

A photograph of a greenhouse with solar panels on the roof and various plants inside. The greenhouse is made of glass and metal, and is filled with various plants, including potted plants on shelves and plants in raised beds. The solar panels are mounted on the roof of the building. The text is overlaid on the image.

# **Norfolk Zone Community Benefit Fund Necton Rural Community Centre Report**

January 2022



**VATTENFALL**

# Vattenfall - Norfolk Zone Community Benefit Fund

## Report of workshop at Necton Rural Community Centre

January 2022

The meeting was held at Necton Rural Community Centre and on Microsoft Teams on Friday 21st January 2022 between 6pm and 8pm.

### 1. Introduction and purpose of the meeting

This was the first workshop for local residents as part of a dialogue expected to continue over the coming year aimed at shaping Vattenfall's Norfolk Zone Community Benefit Fund. The purpose of the workshop was for Vattenfall to share the broad parameters of the Community Benefit Fund, to begin to share and discuss any locally appropriate climate smart community ideas that residents in Necton and surrounding parishes might have, and to review and build on the findings of the first phase of the dialogue.

The Clerk of Necton Parish Council and the office of George Freeman MP helped to define who should be invited to attend the meeting, helped to publicise it, and encouraged participation. Vattenfall would like to place on record our thanks for their support.

### 2. Workshop detail

The workshop started with a warm welcome from Jean Bass, the Chair of Necton Parish Council. George Freeman MP then spoke about the importance of continuing community engagement and stressed that he was there to represent the interests of his constituency. Catrin Ellis Jones, Head of Stakeholder and Community Engagement at Vattenfall, then gave a very brief project update in relation to the Norfolk Vanguard and Norfolk Boreas offshore wind projects. This was followed by an introduction to Vattenfall's collaborative approach to establishing a Community Benefit Fund, and a description of the key findings of the phase one Community Benefit Fund survey - Give My View.

A second presentation showcased the [Vattenfall's Unlock our Future Fund](#), which is attached to Vattenfall's Aberdeen Bay Offshore Wind Farm, the European Offshore Wind Development Centre (EOWC), and the community projects it supports in Scotland. While the differences between Vattenfall's Aberdeen Offshore Wind Farm and Norfolk Zone were pointed out, this session highlighted similarities in approach to establishing the two funds. Foundation Scotland, administrators of the Unlock our Future Fund, outlined key parts of the process involving communities and stakeholders in shaping and setting up the fund, such as appointing a local panel of decision-makers to determine which projects would be funded. They also shared some lessons learned during the four years the fund has been in operation and described case studies of community projects. Community members reflected and chatted together about what they had heard and then took part in a Q&A session - see section five.

The main workshop session involved small group discussions with residents, exploring their ideas for climate smarter community living and the kind of support that could help them develop great projects, delivering lasting benefits for their communities. Participants noted their views, ideas and comments on worksheets and post-it notes. For those who joined the session online, this involved recording ideas and comments on an interactive whiteboard. Please see the appendices for examples of the feedback received.

Two videos from students at Necton Church of England Primary School showcased local children’s ideas about things they would like to see developed in and around the school to help them and their community become climate smarter. These were super contributions!



Necton Primary’s Eco Council and School Council share their ideas hopes and aspirations for their school and how it can continue the great environmental, and climate smart work they are already busy with. To see their terrific contributions to the meeting, please visit the school website to watch the full videos: <https://www.necton.norfolk.sch.uk/Our-Children-s-Voice-Groups/>

In total, 31 residents and stakeholders attended the event in person and five attended online. The attendees comprised residents and representatives of local community groups, as well as local councillors and parish councillors. The slides that we presented during the workshop can be found on our project webpage here: <https://www.vattenfall.co.uk/vattenfallinnorfolk>

### 3. Participants’ initial climate smarter community ideas

The idea-sharing session was framed by the earlier presentations, and clarified further through the Q&A session – the fundamental criteria surrounding the fund at present are simply:

- To support locally appropriate, climate smart community initiatives. Eligible ideas could involve investing in community facilities e.g. community spaces or transport, and activities to ensure they are fit for the future (i.e. helping to reduce energy consumption through installing energy-saving measures/technology, promoting sustainable development, helping communities adapt to the effects of climate change, and helping the natural environment to regenerate).
- To ensure a legacy and lasting impact, which clearly brings benefit to the local community.

Group discussions initially responded to the following question:

*What ideas do you have to help your community live a climate smarter life?*

A summary of the key themes from this session is outlined below.

### **Rural connectivity and smart transport**

Attendees said that residents need to travel for everything, so sustainable transport is very important. Feedback and ideas included:

- Electric vehicles. The Vattenfall Unlock our Future Fund has supported the purchase of electric vans and an electric utility vehicle.
- More electric vehicle charging points.
- An electric community bus connecting Greenway to Swaffham, Dereham, and points in between.
- An on-demand bus service.
- Cargo bikes for local shops. The Community Benefit Fund in Aberdeen helped Camphill School and Community Food Initiatives Northeast (CFINE) purchase electric cargo bikes to redistribute food to those in need.
- A cycle path from Greenway to Necton, Dereham and Swaffham, as well as a bike track for Great Dunham.
- Community space near the substation for cycling.

### **Energy efficiency and renewable energy generation**

- Insulation. One of Vattenfall's Community Grant Funds awarded funding to Fittie Community Hall to install insulation and window glazing.
- Sustainable heating, such as air source heat pumps for community buildings.
- Solar panels on community buildings, such as the village hall in Great Dunham.

### **Connecting to nature**

- Create a habitat for the preservation of native wildlife and plants within the development. Then use this as an education/training destination.
- Invest in preserving the Norfolk coastline.
- Build composting toilets.
- Build a green play area in Great Dunham.
- Provide green nature garden space and 'green' the village hall in Little Dunham.

### **Climate smart rural living**

- Establish Necton as a demonstration town for off-grid living.
- Community-run "home office" hubs.
- Set up an eco-hub near the proposed substation.

### **Additional ideas**

- Some funding should be awarded to clean the ditches from Dereham through Necton, to prevent flooding and sewage overflow due to surface water spilling from ditches to sewer (climate adaptation).
- Vattenfall should work with other schools apart from Necton Church of England Primary School (e.g. in Great Dunham).
- Use some funding to work with communities to help them develop their ideas and proposals.
- Establish a community development trust to deliver major local projects.

## 4. Additional feedback

- Several participants said communities in and around Necton should receive a very significant share of the Community Benefit Fund as residents will be among those most impacted by the two projects' onshore infrastructure.
- There is a strong desire to focus on mitigating the visual impact of the proposed substation.
- The Government needs to make sure the East of England will benefit from the national transition to Net Zero.
- Some participants said their 'very small' communities will find it difficult to identify opportunities to benefit from funds like this, adding it would be tough to find people willing to deliver projects they do come up with.
- Norfolk Community Foundation would do an excellent job as an administrative body for the Fund.

## 5. Q&A session

Here is a flavour of the key topics covered during the Q&A session and at other points during the workshop. We will capture these alongside questions raised by other communities during the course of the ongoing dialogue in a FAQ document, as many questions resulted in sharing insights that are of interest to others who will help to shape the Community Benefit Fund.

### **Q: Who decides how the Community Benefit Fund will be allocated?**

A: Vattenfall will appoint an administrative body and recruit a local panel that will decide which projects will be allocated funding.

### **Q: What are the criteria by which they will judge proposals?**

A: We are starting this dialogue now to shape these criteria, and they will be clearly formulated throughout the development of the fund. However, the primary criteria noted above, and in all material to date, form the basic outline of eligibility - namely the projects must support the delivery of lasting, climate smarter benefits to local communities.

### **Q: How much of the money is going to be allocated to Necton?**

A: This is yet to be decided. We will be holding similar workshops with other communities along the cable corridor to understand their needs and interests. The £15 million fund associated with the Norfolk Vanguard and Norfolk Boreas projects will be one of the largest funds provided by offshore wind projects in the UK to date, so there will be plenty of opportunities for communities to benefit. The key now is for communities to start thinking about what they want and need to improve community life and achieve climate smarter community living.

### **Q: Was the amount of money given to the Community Benefit Fund decided by Vattenfall or the Government?**

A: The Government/Planning Inspectorate has no involvement in deciding the amount of money included in the Community Benefit Fund because it is neither a consent condition nor part of the Development Consent Order application process. Vattenfall recently announced the fund would be worth £15 million, which is the largest funding commitment to a focused geographic area by an offshore wind company to date.

### **Q: Why can the fund only be used for climate smarter community living?**

A: This theme aligns with Vattenfall's purpose, connecting people with the source of the funding - the Norfolk Zone projects, and we hope it will help you build forward-facing, legacy projects for your communities.

In the results from the first phase of our community benefit fund dialogue, a unifying theme among those who participated in the survey was the recognition that the whole of society needs to make adjustments to prevent climate change from accelerating dangerously. Deploying offshore wind is an efficient, large-scale action that can enable the electrification of many of the services we take for granted today but we also know we all need to act on a community and on individual levels too. As good neighbours in Norfolk, Vattenfall want to support communities to play their part, and also to reconnect perhaps to what they love about Norfolk already. In some instances, it may be that communities need to adapt to the impacts of climate change, and this fund may also provide that kind of support.

Through our experience setting up successful funds elsewhere, we have found that most proposals can be adapted to be climate smarter. Requiring projects to do things a bit differently can help communities drive towards Net Zero, address climate change and build social capital by working together to do things a little differently.

**Q: Can you provide some small grants to investigate the viability of ideas?**

A: Yes, that is a possibility.

**Q: Why does the Community Benefit Fund need stipulations?**

A: We need to shape criteria that help people develop their applications, and that can be used to help the local decision-making panel assess the merits of projects. We have found that stipulations can help communities get what they want while showing others that they can be climate smarter too. Our fund in Aberdeen has inspired other funds to focus on being climate smarter, and we have seen the ideas from that fund being rolled out into other more generic funds.

## 6. Next steps

Vattenfall is continuing the dialogue to ensure that the fund remains based on, and responsive to, community interests, needs and aspirations. There will be other opportunities to get involved and influence how the fund will be spent. We will be holding similar meetings along the cable corridor to talk with residents and explore their ideas for how they would like to benefit from the fund.

Following these workshops, we will use the feedback received to decide on the key themes for the fund. We will then run more thematic workshops to explore these ideas in more detail.

Please continue to take part in the conversation. We need to hear from you to make sure we understand your priorities for how you can benefit from the fund and your local climate smarter initiatives. Community involvement will help ensure the fund provides a lasting legacy of locally appropriate initiatives and support. If you are not yet signed up to receive our e-shots and newsletters, then please register here: [Subscribe to Norfolk Zone E-News](#).

If you have any questions or would like to share further ideas at this stage, please contact [info@norfolkvanguard.co.uk](mailto:info@norfolkvanguard.co.uk)

We look forward to continuing the conversation with you this year.

## 7. Thanks

Many thanks to all those who participated in person and online, and thanks also to pupils and staff at Necton Church of England Primary School who enabled the super contribution of the School Council and Eco Council. Vattenfall is grateful to all involved in organising and publicising the meeting and encouraging broad participation. Thanks to Foundation Scotland for their presentation and participation in the Q&A session that followed.

## Appendix - example of feedback provided on Jamboards

Themes and ideas:

- What ideas have you got that you think could help your community live a climate smarter life? (why do you think it could make a real difference in your community? who would benefit most? will your idea deliver lasting benefit or be sustainable? are your ideas about climate mitigation or adaptation, or both?)

although I can understand what the audience has said, these are perfect examples of how paid-for consultancy can aid converting 'What we want' into 'How the fund can deliver it'

Distances between the parishes make it difficult to have a travelling service (if it's not travel-based)

People want a proportional representation of the fund for their area. If we don't have a need for it, where can we put that offer?

Might be interested in funding people to deliver it. Need it to be something the community wants.

Don't need or have these services so there's no need to put them in. Good that the fund is available but what for?

Note: Holmhale playing fields are rarely used (older community than Necton).

Important that the fund helps rural communities open our eyes to what possibilities there are in our specific communities (new ideas)

Note: I represent a very small community, right next door to the site. We don't need football pitches or commitments to infrastructure. Green spaces?

Fear people won't want to take on further responsibilities to deliver these projects. Who will run them?

I've seen examples of people chasing the money then reshaping it to be more climate-oriented, adding additional value

PCs could join forces to create a worthwhile service for multiple parishes.

Young people want experience (can be volunteering, administration)

Appendix - example of feedback provided on worksheets and post-it notes

