

Report to Walberswick Parish Council on Sizewell C WPC Meeting 13 October 2025

The following is an update on Sizewell C as of October 2025. Information is provided by Cllr Bassinette based on her membership on behalf of Walberswick Parish Council on the Northern Transport Forum and the B1125 Working Group.

Northern Transport Forum

The summer meeting of the Northern Transport Forum brought universally bad news for our communities. The massive delays on the A12 being caused by the construction of Park & Rides at Darsham and Wickham Market, the building of the 2 village by-pass, the Sizewell Link Road and the massive new roundabouts at Snape and Yoxford have slowed the A12 to 30 mph for about a 20 mile stretch from Woodbridge north. This slows even more when SZC adds one way traffic lights and other closures, including for movements of extra large loads. All the Parish, county and district representatives complained about the impact of this situation and asked for adjustments to be made to unnecessary or excessive 30mph signage, single lane closures seemingly for no reason than to provide parking for contractors, and a complete lack of coordination amongst the different construction areas. Whilst acknowledging that the situation was not good, SZC provided no firm commitments to follow up on a number of helpful suggestions made by Councillors (including looking into variable speed limits) nor that the situation would improve going forward.

There was also very considerable unhappiness expressed by Councillors in parishes closest to these works particularly regarding senseless and uncoordinated diversions. There was a long discussion of a weekend closure of the level crossing at Melton which had made it impossible for some people to reach their homes, for emergency services to operate and that led to intolerable traffic elsewhere as people sought ways around the closure. Despite repeated efforts by local people, SZC, Suffolk Highways and Network Rail all denied that the closure had anything to do with them. Finally, local people themselves moved the unnecessary barriers in frustration. At the Northern Forum meeting, a top executive from Network Rail attended and admitted that it was a mistake of a Network Rail Contractor, working on the SZC project, that had closed the crossing without permission and without any need as they had misunderstood their contract! A taste of things to come for the next 20 years of SZC construction!

We were also informed at this meeting that SZC is seeking permission for an unplanned new workers campus at the area of High Lodge. This is contrary to SZC's DCO and to their statements at the time of the Inspection Panel hearings that the workers campus at Eastbridge would be sufficient. SZC is asking to build some 1500 bed accommodation there, using the existing planning permission for some 900 bed tourist accommodation that has never been built and adding another 600 or so units to that. We were told that ESC was minded to approve the request. This shocking development will require yet another construction area on the A12, large number of coaches carrying workers to and from SZC 24-7 and potentially difficult community issues with this high density dormitory living added to our rural area. It also further erodes our area's

tourist- oriented economy on which, presumably, the initial planning permission for a tourist cabin site was granted. We are likely to see more on this application later this autumn.

Anyone who has tried to go to Leiston lately will have seen the devastation of the natural environment and the large increase in traffic and congestion. Forum members requested that a study be done on the impact this was having on Leiston and surrounding area businesses as anecdotal evidence suggested shoppers and visitors were staying away. We also heard how one set of lorries at one of the Leiston construction sites was covering neighbouring houses with dirt and dust as the contractors were not obliged to have dump trucks with covers. When asked if this could be addressed, SZC said it could not because the contractor already had the contract and didn't have covered equipment!

Finally, we learnt at this meeting that despite what was presented at the time of DCO approval, considerably more SZC traffic (workers and equipment) are coming from the north than was planned for. This means more traffic is coming down the A12 past Blythburgh and as well as down the B1125. It is creating an even more dangerous situation at the A12 turnings to Southwold, Halesworth and Walberswick. SZC committed to monitor this situation, particularly as very little, if any, mitigation in terms of road improvements on the A12 are planned north of Darsham since such high traffic volumes were not expected. Given that SZC itself is housing thousands of workers at former tourist parks such as Pontins, and using the port at Lowestoft for deliveries, this outcome should hardly have come as a surprise. We expect to be watching this carefully.

The next meeting of the Northern Transport Forum is scheduled for 5 November.

B1125 Working Group

As reported previously, the B1125 Working Group (Blythburgh, Walberswick and Westleton Parish Councils) has been working with SZC, their engineering contractors and Suffolk Highways to find ways to control the dangerous speeds and congestions that will be associated with thousands of cars and vans using the B1125 to reach Sizewell. Monitored average speed cameras have already been installed at Westleton as part of this effort. The other major work will consist of the closure of the B1125 north of the Water Tower/B1387 junction.

This plan is now well developed and SZC is looking for sign-off by the Blythburgh and Walberswick representatives. A near final plan has been submitted and Cllr Bassinette expects to present this to the WPC in November. We have fought hard to get a positive outcome from the design which will include the B1125 closed going north and an improved exit from the B1387 coming from Walberswick. Bicycles and pedestrians will be able to go north on the B1125 as will emergency vehicles if needed. We also fought to have the B1387 from the Water Tower to the A12 substantially approved as part of the closure scheme. Despite an initial “no”, SZC has agreed to give Suffolk Highways the funding to improve this part of the B1387 including drainage, widening and resurfacing. There will also be dedicated right and left turning lanes where the B1387 meets the A12. We argued for a right turning lane into the B1387 on the A12 coming from the South to improve safety and traffic flow, but Suffolk Highway and SZC engineers continue to insist that this will not be necessary. We are asking for a commitment (in writing) that this will be kept under review and that it will be instituted if needed. We are also asking for a commitment that Suffolk Highways and SZC will coordinate the upgrade of the B1387 to be done before the B1125 is closed as the current roadway is not fit for purpose and, in winter months, is often impassable. Cllr Bassinette is awaiting these undertakings before bringing the plans to WPC’s November meeting.

Separately, Cllr Bassinette has asked SZC to consider putting in a cycle PRow from the tarmac end of Lodge Road down the gravel track to the Dunwich Road. Currently that track is not suitable for bicycles. Such a dedicated bicycle path would allow cyclists to stay off the B1387/B1125 whilst still able to reach Dunwich, Darsham, Westleton, and beyond to Eastbridge. Having such a route would also cut back on cyclists illegally using the current footpaths and boardwalks through the marshes (including on the King Charles III footpath) from Dunwich to Walberswick. Cllr Bassinette will continue to work on this with the B1125 Working Group and the SZC working group on PRow.