

## Offshore Wind Farms

# Students discover their future in marine design challenge

What role is right for you in the offshore wind industry? 'You can't be what you can't see', so young people have been given a taste of the wide range of opportunities on offer here in Norfolk.

The Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon Offshore Wind Farms gave 17 year old engineering, computing, maths and biology Sixth Form students at University Technical College Norfolk (UTCN) a challenging brief about the wind farm industry on their doorstep.

The Marine Employability Project required students to use their technical knowledge from college to find practical solutions to a real-world concept, designing an artificial reef to be placed in the sea. They planned a structure to promote biodiversity around the Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon Offshore Wind Farms.

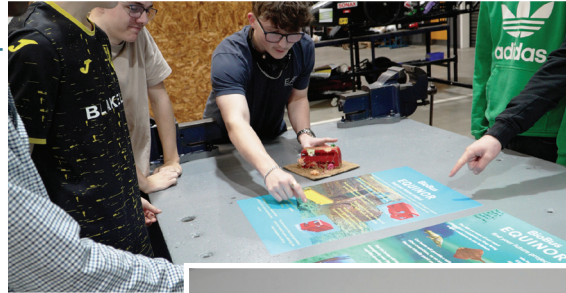
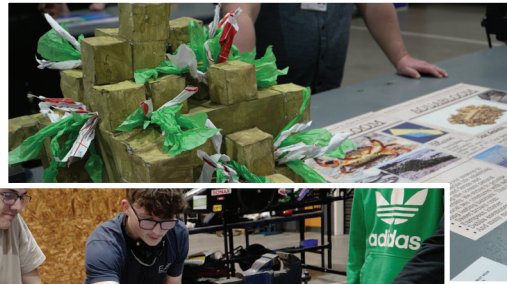
Working in small groups, the students were challenged to create a scale model of their design using recycled materials, and to present their work to industry professionals.

Year 12 student Praise was part of the winning team. He said: *"It was the highlight of the whole term, particularly the final day, as there were so many interesting people to talk to."*

Students were tasked to answer key questions testing their research of materials, location and how to secure and monitor their concept.

The future engineers and scientists were encouraged to contact organisations and groups with experience in marine management, shipping and fisheries, ensuring their reef designs reflected stakeholder inputs and ideas.

At the end of February 2026, the students' projects were judged by a panel of nine regional industry leaders, and at a prize giving ceremony, Amy Lerpiniere, Employer Engagement Co-ordinator at UTCN, said:



■ Students and their projects.

*"I believe that this six-week long project delivered by Sophie Skipp, Equinor's Norfolk Stakeholder Manager, has really helped the students understand what varied career opportunities are open to them in the offshore wind industry, right here in Norfolk!"* □



Five winning students from the team named 'Glub Hub' received a trophy and cinema vouchers to celebrate. □

■ The winning team

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# SHERINGHAM SHOAL & DUDGEON

## Offshore Wind Farms

### Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon Extension Projects... Norfolk Archaeology

Whilst onshore construction is yet to begin, Equinor continues to develop detailed construction and operational plans for the Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon Offshore Wind Farm Extension Projects (SSDE).

Looking closely, you may see early archaeological investigation along the onshore cable corridor from Weybourne in North Norfolk to Swardeston to the south of Norwich. A programme of 'trial trenching' has recently recommenced.



The route of the onshore cable corridor

Trial trenching archaeology is a rapid form of investigation and evaluation used to estimate the archaeological potential of a site, and trenches will be located at intervals across a site, leaving the rest untouched.

Based on the findings of these digs, Norfolk County Council Historical Environmental Service will decide whether Equinor will need to undertake further investigations.

Consent has been obtained from the landowners in whose fields this early work is taking place.

When completed, the existing Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon Offshore Wind Farms combined with SSDE are expected to generate sufficient electricity to power 1.5 million UK homes. □



Simon Franey

#### Welcome back Simon Franey!

A warm welcome to Simon Franey, who has recently been appointed as Project Director to lead the Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon Extension Projects through the next phase of the development.

In an interview for this newsletter, Simon said:

"I am really pleased to be returning to Norfolk. As a member of the Dudgeon prepare-for-operations team, I lived and worked here from 2014-17, and I am now looking forward to leading this major development in Norfolk's offshore wind industry." □

## Experience Windscape

Windscape at Sheringham Museum is the Visitor Centre for the Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon Offshore Wind Farms, both operated by energy company Equinor.

Located in the iconic building known as The Mo on Sheringham's East Promenade (NR26 8BG), since opening in 2011 the Visitor Centre has welcomed over 160,000 visitors.

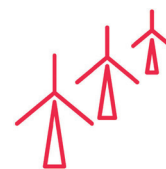
The Visitor Centre was totally refurbished in 2025, and its new information and activity zones are proving very popular with visitors of all ages. On clear days the powerful telescopes and binoculars make Windscape one of the best places on the North Norfolk coast to look out across the North Sea to both wind farms. You can learn about the history of wind power



and the people who look after the turbines at sea.

A trip up the viewing tower also offers great views across Sheringham town and out to sea.

Although there is an admission charge to Sheringham Museum ([www.sheringhammuseum.co.uk](http://www.sheringhammuseum.co.uk)), Windscape is free to enter and is open from 10:00am – 4:30pm Monday to Saturday, but closed on Sundays. □



## My work placement experience - Josh Wegg

*"This year for my T-Level work placement I spent 4 weeks with Equinor at its Greater Wash Operations and Maintenance base in Great Yarmouth.*



■ Drake Neeve (Problem Solver) and Josh Wegg (Engineer) with members of the Equinor O&M team.

*"My partner Drake Neeve and I were presented with a project; to create a model and worksheets which would educate Year 9 students about offshore wind and, more specifically, Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon. We spent our time at Equinor planning this project, meeting industry partners and visiting physical assets such as the Sheringham Shoal onshore substation at Salle.*

*"Stakeholder Manager Sophie Skipp provided Drake and I with exposure to Equinor's various departments and teams which play a key role in ensuring the wind farms run as efficiently as possible; this gave us plenty of detail to put into our model and worksheets.*

*"Our project turned out to be a success. We developed a CAD model and created worksheets which encompassed all that we had learnt during our placement. Using PowerPoint, we presented these to everyone we had met, and took their advice on how we could take our ideas further.*

*"Overall, this placement was beyond my expectations. The kindness and hospitality of everyone we met, from the office to the Esvagt Njord SOV (service operation vessel) was beyond amazing and really showed just how well Equinor treats its people. Personally, I feel I have come away from this experience with greater confidence, and presentation and communication skills, which will be key as I progress through my education and further on into my career." □*

## From the Norfolk Stakeholder Manager's Diary



■ Sophie Skipp

The first few months of 2026 have been busy ones for Sophie Skipp, as she now reports:

*"Norfolk is hosting onshore cable and substation construction work for offshore wind farms. My recent meetings with colleagues from Orsted and RWE support Equinor to consider how the SSDE plans need to work across the county. Regular communication allows us to understand their planned activities to minimise community disruption. Our February meeting was well timed, coinciding with the commencement of Spring work programmes.*

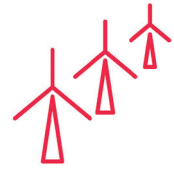
*"On 17 March I was in Westminster to attend an All Party Parliamentary Energy Group meeting discussing the East of England's energy industry. Minister for Energy Michael Shanks MP addressed the meeting sharing the opportunity for local and national suppliers, providing jobs here in Norfolk.*



■ Filming with Renewable UK to promote the importance of Norfolk suppliers.

*"I enjoyed speaking at the East of England Energy Group's Marine Science and Technology Conference, 'Unlocking the Seabed: Pioneering Offshore Innovations in the East'. Keynote Speaker Professor Ben Garrod from the UEA joined innovators from Renewable UK, Natural England, Norfolk Seaweed, National Grid and SSE Renewables for a showcase of the expertise working around our coastline."*

Sophie Skipp can be contacted at email: [gm\\_ssde@equinor.com](mailto:gm_ssde@equinor.com) □



## Community Funds Update

### Helping to sustain community life in rural North Norfolk

Village halls, community centres, scout huts and sports pavilions are community lifelines in North Norfolk's small and often isolated villages. Hosting everything from toddler groups to warm spaces, their survival often depends on keeping running costs low.

The Sheringham Shoal Community Fund's objectives include assisting community sustainability and contributing to climate change reduction. Grants to the organisations managing these venues help install renewable energy systems – solar panels, battery storage, heat pumps, LED lighting – making significant contributions to securing their future whilst also cutting emissions.



■ The Sheringham Shoal Community Fund grants award panel at Hanworth with Gunton Memorial Hall.

Recent grants to Barney and Fulmodeston Playing Field Association, Sharrington and Gresham Village Halls and Hanworth with Gunton Memorial Hall have supported the installation of such renewable energy systems, whilst at North Walsham a grant enabled its football club to convert all the lighting around the football pitch areas to LED lights. □

## STEM education... it starts outdoors!

Thanks to a grant from the Dudgeon Community Fund, an outdoor learning area at the Duke of Lancaster Academy in Fakenham, North Norfolk now has two innovative pieces of sensory STEM education equipment, and the pupils think they are great!

Head of School Elizabeth Barneveld said:

*"The grant has enabled us to invest in two new pieces of interactive STEM equipment. When it arrived, students were queuing up to use it, and they continue to enjoy engaging with it. It's brilliant at supporting wellbeing, social interaction and teamwork."*

The Duke of Lancaster Academy is a special school which caters for the education needs of 110 students aged 5-16 years with communication and interaction difficulties, the majority of whom have a diagnosis of autism. □



■ Duke of Lancaster student with the new STEM equipment (image courtesy of Eastern Education Group)

If your organisation is seeking funding support for a community project or a STEM initiative, visit [www.norfolkfoundation.com](http://www.norfolkfoundation.com) to learn how to apply for a Sheringham Shoal or Dudgeon Community Fund grant.

### Contact details and more information:

The Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon Offshore Wind Farms are operated by Equinor from its Greater Wash Operations and Maintenance Hub located at:

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+44(0)1493 841700

**SHERINGHAM SHOAL & DUDGEON**

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