

WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 15th July 2026 at 6pm.

Present: Councillors Whiting (Chair), Lewis (Vice-Chair), Bassinette, Dadswell (part) and Watson. Also in attendance were 87 members of the public and 5 representatives from the Lionlink project, who were there to present to the Parish Council and respond to subsequent questions from the Parish Council, as per the agenda.

062/26-27 Chair's welcome.

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting and reminded all those present of the rules of conduct for the meeting, including the public forum. In the absence of the clerk, Cllr. Lewis volunteered to take the minutes of the meeting which was agreed.

063/26-27 To consider and approve any apologies for absence.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs. Sutton and Richardson, along with Mark Knight, Clerk and Simon Ashton, RFO.

064/26-27 Declaration of Interest and Requests for Dispensation.

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation

065/26-27 Open Forum

A total of 12 comments/questions were made by members of the public, including:

- When will archaeological reports and surveys be available
- Would Lionlink apologise and withdraw and locate in an area that was not so obviously inappropriate as Walberswick
- G3 made some people slightly less impacted compared to G2, but others were made much worse off and the overall impact on the village was unchanged
- Where would all the earth go and how would a drilling noise level of 85-105 db -- equivalent to a rock concert or Harley Davidson motor bike – 24/7 be mitigated
- Why is there not a joint venture between NGV & Tenent for an off-shore grid solution
- What precision can be added to the current map re. the crossing of Lodge Road
- Why was this particular field (G3) chosen and have any of the presenters actually been to the site
- Why is the Sizewell link road not being considered for access to the converter station site in Saxmundhum
- One side of the field proposed (G3) has nightingales and the other side has nightjars, both protected species
- Whether G2 or G3, all Walberswick residents will be affected
- Impact on public footpaths
- Overwhelming imposition of infrastructure (not just Lionlink but all the other

NSIPS as well) with potential for cumulative damage impact on residents physical and mental well-being.

Cllr. Dadswell joined the meeting at 18.15

The open forum concluded at 18.21

066/26-27 Presentation from Lionlink (to be made available with the approved minutes)

066/26-27.1 The Chair introduced the presentation to be made

066/26-27.2 Key points of the subsequent presentation included:

- 900 pieces of feedback received on initial consultation and this targeted consultation was in response to some of the points made.
- This was a targeted consultation lasting 4 weeks on the G2 to G3 proposed amendment along with the Benhall bridge option, widening of the project boundary at Lymballs Lane and other small amendments
- G3 was circa 400m further from the village centre
- Stocks Lane would not be used as an access point
- It was proposed to use Benhall bridge to access the converter station as this is what SeaLink is doing.
- Lymballs Lane boundary had been moved 30metres south to avoid some of the environmental impact
- Working hours would be reduced and aligned with Sealink
- Consultation closes 5 August
- Expect DCO in first half of 2027
- Construction would begin no earlier than 2028

067/26-27 Questions from the Parish Council Cllr Bassinette thanked the Lionlink representatives for their presence at the meeting and their willingness to take questions directly from the Council on matters of grave importance to Walberswick. She then presented the questions on behalf of the Parish Council.

067/26-27.1 Although it was welcome that LL had recognised the inappropriateness of G2, the G3 replacement was still in the village. Why were they persisting with Walberswick at all and not going elsewhere knowing all the shortcomings of Walberswick as a landfall site?

Answer:

- Starting point was that LL was told by NESO that connection had to be at Kiln Lane (Friston) which constrained their choices to a small section of the Suffolk Coast.
- Sites from Lowestoft to Aldeburgh had been considered and none were found to be appropriate.
- 20 options had been reduced to 5
- Walberswick was subsequently chosen on the basis of what LL has been permitted/directed to do by NESO. Then did “micro-location” selection which is why have changed 3 times to try to find a location in Walberswick that might lessen the negative impact whilst acknowledging that the impacts could only be

managed as they could not remove them.

- G3 is at the technical limit of drilling (in terms of distance) from the sea. This technical analysis was done over the last six months in light of comments received about constraints of G2. So are unable to move landfall to outside of the village.
- G2 to G3 lessens by half the number of “human receptors” directly impacted.

Follow-up: Please confirm that the only reason you are locating here is because NESO told you to connect to Kiln Lane. Otherwise, you could connect through a brownfield site like the current Netherlands/UK connector at Isle of Grain.

- Yes, that is correct. LL must manage within that.

067/26-27.2 Where within the ‘yellow square’ will the drilling actually take place?

Answer:

- The black dotted line on the map is the current premise for the pipeline itself
- This will be finalised over time as further study of the site is undertaken.
- Refinements will be made to maximise distance from homes and best manage noise, vibrations within the confines of what is technically possible. This detail will be provided at the time of the DCO documentation.

067/26-27.3 Timing – 20 months have been indicated; are these consecutive months and is all this time in Walberswick itself?

Answer:

- 20 months is an envelope of what LL thinks is achievable at the landfall/drilling location. Not 20 months consecutively.
- Other work runs alongside this and is done sequentially including the cabling route running out of the landfall. Exact timing/sequencing will be decided later in the project. Have to consider the impact on Walberswick’s population, ecological constraints, tourism etc in trying to time the works.
- When main work is complete, LL will remove the main plant, lighting, etc. though will keep haul road and stone platform of the drilling equipment as they will need to come back and test the whole system, etc when construction is done.
- Time in Walberswick sits within a 3-year window, which will be refined later
- When all done, land will be reinstated and nothing will be left above ground

067/26-27.4 Are you building a haul road or using the B1387?

Answer:

- Both. There will be a haul road south of the B1387 but because they are limited by the existence of Sallow Walk SSSI site, they will have to rejoin the B1387 for some distance and then exit again to rejoin a haul road.
- Specifically, will turn from the A12 on to the B1387. Then will turn off to the south to a haul road that will cross the B1125

south of the water tower and carry on along the cable route until reaching Sallow Walk. At Sallow Walk covert, they can't continue because it is protected. Can't go to the north, because it's a SSSI. So have to rejoin the B1387 and use this until exiting again and building haul road to landfall (crossing Lodge Road).

- Propose to manage this by making the road gated and stopping traffic to allow their vehicles on when needed to traverse safely.

Follow-up: In your selection process, you discounted some locations because it was difficult to reach the sites without using the common roadways or difficulties constructing haul roads, yet both of these problems are in Walberswick. You are using the B1387 for the duration of the project which is particularly bad given that Walberswick has only one access road. This reality should have discounted Walberswick as a landfall location.

067/26-27.5 Where will all the power and water come from?

Answer:

- All water will be brought onto site via tankers. They could not say how many tankers would be needed per day or overall.
- Electricity will be via generators brought to site

067/26-27.6 What is the estimate for HGV movements?

Answer:

- HDD drilling requires drilling fluid and water; the newer technology allows the water to be reused to help limit amounts needed.
- Installation of haul road requires the greatest number of HGVs. They can construct about 150m per day, which requires about 17 HGVs of material each day meaning some 34 HGV movements a day for period of road construction.
- An example from Lodge Road to landfall site is about 450m so would take 3 days of 34 movements for that section.
- LL was not able to estimate for water, AILs, other equipment, removal and worker vehicles
- Will do more noise measurements and will attempt to build noise barriers, etc to deal with this aspect.

067/26-27.7 24/7 HDD drilling – how will this be mitigated?

Answer:

- Distance from homes is the primary mitigation. When that isn't available, use sound mitigation (acoustic barriers)
- Will use state-of-the-art plant (less 'rattle').
- Task specific lighting will be used with no overnight flood lighting during drilling. Will only light what they feel they need to light.
- When not working, low level lighting and/or security guards will be used for security rather than strong lighting. Will only use what is necessary.

Follow-up: Walberswick is a dark sky village, has an economy built around nature, quiet and tranquillity. How do you manage all the lighting and the noise in such an environment?

Answer:

- During the drilling, will be noise and lighting. Lighting only as much as necessary. Won't be flood lit.
- For other activities, will work to minimise night time movement of HGVs and lighting.
- Aware of impacts on nature and will work with statutory bodies (Natural England and Environment Agency) to lessen impacts as much as possible.

067/26-27.8 Trying to work around all protected species including Red Throated Divers which are present in the sea, and species such as the Marsh Harriers that are present on land, appears to leave no effective window to undertake HDD drilling.

Answer:

- In Thames estuary (with similar problems) work is prohibited from 1st Nov – 31st March and LL would also have to have no offshore work during that period (such as cable pulling). But they can do onshore work then.
- They are aware of the challenges and talking to Natural England on how to proceed to avoid worst impacts on protected onshore species
- Will have to work within the rules set for them by the DCO process. If they have to "thread a needle", they will do it.
- Too early in the process to provide a definitive answer.

Follow-up: It is the great frustration in dealing with LL that your ecologists and our ecologists all recognise that this is an inappropriate place to work. In your selection process, you discounted locations because of protected habitats. But rather than admitting the same for Walberswick, you are digging in your heels and trying to mitigate what can't be mitigated. Might all these constraints mean that you can't finish the work in 20 months and will have to be here longer?

Answer:

- Yes. But our current estimate is 20 months.

067/26-27.9 Surely Benhall Bridge is the wrong way to go and SCC came up with a perfectly feasible option from the north using the SZC Link Road and disused Leiston airfield. Why is this not being followed?

Answer:

- LL agrees with SeaLink's approach and prefers the Benhall Bridge because:
 - North route would need 2.5km of extra road
 - Topography of airfield and disused buildings would require extra work for building the haul road and that would mean more HGVs for the ground works.
- They believe that Benhall Bridge can handle nearly all the HGV traffic except for the heavier loads. AILs cannot use the bridge as it currently cannot handle the size/weight. Correcting for this, for them, is less impactful than the northern route. It is not a costing exercise.
- Airfield has contaminated areas so would require more work to clear this.

- Benhall bridge easier with over-bridging or other work.

Follow-up: No one in the community or the local authorities share LL's (or SL's) view on this. The impact of these projects, and the cumulative impact with the other NSIPs, means Benhall Bridge route has an outsized impact on people's lives. We understand that it is more convenient for LL and SL but you are not taking into account the impact on people but rather prioritising the profit of your shareholders.

Answer:

- LL appreciates the point, but they are working within their own parameters and they believe the Benhall bridge route is a better way for them to deliver the project.

Follow-up: Appreciate that LL is trying to listen and therefore we are emphasising to you that the overwhelming sentiment is that you should reconsider this and look to lower the impact on the people who will suffer more from the Benhall Bridge option than if you used the northern route proposed by Suffolk County Council.

067/26-27.10 LL is now to operate not 7 days a week and holidays but rather hours of other NSIPs. In Walberswick, however, will LL be exceeding these hours (working 24/7 for 10 days at a time, 4 times) for anything besides drilling? What time of year will this be?

Answer:

- HDD drilling requires that once started, it cannot be stopped. That will require 24 hour drilling up to an estimated 10 days per drilling session. This will be repeated 4 times.
- They don't know when these sessions would take place because getting the work set up will require working with Natural England to mitigate impact on ecology. Because it may require 'threading the needle' to find the time to undertake this work means they don't know yet when the 24-7 work can happen.
- Won't be able to share when/how it can be done until 2028 after contractors hired. Other unexpected reasons could also extend the regular hours
- They believe these controls are achievable from an engineering perspective but are best estimates at the moment.

067/26-27.11 Going into the DCO will you have all the facts on sound, vibration, etc.? Or will you only be giving hypotheticals and leaving it until contractors are hired when it is too late to do anything about it?

Answer:

- They will have all the relevant and required sound and vibration impact assessments done and proposed mitigation going into the DCO.
- They will have noise level estimates on both people and ecology receptors from different distances from the site ready at the DCO.

067/26-27.12 The Dutch partner appears to be doing it right with infrastructure offshore and using brown field sites for onshore. Why isn't NGV, the British partner, doing it properly here and following the good example of the Dutch partner?

Answer:

- The Dutch side does have an offshore platform, but still has to land. The cable is going up an estuary (to brownfield), but then will land in a farmer's agricultural field outside of a town. So also "greenfield".

Follow-up: Obviously, even with one field being used, the Dutch side is basically brownfield compared to what LL is proposing here.

067/26-27.13. Conclusion from Walberswick:

- We thank the LL team, led by the Project Manager, for their candour in answering the questions today. This is more positive than the behaviour of many NSIPs.
- We request and expect that LL will go back to NESO and put the case that LL should land at a brownfield site as a more sustainable and appropriate solution for the UK side of this private-sector, profit making enterprise. This would also follow the much better example of the Dutch partner of Lionlink.
- We are available to work with LL to answer questions they have prior to DCO when we hope NGV will have reconsidered the proposed project in this location.
- We will put in a written consultation response.

068/26-27 Date of next meeting was confirmed as being Monday, 14th September 2026 at 7pm.

The meeting closed at 7.28PM.