

## HALE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Miss Kathy Cleary, 5 Saddlers Close, Fordingbridge, Hants, SP6 1AE  
07753 928088 and 01425 652495 [hpcclerk@gmail.com](mailto:hpcclerk@gmail.com)

FAO Ben Smith/ Stuart Fox  
National Grid plc  
1-3 The Strand  
London  
WC2N 5EH  
By email: [visualimpact@nationalgrid.com](mailto:visualimpact@nationalgrid.com); [SFox@camarque.uk](mailto:SFox@camarque.uk)

18<sup>th</sup> October 2018

Dear Ben

Many thanks for your letter of 16<sup>th</sup> October, in response to the Parish Council's letter of 11<sup>th</sup> October. Your points of clarification are noted and welcomed as I think this now reflects properly the spirit of the Parish Council offer to assist residents in any meeting that they may choose to have with National Grid.

You mention that you are happy for your letter to be published on the Hale Parish Council website and I have done this, but we remain concerned that some of our residents do not have access to the internet and may not see this clarification. I will post both letters on the Parish Council noticeboards but equally not all residents who received your letter of 26<sup>th</sup> Sept will be regular walkers past the noticeboards.

Therefore please can National Grid send by first class post to every resident who received the original National Grid letter a follow up letter and enclosing unamended copies of these documents – appended to this letter so there are no further misunderstandings:-

- Hale Parish Council letter to National Grid dated 11<sup>th</sup> October 2018 (appended to this letter)
- National Grid letter to Hale Parish Council dated 16<sup>th</sup> October 2018 (appended to this letter)
- This letter from Hale Parish Council to National Grid dated 18<sup>th</sup> October 2018

You will appreciate that the Parish Council does not have a record of which residents were recipients of your original letter and hence this request for a further mailing from yourselves is the only way that the Parish Council can guarantee that residents have been updated.

I would be grateful if you could confirm when these have been sent.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Yours sincerely

*K. Cleary*

Kathy Cleary  
Clerk to Hale Parish Council



Ben Smith  
VIP project manager (South)  
[visualimpact@nationalgrid.com](mailto:visualimpact@nationalgrid.com)

Ms Kathy Cleary  
Clerk to Hale Parish Council  
[hpcclerk@gmail.com](mailto:hpcclerk@gmail.com)

16 October 2018

Dear Kathy

Thank you for your letter dated 11<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

Please find our responses to the points raised in the letter below

**1. Potential attendance by HPC representatives at meetings between Parishioners, National Grid and BK**

National Grid fully accepts that the offer to attend made by Hale PC was with the intention of supporting residents, so that as supportive bystanders they could help to ensure that what is said by both parties is as clear and unambiguous as possible.

The offer to attend was always designed to increase options open to residents and intended to be helpful to them. We are happy to clarify this point.

**2. The wording of the letter**

National Grid is happy to clarify that the use of the words 'independent third parties' was used solely to demonstrate that the views of any HPC members who might attend meetings were separate from, and did not necessarily reflect those of, National Grid or BK. The attendance of Hale PC members was purely to be helpful to parish residents – see 1 above – and did not in any way represent an endorsement for National Grid's proposals.

**3. Representation at the meeting**

National Grid can confirm that residents may choose to have any person they wish attend the meeting with them. Additional attendees are not restricted to representatives from Hale Parish Council.

**4. Clarification of the purpose of the meeting**

The scope of the meeting is outlined in our letter which states:

*National Grid understands that homeowners would like more information about how the proposal will affect them. This will be an opportunity to discuss your thoughts and concerns, and how these might be addressed, directly with us and National Grid.*

We had left the scope broad so that residents were able to speak to us on any matter or concern that they might have, large or small. This would include the issues you state, namely access, the potential for damage to property and noise, but also anything else they may want to raise including compensation. National Grid's appointed land agents, BK are responsible for all compensation issues relating to the VIP project in the New Forest. National Grid's land agents perform this role on all of National Grid's projects in the UK.

It is up to residents whether or not they feel the need to take professional advice either at the meeting or outside it. However National Grid will not bear these costs. It should be noted however that if you are able to demonstrate that you have a legal interest in land that is directly affected by the works i.e. where the cables will be placed, then National Grid will pay appropriate compensation for any loss that can be reasonably demonstrated along with associated reasonable professional fees.

#### **5. Location of meetings**

Meetings can take place at alternative locations to residents' homes if they would prefer. National Grid offered to have them in residents' properties, so that we could physically demonstrate how close the works would come to the property and the impact they might have. The choice of location is however up to individual residents. Your suggestion of the small meeting room at Hale village hall would seem a sensible location. National Grid would meet the cost of room hire at the village hall for such a meeting at the going commercial rate.

#### **6. Written confirmation of the meeting**

National Grid and BK will make a note of the meeting for its records. Residents would be entitled to a copy of the meeting notes should they request it.

We would be happy for the responses here to be posted on the Hale Parish Council website so that residents can be made aware of these clarifications. We will ensure that residents who contact us subsequently are also made aware of the options outlined above.

Your sincerely



Ben Smith

VIP project manager (South)

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11<sup>th</sup> October 2018

Dear Ben and Stuart

I am writing in response to the letter sent by Bruton Knowles on behalf of National Grid to certain Hale residents dated 26<sup>th</sup> September 2018. Several councillors have received this as residents and the letter was also raised as an item for discussion by Parishioners at the Parish Council meeting on 2 Oct.

The Parish Council would like to bring the following points to the attention of National Grid as a matter of urgency:

**1. The nature of HPC's potential attendance at any meeting between National Grid/ Bruton Knowles and Hale residents.**

As you are aware, the idea of offering residents a one on one meeting to have their personal questions answered was raised by Cllr Lucas after the Stakeholder Reference Group meeting at which the latest route was disclosed and it became clear that many more Hale residents would suffer real and sustained disruption through the period of the project.

Cllr Lucas also verbally suggested that HPC would be willing to attend these meetings if so desired by residents. Cllr Lucas had previously discussed this concept informally with individual Councillors who confirmed their willingness to help, subject to availability.

The aim of HPC's offer to attend was to support the residents to make their points and ask their questions. As supportive bystanders Councillors could help ensure that what is said by both parties is as clear and unambiguous as possible.

We understand that some residents may choose not to meet National Grid at this stage. Equally, some may choose to meet National Grid alone and others may choose to have their own professional advisers alongside them at any meeting. The offer to attend from HPC was designed to increase resident options and intended to be helpful to residents.

**2. The wording of the letter sent to residents dated 26th September – Hale Parish Council involvement in any meetings between National Grid and residents.**

The actual wording in the letter sent to residents, which describes any Parish Council attendees as 'independent third parties' does not reflect the proposal or the intention behind our offer of assistance.

We accept that a draft of the letter was sent to Cllr Lucas by Camargue/ National Grid. Unfortunately, this occurred whilst Cllr Lucas was on holiday in an area with particularly poor mobile and email communication. Rather than hold up the letter unnecessarily, Cllr Lucas tried to review whilst overseas and responded with a request to advise her of the potential sending date of the letter so that she could make sure the whole Council knew what was happening. Somehow the message was

misinterpreted and the letter was sent before other Councillors had had sight of it (a copy of the letter was sent to other councillors emails five days after the letters had been despatched and just one day before the Parish Council meeting on the Tuesday evening). Consequently this has led to a fundamental misrepresentation to residents of the Parish Council's offer of assistance. For any errors on our part in this we apologise, but the fact remains that the letter was sent without the full knowledge of Hale Parish Council. Cllr Lucas has already apologised to the other Parish Councillors for not being specific enough in her reply to the draft letter.

**3. Other aspects within the letter to residents where the Parish Council feels further clarification is required.**

As stated above, describing any Parish Council attendee as an 'independent third party' does not communicate the role of resident support that was offered by HPC. However there are other aspects of the letter to residents that the Parish Council feel needs immediate clarification:-

1. The letter does not make it clear that residents may choose to have any person they like attend the meeting with them, not just someone from Hale Parish Council.
2. The letter is not clear on expected outcome of the scope of the issues that could be dealt with. The letter should clearly state the scope of Bruton Knowles' commission and list any exclusions. For example, we anticipate that issues such as damage to property, access and noise would be appropriate, but will compensation for losses associated with the various rights of common and risk or injury to animals be within the scope of the BK work? This clarification would highlight whether residents might be advised to take professional advice. Equally, this would reduce the risk of residents having unrealistic expectations of the outcome of their meeting.
3. The letter does not make it clear that residents may choose to have any meeting not at their home but at another venue of their choosing – the letter does not inform that National Grid would be happy to book the small meeting room in the Village Hall at their cost for example.
4. The letter does not clearly state that anything discussed at the meeting would be followed up and confirmed in writing.

The Parish Council feels that the offer of assistance from HPC and the additional points above should be clarified to residents as soon as possible. We would be grateful to receive your urgent response to discuss how this might be best achieved given the tight timetable and meetings already being scheduled.

Yours sincerely

*K. Cleary*

Kathy Cleary  
Clerk to Hale Parish Council