

Weybourne PC resolved to join the Norfolk Parishes Movement for an OTN a long time ago because we felt that this gave local residents a voice – helping to redress the power imbalance between, on the one hand, the vested interests of the wind farm companies (in this instance Equinor) with their army of consultants, technical specialists and community liaison teams, and on the other hand ordinary people who are on the receiving end of the cable construction. Being part of the Norfolk Parishes Movement for an OTN has allowed us to pool resources and knowledge and to feel less alone in the fight against the destruction of our rural way of life, and to counter Equinor’s propensity to “divide and rule”. It is important for the local community to have a voice, to question the assessments that impacts are “negligible” or “minor”, when this is not actually the experience of the “receptors” (in other words – people!).

We cannot stress enough the cumulative impact of the construction of one wind farm after another. In addition to the human cost of the stress and anxiety caused by the drawn-out planning and construction process, the repeated destruction of important environmental features is disastrous at a time when nature and biodiversity is in crisis. For example, the Hornsea 3 scheme has recently hacked its way through hedgerows and trees along its cable corridor. These are not scheduled to be replaced until the cable construction is completed, which will be several years at least. It will take time for these to recover to function fully as wildlife corridors, and meanwhile, the Equinor projects, if approved, are likely to take out another swathe of hedgerows and trees, further damaging the integrity of these important environmental features.

With the latest research on climate change suggesting that the situation is even more serious than previously thought, now is not the time to be ripping out vegetation which fulfils vital functions: providing shelter from wind, temperature regulation, sequestering carbon, sequestering water, preventing soil erosion, and providing food, shelter and nesting opportunities for wildlife. Particularly when there is a much better alternative to bring ashore the renewable energy from the Equinor wind farm projects, namely a connection at Walpole.