

**MINUTES OF NETHER STOWEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**HELD ON FRIDAY 15 JANUARY 2010 AT 7.00pm**  
**IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

**Present:** Parish Councillors                      Tony Rich (Chairman)  
                                                                         Rita Corbett  
                                                                         Peter Greig  
                                                                         Malcolm Hogg  
                                                                         Margaret Hogg  
                                                                         Pat Pardoe  
                                                                         John Roberts  
                                                                         Teresa Youe

**In attendance:**  
                                 Chairman of CANS                      Mary Roberts  
                                 Parish Clerk                                      Ainslie Ensor  
                                 6 Parishioners

**3782 Apologies**

Apologies were also received from District Cllrs Dyer and Joslin and District /County Cllr Edney. The Clerk reported that Cllr Dyer was recovering but had indicated that he would be unable to attend evening meetings for a while. The Parish Council sent its best wishes to Cllr Dyer.

**3783 Hinkley Point C – Proposed Nuclear Development**

The Chairman explained that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Parish Council's formal response to the EDF Energy Stage 1 Consultation regarding the proposed development of the Hinkley C nuclear power station.

The Clerk reported on the comments made at the special meeting of Sedgemoor District Council held on 14 January and comments received by the Parish Office following the public meeting held in Nether Stowey the Village Hall the previous evening.

The Chairman invited those members of the public to make comments and the Council then discussed, in detail, various concerns regarding the proposed off site "associated developments" linked to the proposed development of Hinkley C.

It was **agreed** that the Parish Council welcomed the proposed development of Hinkley C.

It was further **agreed** that the Parish Council considered that whilst there was the potential for certain limited development in Nether Stowey, associated with the proposed power station, it was vital that a number of measures were implemented to mitigate the consequential pressures on Nether Stowey identified during the consultation in the village.

It was noted that the deadline for the response to EDF Energy was Monday 18 January 2010 and therefore the Council **authorised** the Clerk to the Parish Council, in consultation with the Chairman and Cllrs Corbett and Greig, to prepare and submit a detailed response to EDF Energy based on the points raised during the foregoing discussion

The meeting closed at 9.10pm

**NOTE:**

***A copy of the Parish Council response to EDF Energy submitted pursuant to the above minute is appended to these minutes.***





**NETHER STOWEY PARISH COUNCIL**

**Hinkley Point C  
Proposed Nuclear Development  
Pre Application Consultation Stage 1  
Initial Proposals and Options November 2009**

**Response to EDF Energy  
by  
Nether Stowey Parish Council  
January 2010**



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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 In November 2009 EDF Energy published their Initial Proposals and Options with regard to the proposed development of a new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point (Hinkley Point C). On 14 December 2009 representatives of EDF Energy made a presentation to a meeting of the Nether Stowey Parish Council, and members of the public, in Nether Stowey Village Hall. On 14 January 2010 representatives of EDF Energy made a further presentation to a public meeting hosted by the Parish Council in Nether Stowey Village Hall attended by 64 people.
- 1.2 A representative of the Parish Council also attended the consultation event in Bridgwater on 9 December 2009 hosted by EDF Energy. Parish Council representatives have also held various discussions with neighbouring Parish Councils in Sedgemoor and West Somerset. The Parish Council is also aware of the comments of the Sedgemoor District Council and the technical evaluation of the Stage 1 proposals document prepared by Ove Arup & Partners Ltd for Sedgemoor and West Somerset District Councils.
- 1.3 The Parish Council's response takes into account information gained through the various meetings and documents outlined above and the verbal and written comments made by residents of the Parish both at the public meetings and sent to the Parish Council Office.
- 1.4 Nether Stowey has a long standing and positive connection with the Hinkley Point power stations and the Parish Council considers and welcomes the proposed development of Hinkley Point C as a significant and positive investment in the area.
- 1.5 However, the Parish Council believes that any project of this size will inevitably bring with it pressures and challenges for local communities, including Nether Stowey, which if not addressed will have a detrimental impact on the area. The Parish Council wishes to ensure that these pressures are recognised and addressed before the main construction phase is underway. Section 2.0 of this document outlines some of the ways in which the project will impact on Nether Stowey.
- 1.6 The Parish Council has noted the proposed Transport Strategy but has substantial concerns and reservations about the detailed proposals and in particular the impact on the safe and efficient operation of the A39 west of Bridgwater. These are detailed in Section 3.0 and Appendix 1.
- 1.7 At the presentation on 14 December 2009 EDF Energy indicated that the Initial Proposals Document did not include any proposals for associated development in Nether Stowey as they had been guided by the emerging Sedgemoor District Council Local Development Framework (LDF). In its response to the LDF Core Strategy Preferred Options consultation the Parish Council disagreed with the proposed Spatial Strategy and the lack of a review of the development boundary for the village; both of which the Parish Council considered to be too restrictive and against the best interests of the village. The Parish Council considered that the Core Strategy should allow for further development of Nether Stowey, most likely to the north and east of the existing settlement. A copy of the Parish Council's response to the LDF Core Strategy consultation is included as Appendix 2

- 1.8 At the public meeting on 14 January 2010 there was a cautiously positive reaction to the opportunities presented by the development of Hinkley C. There was also wide support for the concept of the development of a residential care home / nursing home for local people. In line with this and its response to the LDF Core Strategy the Parish Council considers there is some limited potential for the development of workers' accommodation and associated development in Nether Stowey and this is outlined in Section 4.0.
- 1.9 The Parish Council considers that should the development of Hinkley C proceed EDF Energy should be required to undertake actions and support initiatives designed to mitigate the pressures outlined in Section 2.0 and support a programme of Community Benefits as outlined in Section 5.0.
- 1.10 The Parish Council response to the Stage 1 Consultation is being submitted to EDF Energy and copied to the following:
- Somerset County Council
  - Sedgemoor District Council
  - West Somerset District Council
  - Somerset Association of Local Councils
  - Community Council for Somerset
  - Member of Parliament representing Nether Stowey
  - District Council Ward Members and County Council Divisional Member representing Nether Stowey

Quantock Cluster Parishes

- Broomfield Parish Council
- Cannington Parish Council
- Chilton Trinity Parish Council
- Durleigh Parish Council
- Enmore Parish Council
- Fiddington Parish Council
- Goathurst Parish Council
- Otterhampton Parish Council
- Over Stowey Parish Council
- Spaxton Parish Council
- Stockland Bristol Parish Meeting
- Wembdon Parish Council

West Somerset Parishes

- Stogursey Parish Council
- Holford Parish Council

## **2.0 Potential Impacts on Nether Stowey**

2.1 Nether Stowey is a village of some 670 homes with a population of about 1485 population (2001 census, 1313) and is a designated Key Rural Centre. The village has a wide range of services and facilities including a parish church, church centre, primary school, public library, fire station, medical centre, post office, four shops, estate agency, garage, three public houses and a bistro. Nether Stowey has a recreation field and a village hall dating from the early twentieth century. The village has a strong community identity with many voluntary social organisations. The village has a very low incidence of crime and anti social behaviour.

2.2 It is an historic settlement with a large conservation area at its centre in which the medieval street pattern and property divisions are still visible. The village has a number of listed buildings including a National Trust property (Coleridge Cottage) and a scheduled ancient monument on the Castle Mount. The village is bounded to the south by the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. By virtue of its position and history Nether Stowey is a centre for visitors to the Quantock Hills.

2.3 As indicated in the introduction, the Parish Council recognises that the development of Hinkley Point C will bring benefits for the area. However, by virtue of its size and scale the project could have a number of negative impacts on Nether Stowey. These include:

- Increased traffic congestion generally and in particular on the A39
- A reduction in road safety, in particular the eastern access to the village; the A39 St Mary Street junction
- Increased car parking pressures in the village centre
- Increased demand for residential property exacerbating current problems of affordable homes for young people
- Increased demand for bed and breakfast accommodation reducing the bed spaces available for tourists
- Increased pressure on public services including the medical centre, school etc
- Loss of community identity due to an influx of temporary and permanent workers
- Anti social and law and order problems from a large influx of unaccompanied male workers

2.4 The development will have a visual impact on the village as the development site will be visible from much of the southern part of the village.

### **3.0 Roads & Transport**

- 3.1 Although there are many facilities in the village residents travel to Bridgwater and beyond for employment, retail services, health services and education. The A39 to Bridgwater and the M5 is, therefore, a key artery for the village. The Parish Council is concerned that the proposals outlined are not sufficient to avoid significant traffic congestion on the A39 to the detriment of the residents of Nether Stowey and other communities west of Bridgwater.
- 3.2 The Parish Council considers that there is a fundamental weakness in the transport strategy proposed by EDF Energy. The present proposals require all road traffic for the site (with the exception of traffic from Williton) to travel along the A39 from the western end of the Bridgwater Northern Distributor Road to the roundabout at the eastern end of the Cannington southerly by-pass. This stretch of the A39 has been closed for a matter of several hours twice in the last two years following serious road traffic accidents (one involving a fatality). There is no alternative direct route from the proposed park and ride and freight consolidation developments at M5 junctions 23 and 24 to the site. On the occasions when the A39 was closed to traffic all the minor roads between Nether Stowey and Bridgwater became congested and the area became grid locked for several hours.
- 3.3 The Parish Council also has serious concerns about the traffic implications of the proposed park and ride facility for 350 cars at Williton. Whilst such a facility may reduce the number of vehicles on the A39 it will exchange cars for larger vehicles (buses). There are a number of pinch points on the A39 between Williton and Cannington where it is difficult for two large vehicles to pass. Slower moving buses will also hold up car traffic and increase the likelihood of car drivers increasing their speed in an attempt to overtake slower traffic on the A39 at Nether Stowey increasing the probability of accidents at the eastern access to the village.
- 3.4 In view of these concerns the Parish Council calls upon EDF Energy to work with Somerset County Council and Sedgemoor District Council to achieve a road link from the A38 in the Dunball area to a Cannington By-Pass linking the C182 and A39. This would remove the single pathway weakness referred to in para 3.2 above and be a lasting legacy by providing an improved link to the M5 corridor for the communities west of Bridgwater.
- 3.5 The Parish Council expresses no preference for the route of the Cannington By-Pass which it considers should be a matter for detailed discussion between the appropriate Authorities and Cannington Parish Council.
- 3.6 The Parish Council notes the proposal to use the route from the site via Stogursey Lane as an alternative / emergency access and would wish to receive further details of how this road is to be improved / managed to ensure that adequate access is maintained at all times for the homes accessed off Stogursey Lane.
- 3.7 Whilst it is accepted that EDF Energy will, to a large extent, be able to control traffic to and from the development site it should be borne in mind that it will have little or no influence on additional traffic generated by off duty domestic and recreational travel and travel by dependants of site workers.

- 3.8 Further details of the concerns the Parish Council has about the Traffic strategy and use of A39 between Bridgwater and Williton are given in Appendix 1.

#### **4.0 The Potential for Associated Development in Nether Stowey**

- 4.1 As indicated in para 1.8 the Parish Council considers that there is limited potential for the development of workers accommodation and associated development in Nether Stowey. However, in considering any such development there will be an overriding need to ensure that the scale, location, and design of any proposals are in keeping with the existing village.
- 4.2 At the public meeting held in Nether Stowey on 14 January 2010 the EDF Energy representative stated that it had been estimated that 12% of the incoming workers would be in family units, rather than unaccompanied. The Parish Council believes that any development of workers accommodation in Nether Stowey should be designed to cater for this segment of the workforce. It is considered that such family units (with or without dependant children) are more likely to contribute to village life, support local businesses and facilities and less likely to cause law and order problems.
- 4.3 As indicated in the response to the LDF Core Strategy, the Parish Council would expect to see any such development to the north and east of the existing village centre. In this context it should be noted that 12% of the homes and a slightly higher proportion of the population of Nether Stowey lie to the north of the A39, as does the village church and the largest commercial development (Cricketer Farm).
- 4.4 If any such development was to be considered the Parish Council considers that it should be no bigger than the Hartley Meadow development off Stogurse Lane. This is a development of 67 properties ranging from 2 bed "affordable" starter homes to 4 bed family houses.
- 4.5 The Parish Council would expect any development to be a permanent development. It would be expected that the legacy use be identified at the outset and the development designed to ensure that it met the necessary standards without extensive alteration at the end of the construction period. Legacy uses could include:
- (a) affordable housing to be owned by a registered social landlord chosen by the Parish Council in conjunction with the Sedgemoor District Council and Community Council for Somerset
  - (b) a residential care home / nursing home to be owned by a Community Trust, to be established in conjunction with the Parish Council
  - (c) accommodation for small businesses to be owned by a Community Trust
- 4.6 It is noted that it is likely that such a development could involve ancillary parking and social and leisure facilities, both of which should have a legacy use. These would need to be the subject of detailed discussions with the Parish Council.

## **5.0 Planning Gain, Mitigation of Pressures and Community Benefit**

- 5.1 In addition to the measures outlined below, which are in the main specific to Nether Stowey, the Parish Council believes that it is vital that EDF Energy promote local training and apprenticeships in order that local people are able to access the employment potential at Hinkley C and also to minimise the negative impact of a labour shortages for other (non Hinkley C related) businesses in the area.
- 5.2 The Parish Council believes that it is important that EDF Energy implement a package of measures to mitigate the potential pressures on Nether Stowey regardless of whether or not the associated development outlined in Section 4.0 above takes place.
- 5.3 The following is a, non exhaustive, list of the measures the Parish Council is seeking. In all cases the Parish Council would expect and require EDF Energy to consult with and gain the approval of the Parish Council for individual initiatives, regardless of what body or agency is implementing the initiative.
- 5.4 Traffic Management – support for measures designed to reduce the existing pressures on on-street parking in the village centre.
- 5.5 Road Safety – support for improvements to the junction of St Mary Street and the A39 and safe pedestrian crossing to the village church. Also support for road safety improvements on the A39 between Nether Stowey and Bridgwater.
- 5.6 Affordable Homes – support for more affordable homes to rent in the village. The Parish Council is currently working with the Community Council for Somerset and Sedgemoor District Council following a recent Housing Needs Survey which indicated the immediate need for up to 20 affordable homes to rent for local people.
- 5.7 Tourism – support for initiatives designed to ensure that local tourism business does not drop below current levels as a result of the development of Hinkley C.
- 5.8 Community Cohesion – support for initiatives undertaken by **CANS (Community Action for Nether Stowey)** designed to encourage community cohesion, voluntary projects in the village and the provision of youth facilities. Support for the improvement of leisure and other community facilities in the village.
- 5.9 Public Services – to review the provision of health, educational and other social services in the village to ensure they are capable of serving any permanent or temporary increase in the local population.
- 5.10 Legacy Use – of any associated development as described in Section 4.0
- 5.11 The Parish Council would be pleased to work with EDF Energy, and other agencies as appropriate, to prepare a more detailed, prioritised and costed schedule of community benefits based on the above outline.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Traffic Strategy and A39 Concerns**

The following is a, non exhaustive, list of concerns the Parish Council has about EDF Energy's current traffic strategy which relies on the A38 / Bridgwater Northern Distributor Road (BNDR) and A39 to Cannington as the principal / single access to the Hinkley C site.

- The A39 is a designated Red Route, an acknowledgement that it has higher than average accident/casualty statistics.
- The A39 west of Bridgwater carries significant numbers of vehicles which are either large, slow or over sized. Examples include (i) HGV's destined for Cannington Cold Stores west of Cannington (ii) HGV's destined for Watchet (iii) HGV's carrying mobile homes for West Somerset caravan parks (iv) farm tractors year round (v) farm tractors and trailers taking grain to Cannington Grain Store.
- With the development of year round tourism (e.g. Butlins at Minehead) there is no "off season" for tourist traffic. During the main holiday season tourist traffic now tends to flow round the clock.
- The lack of suitable alternative routes for traffic if the A39 is blocked between Bridgwater and Williton leading to gridlock of minor roads. It should be noted that Parish Council's in Sedgemoor (the Quantock Cluster of Parishes) and West Somerset (Stogursey, Holford, Kilve) have been concerned about this issue for some time.
- The number of pinch points on the A39 between Bridgwater and Williton where large vehicles find it difficult (in the case of cars) or impossible (in the case of other large vehicles) to pass vehicles travelling in the opposite direction.
- Under the Bridgwater Building Schools for the Future project it is planned to construct a major new secondary school accessed off the A39 to the west of the BNDR
- The BNDR was designed as a distributor road for some 1000 new homes not a strategic by-pass for Bridgwater. The present junctions at the eastern end (Wylds Road, The Drove and Bristol Road) are not suitable for large increases in traffic.
- Somerset NHS is planning to build a new Community Hospital on the east side of Bridgwater. The new hospital is being designed to accommodate a substantial increase in out patient work meaning that many people living west of Bridgwater will be travelling into Bridgwater for out patient treatment rather than south over the Quantock Hills to Musgrove Park Hospital as at present.
- The development of the new Morrison's Supermarket Distribution Centre north of Bridgwater will lead to increased traffic, particularly HGV's on the A38 north of Bridgwater leading to further congestion for incoming traffic.
- In the event of any major incident on the M5 between junction 25 (Taunton) and junction 22 (Burnham on Sea) motorway traffic diverts onto the A38 through Bridgwater leading to severe congestion. Any additional traffic destined for Hinkley C using the A38 in Bridgwater (north or south of the town centre) would undoubtedly lead to complete gridlock.

**APPENDIX 2**

**Local Development Framework  
CORE STRATEGY  
Preferred Options**

**RESPONSE BY NETHER STOWEY PARISH COUNCIL**

The Parish Council has pleasure in submitting its response to the above consultative document.

**1.0 SUMMARY**

The Parish Council:

1. Supports Preferred Option SU1, in particular the need to promote the greater self containment of settlements.
2. Supports, in Preferred Option SS1, the designation of Nether Stowey as a Key Rural Settlement.
3. Disagrees, in Preferred Option SS1, with the Spatial Strategy for Sedgemoor as it impacts on Key Rural Settlements such as Nether Stowey
4. Supports Preferred Option SRC1, but considers that the Spatial Strategy (SS1) is too restrictive.
5. Supports Preferred Option SRC2 – The Rural Economy
6. Supports Preferred Option SRC3 – Protecting Rural Services
7. Supports Preferred Option SRC4 – with the proviso that further consideration needs to be given to the development boundaries of Key Rural Settlements
8. Supports Preferred Option DW1 – Promoting High Quality and Inclusive Design
9. Supports Preferred Option DW2 – Affordable Housing
10. Supports Preferred Option DW3 – Dwelling Size and Type
11. Supports Preferred Option DW4 – Housing Density
12. Supports Preferred Option DW5 – Housing for Older Persons and Specific Needs
13. Supports Preferred Option DW6 – Gypsies and Travellers
14. Supports Preferred Option DW7 – Economic Performance
15. Supports Preferred Option DW8 – Tourism

16. Supports Preferred Option DW9 – Health Care Facilities
17. Supports Preferred Option DW10 – Community Safety
18. Supports Preferred Option DW11 – Transport
19. Supports Preferred Option DW12 – Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment
20. Supports Preferred Option DW13 – Green Infrastructure
21. Supports Preferred Option DW14 - Biodiversity
22. Supports Preferred Option DW15 – Historic Environment
23. Supports Preferred Option MP1 – in particular points (h) improvements to the road system and (o) ensuring that the benefits are enjoyed by local communities

## **2.0 DETAILED COMMENTS**

- 2.1 Nether Stowey is an important rural settlement that has good local services (school, library and retail outlets) and a strong community identity. The village acts as a centre of activity not only for the residents of Nether Stowey but also for residents of neighbouring smaller rural villages and hamlets, including those to the west in West Somerset District. As such the Parish Council endorses the identification of Nether Stowey as a Key Rural Settlement (KRS).
- 2.2 Nether Stowey is also an historic village with, at its centre, a conservation area of county wide importance. The village is bounded to the south by the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 2.3 The Parish Council recognises that it is important to protect the historic and natural beauty of the environs of the village. However, the Parish Council is also ever conscious that the services that make the village a community, rather than merely a dormitory for commuters to larger towns and conurbations in the region, need to be sustained and that to prosper the village must be allowed to grow naturally.
- 2.4 Whilst the Parish Council supports the majority of the Core Strategy Preferred Options it considers that certain key provisions are not in the best interests of the future of Nether Stowey. These are detailed below.
- 2.5 The Parish Council considers that the Spatial Strategy for Sedgemoor (Preferred Option SS 1) is too restrictive as regards Nether Stowey as a KRS. The figures presented in the document imply an average of 2.75 dwellings per annum per KRS which the Parish Council considers too restrictive to allow natural growth of the community.
- 2.6 The Parish Council is concerned to note that during a recent presentation on the Core Strategy the Planning Policy Officer indicated that it was not intended to review the development boundary of the settlement.

- 2.7 As was illustrated during the recent search for a site for seven affordable houses, there are effectively no sites within the existing development boundary capable of development. Similarly a recent permitted proposal for a tourist related development involved development outside the development boundary, albeit on a site which is accessed and developed within the development boundary.
- 2.8 The Parish Council notes the comment in paragraph 4.122 that the A39 “defines the edge of the village” but would point out that over 10% of the dwellings in the village, the village church and the largest commercial development in the village all lay to the north of the A39.
- 2.9 With Cannington, Nether Stowey is one of the largest rural communities within the hinterland of Hinkley Point. The Parish Council is of the view that the potential new nuclear build at Hinkley Point will have an impact on the village and has opened discussions with EDF Energy regarding how the village can benefit from that development.
- 2.10 The Parish Council considers that the Core Strategy should allow for further development of Nether Stowey, most likely to the north and east of the existing settlement, to allow for the future provision of affordable and open market housing, community facilities and local employment opportunities. To this end the Parish Council considers that the housing allocation within the Spatial Strategy should be revised to allow more flexibility for development in Key Rural Settlements such as Nether Stowey.
- 2.11 The Parish Council also considers that the emerging Local Development Framework should include either a formal review of the development boundary of Key Rural Settlements such as Nether Stowey or a policy that allows sympathetic and appropriate development adjacent to Key Rural Settlements such as Nether Stowey.
- 2.12 The Parish Council considers that such flexibility will allow natural growth of the community will protect local services and is sustainable in that it allows greater self containment and minimises the need for travel for services and employment.
- 2.13 The Parish Council considers that the safety and efficiency of east west communications on the A39 are of paramount importance and that careful consideration must be given to improvements to the road network, in the event of development at Hinkley Point.



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