



Paull Parish Council

September 6th 2012

As discussed after the Open Floor Meeting held in Hedon on the afternoon of September 5th 2012, Paull Parish Council have asked me to submit the following points for your consideration with regard to the proposed development by AbleUK on the south bank of the Humber Estuary and its corresponding compensatory habitat on the north bank, in Paull Parish :

- 1) Paull Parish Council wish it to be made clear that they do not have any objection to the proposed development in Lincolnshire and indeed support the development of renewable energy sources; their objection is to the proposed compensatory habitat which is entirely in the parish of Paull, East Yorkshire, on the opposite bank of the Humber.
- 2) We object to any loss of land here – it represents a huge infrastructure change for this area. It is prime quality farmland which was reclaimed from the Humber for just this purpose – to extend food production (an important factor in this era of increasing worldwide grain shortage) ; to return it to the river would be a retrograde step. Livelihoods are at risk – the tenant farmers stand to lose a major proportion of their productive land but AbleUK have been told by the landowners - the Crown – not to speak to the very people who would be most directly affected.
- 3) The proportion of land proposed as compensation for lost habitat is extraordinary – we cannot comprehend why it isn't simply like for like, in area at least.
- 4) Has any consideration been made of the effect of flooding land contaminated by chemicals? In the 1950s and 60s a large amount of chemical waste from BP, Reckitts and Smith & Nephew was dumped there as infill and covered with topsoil : one of Paull's Parish Councillors will testify to this as he worked on the site and was involved in burying the waste – he estimates the depth of soil over it to be around three feet. The leaching of these chemicals into the system could be catastrophic.
- 5) The estuary is a dynamic system and is subject to constant natural change, and nobody knows how it will react, even without the addition of extra water flows to the equation. Paull has first-hand experience of this uncertainty: the Environment Agency chose Paull for the site of the first major coastal realignment scheme on the Humber as part of a flood risk management scheme and was intended to provide approximately 200 acres of new intertidal habitat supplemented by the wide expanse of the Paull Holme Sands mudflats. The scheme was completed in 2003 when the sea wall was breached to allow the tides to flood in, and since then we have watched it change rapidly, and unexpectedly

– the EA did say at the time that it was all experimental and that they didn't know what was going to happen. Originally drained by Thorngumbald Clough, which has been blocked and diverted, changes to the drainage outfall have led to the mudflats on the seaward side disappearing at an alarming rate, not back to the river but by being rapidly overtaken by plant growth, whilst the inner lagoon is warping up to saltmarsh and even grassland, so much so that Yorkshire Wildlife, who now manage the Paull Holme Strays site, are proposing to graze sheep on it to keep the vegetation short! Although some mudflat still remains, our experience shows that trying to replace lost mudflats on the south bank by flooding north bank farmland is very unlikely to work.

- 6) Stony Creek and the estuary outside the outfall have a myriad small drainage channels which shift and change naturally – adding extra water from the new system to this could cause major flooding should the Creek – and thus the drainage system for the whole of south Holderness, NOT just Sunk Island – become blocked by a mud bar. Recent experience shows that flooding from land drainage extends far beyond the immediate estuary to parishes well inland, and the catastrophic flooding of 2007 when the land drains were unable to cope would seem minor in comparison should Stone Creek cease to function.
- 7) With regard to any proposed footpath on any proposed sea wall, we wish to point out that it should be sited on top of the bank, as it is at present: even if it is sited at the foot of the bank, our experience at Paull Holme Strays shows that, human nature being what it is, wherever the official path is supposed to be, walkers will still take to the top of the bank for the best views and it would be far better to have a reinforced surface there.

We also wish to express our disappointment at the poor communication with Parish Councils on this side of the estuary with regard to the planning process : Wednesday's meeting was poorly (and in some cases inaccurately) advertised, so that Hedon Town Council turned up for the meeting at 7 p.m., having been informed that it was taking place at that time, and the only reason Paull PC was represented at all was because it was advertised correctly on a very minor website and was spotted in time. The meeting to discuss the compensation issues is being held in Grimsby at 9.30 a.m. for a 10 a.m. start, thus ensuring that councillors from those parishes most affected are simply unable to attend. Our councillors are all unpaid volunteers and apart from those who have retired, have to work for a living.

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