

# FREISTON PARISH COUNCIL

Email: freistonpc@gmail.com

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Dear Councillors,

You are summoned to attend the meeting of Freiston Parish Council, which will be held on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2023, at 7:30pm in the Danny Flear Community Centre.

*Mrs Val Austin*, Clerk to the Parish Council, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023

There will be a 10-minute public forum if needed at 7.30pm when members of the public may make short statements to the Council:

## AGENDA

1. **Chairman to open the meeting:**
2. **Apologies:** To receive and accept apologies where a valid reason for the absence has been given to the clerk prior to the meeting.
  - Cllr Simon Pearson – Due to holidays
3. **Police Matters:** Stats & incidents are available to view on the police website. Local Crime information website [www.streetcheck.co.uk](http://www.streetcheck.co.uk) Crime data
  - Street check website, updated to May 2023 – No Crimes – Nothing to report.
4. **Minutes:** To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 15th June 2023. To resolve as a correct record & to authorise the Chairman to sign the official minutes
5. **Declarations of interest** (if any): To receive declarations of interest under the Localism Act 2011 – being any pecuniary interest in agenda items not previously recorded on Members' Register of Interests
6. **Planning update:** Town and Country Planning Act 1990 - To consider and make observations on all planning applications received and to note planning approvals, refusals, enforcement complaints and appeal decisions advised by Boston Borough Council.
  - B/23/0219 – Conversion of formal village hall to resident dwelling. Planning details emailed to councillors on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023.
  - Update – Cllr Simon Pearson drafted a response to Outer Dowsing, via email See annex A below.

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## 7. Parish Matters / Matters Arising / Updates

- 7.1 **Street Lights** – The clerk has contacted Boston Borough Council for an update – Ongoing
- 7.2 **Speed Awareness** – Nothing to report – To be removed from future agendas?
- 7.3 **Freiston Magazine** – Update: The Clerk picked up the newsletters from the printers on 5<sup>th</sup> July, they are with the chair N Marshall.  
The clerk to post the link on Facebook for the magazine  
To confirm the date of the next magazine.  
Ideas for magazine.
- 7.4 **Highway & Roads** – Update: The clerk contacted Highways for a permit to have a defibrillator sign on the post nearest the Danny Flear Community Centre. Highways to permit the sign. The clerk to find a custom sign via Lives or The Circuit.
- 7.5 **Levelling up fund - Playing Field & Bowls Club** - The clerk received notification from Lincolnshire Community Foundation (LCF) requesting further information. The clerk to respond.
- 7.6 **Safeguarding Policy – To be adopted by Full council.**  
See PDF Attachment.

## 8. Finance:

- 8.1 Bank Account: Statement of accounts as at 20<sup>th</sup> July 2023
- 8.2 To approve the accounts for payments

9. **Date of next parish council meeting:** Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2023 at 7:30pm

10. **Any other business by leave of the chairman: For August 17<sup>th</sup> 2023 Agenda.**

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## **Annex A – Planning – Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind Farm –**

Prepared by Cllr Simon Pearson.

I'm writing to express my concern with respect to the cable route options for the Outer Dowsing off shore wind farm developments.

I am a resident of Freiston, Lincs and also a member of the Parish Council. I live In Freiston, having grown up on a family farm within the village.

Professionally, I'm a Professor of Agri Food Technology, HonFRAGS, FIAgrE and FRSB and Founding Director of the Lincoln Institute of Agri-Food Technology. I was awarded the Royal Agriculture Society's medal for science and innovation in agriculture and have advised government on aspects of agricultural innovation. In addition, my team have specifically studied the impacts of tidal flood risk on this specific region's soils and potential recovery from salt water inundation. I attach a copy of our peer reviewed publication for your records.

Given my specific expertise and local knowledge, I am concerned about the current plans, in particular the potential cable tracks that route south of the A52 and close to the Wash Sea defence banks and how they route through the parish of Freiston. My concerns are;

1. Impacts on food security. The impact assessment has not properly considered potential effects on food security. The Lincolnshire food region produces 26% of all the UK's fresh vegetables, the majority of it produced on the belt of Grade 1 marine silt soils that border the Wash. This includes the main tract of land that is proposed for the South A52 cable route. Food production in this region has unusual national significance and is a function of its exceptional soil quality that enables the cultivation of high value vegetable crops (brassica, potatoes, onions etc) with minimal use of irrigation, since the silt has both significant depth and water holding / movement potential. Disruption to the farming system in this region for up to 2 years, could have significant and national consequences. These impacts would likely be as a secondary consequence of the installation of the cable, via disruption to cropping plans, rotation plans, the splitting of fields, access disruptions for all farming operations etc, etc. Our paper (attached) shows the likely economic impact of a tidal flood in the region, whilst the installation of a cable cannot be directly compared to a flood impact, the scale of the economic activity in the region is self-evident. In addition any food supply issues will also affect the livelihood of workers across the whole farming supply chain (packing operations, logistics, food providers etc), not just the farmers considered in your study. Food security impacts if the cable was laid north of A52 would be lower, this land is typically used for cereal crops with lower economic values, but as cereals are commodity products, they can be easily substituted via other markets...short life vegetables cannot be easily substituted.

2. Impacts on soils. I note that the impact assessment describes our soils from the Cranfield register as "Loamy and clayey soils of coastal flats with naturally high groundwater". Whilst the use of the register is correct, the Grade 1 soils in the region

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are exceptional high quality marine silts. This detail is critical as silt soils have a complex and often difficult physical properties, not least they have a tendency to “run”. This makes any ground works very difficult since the silt can move rapidly, in addition it forms slurries that can contaminate water courses and suffers wind blow. These slurries have very low oxygen contents are very dangerous to life if they enter water courses. The EA enforces actively against silt slurries. The silts in our region are also deep (given their quality) which will add considerable complexity to the ground works. Given the nature of the soils I doubt that the soil management practices to restore the field is sufficient (noted in your appendix). This generally lacked specific details but the risk of silt turning into slurry during ground works is a very real and significant concern that is not addressed, and frankly is difficult to address.

3. Flood risk. I was surprised that I could not find any references to the 2 serious flood events in the region that have occurred over the last 10 years. This includes the breach of the River Steeping causing a fluvial flood in June 2019. This flooded 550ha of land and the evacuation of 580 houses in the region. Whilst floods per se might not affect the cable it would certainly impact flood evacuation planning and any infrastructure near and associated with the cable. Of greater concern was the tidal surge flood of 6 December 2013, and the reason we studied the impacts of tidal floods in our attach paper. Your study has not mentioned that the tidal surge breached the bank at Wrangle, approximately 1000m from your cable run (south A52) at Wrangle. The land next to the breached bank was indeed never recovered. However, the lessons are of critical importance since when the tide breached at Wrangle it led to an extra-ordinary and deep (up to 8m) exudation/erosion of silt on the land ward side of the bank. In addition, as the land was inundated with salt water, the soil properties were destroyed with a dramatic loss of hydraulic capacity as the salt destroyed the soil structure. In theory this soil structure will recover after 7+ years once the salt is washed through the silt by rain (see paper). However, given this, the cable run so close to the sea bank is a very serious risk. If the banks breach (they have now twice in the last 70 years), the water action could cause significant and rapid soil erosion and the land will be rendered impossible for ground works as the structure will be lost. Indeed, I cannot conceive any reason as to why such a critical piece of national infrastructure should be placed so close to those banks. If you wish to find further information on the risk impacts within the region, the EA have modelled breach scenarios along your development zone, these were used in our paper and are referenced. The EA will provide them to you on request, I have copies for research (one is published as a supplemental in our paper) so unfortunately cannot pass them to you directly but it is important that you request this information. The Wrangle 2013 breach could have been far worse, in that breach the sea water was contained between two banks. If the breach had occurred 200m to the south of the 2013 breach there is no second containment bank, if that had happened it is quite likely that Staples yard would have been inundated (beyond the run of your cable in that area).

4. Impact on Freiston. Whilst I understand the need to route the cable south of Boston, I find the route of the cable is unnecessarily disruptive to both the local

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people and farmers. The cable cuts through the village and several high-quality fields. On this basis I do not understand why a less disruptive route could not be found, the obvious course if the cable runs north of the A52 would be to take it to the Hob Hole drain and then run it along the drain. This is a much simpler, route that will not affect the village and local farmers over a period of 2 to 3 years.

In summary whilst I understand the need for renewable energy systems, I am extremely concerned with the proposed routing of this cable south of the A52 through the UK; s finest soils and food production areas, but also along a bank that has a known and serious tidal flood risk. This flooding risk will only worsen with climate change, as the sea level rises, and climate variance become more extreme.

I look forward to your response