information and timetables are available regarding the cable drum movements that will be ongoing throughout the summer and autumn. Alford Town Council have been helpful by further disseminating this information on their website, via their social media and the local free newspaper.
  - 4.5.5 Viking Link is relaying general project and construction updates via the CLG webinars, its website and the Community Matters newsletter. The next issue of Community Matters will be issued in the coming weeks.
  - 4.5.6 Amrit outlined that Viking Link launched a workbook for primary school education, titled 'Nessa and the Interconnector' in March. The workbook has been issued to all primary schools on Viking Link's schools programme. It is STEM-based and aligned with the national curriculum. The workbook is available for download on National Grid's website (<https://www.nationalgrid.com/document/141031/download>).
  - 4.5.7 Amrit went on to state that the workbook would be reissued each academic year to the new Year 5's on the schools programme throughout the course of the project and the free-resource would also be offered to 32 other primary schools in the Lincolnshire area that were relatively close to the cable route.
  - 4.5.8 Viking Link has worked with Balfour Beatty and Siemens to donate PPE, stationery, outdoor games and PE equipment to the school's on the schools programmes. Viking Link was delighted to provide this equipment to the pupil's returning after the lockdown restrictions had eased in March.
  - 4.5.9 Viking Link has also restarted their schools programme, and held virtual workshops focusing on archaeology, electricity & circuits and wind energy. Kit supplies required for the hands-on activities were couriered to the schools ahead of the sessions. The workshops have been well-received and the final two workshops are planned for the new academic year 2021/22.
  - 4.5.10 Amrit outlined that Viking Link has continued to build relationships with Age UK Lincolnshire and Age UK Lindsey. Viking Link supported Age UK Lindsey to convert a minibus, which will assist Age UK to reach out to approximately 150 isolated elderly residents in the area and supporting them with advice on how to use technology for daily activities such as making a video call or doing online shopping.
  - 4.5.11 The Viking Link team has also been donating food to the Age UK foodbank and will be donating prizes to their raffle to celebrate their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- 4.6 Alison Critchley, Communications Manager, Balfour Beatty**
- 4.6.1 Alison Critchley outlined the community contributions work that Balfour Beatty has undertaken on the Viking Link project since the last CLG. This included a beach clean at

Anderby Creek, donating over 85 easter eggs to the children's ward at Boston Pilgrim Hospital and assisting Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust with vegetation clearance.

- 4.6.2 Alison outlined that Balfour Beatty would be continuing to support the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust with a second volunteering day planned for the 29<sup>th</sup> of July.
- 4.6.3 Balfour Beatty is also working with their subcontractor, PBU, to support Spilsby Primary School (local to their works in West Keal) by supplying outdoor games equipment. They will also be providing a 'Healthy Holiday' pack to students and supplying recycled tablets for use in school and at home.
- 4.6.4 Balfour Beatty is also looking into how they could support Alford Town Council to renovate an unused parcel of land in the town into a community garden.
- 4.6.5 Alison said that she would provide an update on these works at the next CLG.

#### **4.7 Colette Flynn, Social Value Manager, Siemens Energy**

- 4.7.1 Colette Flynn outlined that Siemens Energy has been working in the area for 12 months and is keen to deliver local social value. She went on to state the three target areas for Siemens Energy:
  - Energy transmission
  - Access to education
  - Sustaining communities
- 4.7.2 As Coronavirus restrictions are still in place, Siemens Energy has developed a week-long virtual work experience programme to support students at home and those living in more rural areas. Week commencing 19<sup>th</sup> July, 30 students from Haven High will be completing this work experience, with a view to more schools taking part in the future.
- 4.7.3 Siemens Energy hosted a STEM Day at Boston College, which aimed to encourage students to take an interest in STEM vocations and to use the day to ask career related questions to the attending companies.
- 4.7.4 Colette outlined that Siemens Energy is launching a Safety and Sustainability scheme on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021 which is designed to instil values across the project. The scheme is target based and local charities will benefit from targets reached.
- 4.7.5 Colette outlined that they would appreciate members getting in touch to suggest charities that Siemens Energy could consider supporting, based on their performance in the Safety and Sustainability scheme. You can get in touch to suggest a charity by submitting to [vikinglink@communityfeedback.co.uk](mailto:vikinglink@communityfeedback.co.uk)
- 4.7.6 Siemens Energy has assisted in supporting the environment by helping the local Donington Litter Pickers group. Team members had collected litter along the A52, an area that can be difficult to clear safely. Colette outlined that if members would like to suggest an area that Siemens Energy can clean safely on their behalf, they will consider it.
- 4.7.7 Siemens Energy also supported a Year 6 Leaver's Party for Donington Primary School students.

## **5. Questions and Answers**

- 5.1 Attendees were invited to ask questions of the project team – no questions were raised.
- 5.2 Carole Riley said that members could get in touch with Viking Link by calling 0800 731 0561 or by emailing [vikinglink@communityfeedback.co.uk](mailto:vikinglink@communityfeedback.co.uk).

## **6. Closing Remarks**

- 6.1 Mike Elmer thanked everyone for attending the meeting and thanked those individuals that have been involved with the project so far.
- 6.2 Mike commented on the fantastic work of the team in the local communities, highlighting that those small acts of kindness can make a significant impact. He went on to outline that if members had further suggestions on how Viking Link could assist in the community, then they should get in touch.
- 6.3 Mike stated that the project is progressing well and that the people of Lincolnshire and the local authorities that they deal with have been supportive. He outlined that it is impossible to do construction works at this level without causing some disturbance and he is proud of project team members for their efforts to minimise impact.
- 6.4 Mike noted that it has been a privilege to be involved in this project and thanked the local community, councilors and MPs for their active support and for holding them to account to work at their best.
- 6.5 Mike wished everyone all the best and encouraged CLG members to get in touch regarding any further concerns or suggestions via [vikinglink@communityfeedback.co.uk](mailto:vikinglink@communityfeedback.co.uk).