

HOLT & DISTRICT FARMERS' CLUB

FOUNDED 1948

President: Peter Perry-Warnes

Chairman: Martin Jensen

Vice-Chairman: Andrew Ross

www.holtfarmers.club

CLUB MATTERS

October 2025

The success of our *Malting Barley Competition* has gone viral. Not only did **Chris Hill** feature our beaming **Vice Chairman** in Saturday's EDP but Anna Hill, possibly no relation of Chris but who has spoken to us in the past, featured **Chris Borrett** on BBC Radio 4 this morning (Thursday, 23rd) while **Kit Papworth** appeared on the same programme yesterday. Further to his recent report **Michael Pollitt** alerted me to this as he explains :-

Key Norfolk crops featured on national radio –

A self-confessed malting barley enthusiast, committee member Chris Borrett, of grain merchants Adams & Howling was interviewed on Thursday's program with Rebecca Gee, grain procurement director of the Great Ryburgh-based Crisp Malting Group. As listeners heard when a lorry was tipping its load of malting barley at the maltings, Chris was able to identify the variety, Flagon, by its colour. This impressed presenter Anna Hill, who suggested that this was almost Nerd-like! On a more serious note, Mr Borrett said that growers faced on-going price pressures for their crops going forward. But as a county recognised for growing quality malting barley, he suggested that there was a long-term future for the crop although many farmers had reduced their planting this season because of lower prices, partly caused by a global glut.

The Farming Today feature follows last week's meeting when the annual malting barley awards were presented.

And earlier in the week, Kit Papworth, chair of NFU Sugar, explained the details of the new growers' contract for next year's campaign. Although details had been announced in late August, Anna Hill was briefed on the choices faced by beet growers as the Cantley factory had just started its latest processing campaign.

To listen again to the Farming Today interviews, go to BBC Sounds - Kit Papworth (Wednesday, October 22, Radio 4 5.50am). Chris Borrett (Thursday, October 23, Radio 4, 5.53am)

There was another significant event on the day of our AGM with the infamous Filby application for two 'livestock units for rearing 1900 pigs' just outside Aldborough being refused. After five and a half years NNDC have finally acknowledged objections from around \$30 individuals and multiple consultees. As our **Mark Cook**, a pig professional with almost forty years' experience puts it, the site at Rectory Farm near Doctors Corner en route to Calthorpe is "the most unsuitable site you could imagine and to house that number of pigs so close to a village was only ever going to be troublesome". Clearly the Filbys can appeal but

they are already doing this against NNDC's Enforcement Notice to remove 'large tents / bungalows to house pigs'. Their agents, Pick and Harrison from the East Riding, may have suffered their first refusal nationwide for the main application but have made some fair points in appealing against this enforcement action. They argue that the Notice is, as far as they are aware, unprecedented in requiring written consent for outdoor arcs, tents and temporary shelters. Yet in 2001 the Filbys did apply formally for the retention of two field shelters which was approved albeit almost three years later. Up till then and since the slurry based pig operation was established here in the 1970s NNDC were primarily concerned with the impact on the visual amenity of an area whereas now they are more concerned to protect nearby residents from smells and airborne pollution. This prompted the staunch campaign raised by Aldborough residents with a further concern being the fact that Scarrow Beck, a fished tributary of the Bure, runs alongside.

By the end of this year it is expected that NNDC's emerging Local Plan will have finally been adopted after more than a decade but it is still unclear whether the planning process will be any quicker or fairer. The CJC Lee (Seaman and Flather) poultry application between Edgefield and Saxthorpe remains equally contentious. Here there was only one individual objector but NNDC quickly buckled to CAFF, a campaign group against factory farming, and adverse publicity in the EDP to withdraw consent. Rural people like Macauley Carey, a farm contractor and vintage tractor guy from Saxthorpe and Peter J Peachment, Combine King for Anglia Harvesters from Thursford, point out that Shrubbs Farm, roughly equidistant from Edgefield and Saxthorpe, is next to the B1149 so that muck handling should not be a problem. **Peter Seaman** is prepared to co-operate in respect of three tied cottages which would be the most affected while he himself at Great Farm is just about the only other resident within half a mile. Presumably there should be a rerun of the 2022 application but this will not be before the new planning regime has been adopted so who knows what the outcome will be?



Our new President Peter Perry-Warnes Runner up at our AGM looking nervous in front of the allegedly nerd-like Chris Borrett

Mark also refers to the literal and metaphorical stink at Stow Bedon in Breckland. Here lawyers and the World Wildlife Fund have gotten involved on behalf of the locals who have been as unhappy as those at Aldborough. Cranswick have also faced enforcement action over their 7000 pig operation and a decision on their retrospective application has recently been postponed for a second time. Clearly with far greater resources than the Filbys, Cranswick have been accused of serious human-on-animal abuses on one of their Lincolnshire farms which creates further suspicion about their Cherry Tree Farm operation. Meanwhile the saga of my other perennial at Dam Hill Edgefield rumbles on. Here the Enforcement Notice against the glamping operation was served very nearly two years ago and the operator's appeal remains undetermined after 18 months so it is uncertain whether there will be a decision before the related court case in the New Year.

Tim Papworth expects The Feathers to provide locally sourced fare for the meal before his talk at **7.30 on Tuesday, 11th November** and he justifies a good turnout. The strapline for his L F Papworth Ltd. family business is 'Excellence in Practical Farming' and I know that Tim has many other topics he can cover that will be of interest to us all. Then we have **Janet Sorley on Tuesday, 9th December** who is Murphy's Project Director in respect of the **Norfolk Offshore Wind Zone** - another one not to be missed.



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