

HOLT & DISTRICT FARMERS' CLUB

FOUNDED 1948

President: Peter Perry-Warnes

Chairman: Martin Jensen

Vice-Chairman: Andrew Ross

www.holtfarmers.club

CLUB MATTERS

Broadland Glazing - Advent 2025

It was highly topical to have this insight into the latest 'slicing' of our county with cable routes like, as Simon Evans put it, a pizza. Early this month this past, current and future 'slicing' was relevant in the televised meeting of Broadland's Planning Committee to determine their latest solar application. This was made by Exagen on 230 acres belonging to the Youngs family on the north side of the B1145 Aylsham Road between the Woodrow roundabout and the former Cawston College. It was recommended for approval even though two-thirds of the land was classified Grade 1 or 2. This was doubted by some as the land lies between Cawston and Abel Heaths and is being used for outdoor pigs. Ken Leggett, still to the fore as Old Catton's representative on the Planning Committee, expressed certain misgivings and his colleague Jo Copplestone, daughter-in-law of our late member Robert from Alderford, endorsed these. She argued that, for Food Security reasons, we should not be using our best land and was sceptical about the sheep grazing that was claimed to provide a second income. Glint and glare from the solar panels was also a concern and the neighbours at Dix's Farm to the west and the converted water tower to the east were understandably worried. The proximity of Marriott's Way along the old railway line to the north and the disturbance in connecting the site to the proposed installation at Salle were further issues. The latter of these had been withdrawn from the application but nevertheless it was refused by one vote.



The expectation is, based on other recent applications, that this decision is likely to be refused on appeal. Nearby at Pettywell west of Reephams, Albanwise applied for a solar farm of similar size that they claimed would power 14,000 homes. Here 87% of the land was classed as Best and Most Versatile (BMV) although

only Grade 3a and this was passed, again, by only one vote. This was after an 87acre site at Reepham Road, Horsford had been granted on appeal. Even though the land was tenanted the Inspector was persuaded that central and local government's declared Climate Emergency was the crucial factor so that Net Zero can be achieved by 2050. He downplayed Food Security concerns and considered the sheep grazing option viable. In this he will be supported by the Mack family whose Everblue Solar company is becoming a serious player in this field now that Charlie has joined John's sons David, Robert and George in their international operation that has expanded beyond merely panel cleaning systems. Also it was anticipated that there would be less disruption since Horsford is close to a primary circuit. Janet Sorley impressed us with the care Murphy's are taking over the Vattenfall route from Happisburgh but even she admitted that it was poor planning that the nearly completed Orsted route runs from Weybourne to Swardeston when it would have been much less disruptive if it ran to Necton as previous cabling did and if the Vattenfall route had run east of Norwich to Swardeston. We await the decision on Heydon Estate's solar farm application between Sygate and Bluestone Plantation that is on the opposite side of the B1149 to the Bluestone solar farm.

Laurie Hill and his Larking Gowen colleagues have been conducting further sessions on the Inheritance Tax threat to the talk he gave us back in January as well as on other relevant topics. Our Chairman was impressed by one that he attended and Laurie refers you to his firm's Beyond the Barn podcasts which can be found by those interested at <https://www.larking-gowen.co.uk./lgi/>. Martin and I attended a Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association YIELD Event Feeding Britain in a Less Secure World at The Forum back in November with Lord Fuller, Andrew Dewing and Tom Hume on the panel, chaired by Anna Hill and with Duncan Baker in the audience. Again Food Security and Net Zero were topics for 'a heated debate' in which Martin made it clear that farmers should not be made scapegoats when they had done so much to produce cheap food while constrained and taxed so severely. We were impressed by the former army officer Mark Nicholas MBE who has been the RNAA's Managing Director for the past five years and, living in Holt, he is also a Trustee for the Holt Youth Project. He will be our speaker at The Feathers on Tuesday, 13th January and he will be joined by Revd. Dr. Tim Weatherstone who has recently been appointed Norfolk Rural Chaplain focused on supporting the farming community. By then our new President Peter Perry-Warnes expects to have firmed up on an itinerary for a trip to North Yorkshire early in June and I wish you all a merry Festive Holiday in the meantime.



SPOTTED on the roadside coming north out of Coltishall is this 'iron horse' erected in memory of Rex and John Parsons, father and son both dead now, who farmed at Swanton Novers. Speed the Plough is the phrase we found at Cawston where a sign relating to the Plough Inn at Sygate reads God spede the Plow and send us Ale Corn enow our purpose for to make at Crow of Cok of the plowlete of Sygate be mery and glad wat good ale yis work mad. There is permission to replace the 1960s bungalow but not to create 3 self-contained holiday units in the one acre back garden. It could be yours for something over £500,000 which may include a hot tub but probably not the equine sculpture. Speed here used to mean health prosperity on your journey / enterprise

as in Fare thee Well rather than Get the Field Ploughed Today. Last January Cawston had a procession from Sygate to Cawston Church accompanied by tractors and Plough Sunday is on 11th January next month when other churches will provide the chance to declare God Speed the Plough as The Farmers' Toast.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'Tim'.

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