

# Sheringham Shoal

by Scira Offshore Energy

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## Wind farm blows opportunities into Wells-next-the-Sea

When looking for an operations and maintenance base, Wells-next-the-Sea was the natural choice, being only around 20 nautical miles from the Sheringham Shoal site. There was just one key challenge – its limited accessibility due to tidal restrictions.

The project team began working with the Wells Harbour Master and Commissioners more than two years ago to determine whether the tidal challenge could be overcome and this work has culminated in a dredging initiative that has created a new outer harbour and deepened the harbour entrance channel. With the extended tidal window, this project has enabled almost 24-hour access to wind farm and other vessels. The depth of the channel will need to be maintained with regular dredging.

A new commercial outer jetty with pontoons has been constructed so the wind farm vessels will not interfere with established port operations. Scira and the Wells Harbour have signed an agreement confirming that the developer will use the harbour as its wind farm operational base for up to 50 years.

### Developing the onshore operational base

Scira will have a large operational base just outside the town where wind farm workers will go every day to change for their offshore duties. A mini-bus will then transport them to the outer jetty where vessels will take them offshore, returning later in the afternoon via the same method. This is to ensure traffic in the town is minimised and additional car parking is not required.

The operational base will need to house a significant office area up to 500m<sup>2</sup>, up to 400m<sup>2</sup> of warehousing facilities and amenities for wind farm technicians. There are no existing buildings in the district which meet these needs so the planning and design for a new development is underway. Local consultation on the plans is part of the process. The aim is to have all the facilities completed by the second quarter of next year.

**A central office, with a shop-front, is now open in Staithe Street where people can find out more information and follow the progress of the project's construction.**

**By establishing its hub in the town, the Sheringham Shoal development will help to ensure a viable future for the port and provide employment and other economic and social benefits to the area, while safeguarding its unique character and charm.**

## What will happen in Wells during construction of the wind farm?

Construction of the wind farm is now underway so the project will be entering a busy period with personnel from foundation contractors MT Højgaard, leaving regularly from the new harbour for the installation vessel "HLV Svanen". It will take around nine months to install all 90 foundations.

During the first half of 2011, the installation of the offshore substations and turbines will begin. Contractor Siemens will operate its personnel transport vessels from the new harbour – both for the installation, and, as soon as the turbines are installed, the operation and maintenance. This period of heavy activity from Wells-next-the-Sea will continue until early 2012 when the wind farm becomes fully operational.

## How many vessels will use the new harbour?

The first Scira contracts for the provision of vessels were awarded to local company, Safety Boat Services, in March 2010. The "MV Kirkspray" has been commissioned to take Scira personnel offshore to the "Svanen" foundation installation vessel. The "MV Observer" will be used for the transportation of environmental contractors to the wind farm site to undertake mammal surveys during the piling operation, as well as for general inspection visits.

The fast crew boats "Valhalla of Whitstable" and "Valkyrie of Whitstable" will also operate out of Wells having been contracted by MT Højgaard for the transport of their personnel to the "Svanen". These vessels will operate until the foundation installation is complete.

Early next year a further five personnel transfer vessels will be needed to transport crew for the turbine installation work. One feeder vessel taking heavy equipment and materials from Wells main harbour to and from the new outer harbour will be operational from January next year.



## What type of jobs will be available and when will they be recruited?

There will be both offshore and onshore job opportunities. For at least the coming five years, the bulk of the employees required will be via Siemens, who will operate the turbines on contract to Scira. Recruitment for the first of these positions began this month with the remainder being recruited around October this year. See below for details.

Additional offshore requirements will include the skippers and crew to run the six personnel vessels. These positions will be required from early next year. However at this stage, until the vessel contracts are awarded, it is not known whether they will be provided by the successful contractor or through Scira. Individuals with knowledge of local seas and conditions should be at a distinct advantage.

For the administrative side of the business, a total of 10 positions will be recruited locally and need to be in place by January 2011. Three marine coordinators will be required once the offshore operations are underway and recruitment for these will begin after the summer with advertisements placed locally, while CVs received to date will also be considered.

Additional onshore jobs will be in relation to the office and information point in Staithe Street, where one to two staff will be required to manage and coordinate activities and the operational base, which is to be constructed. Employment needs at the base will include IT, finance and control, HSE, production and technology and administration. All positions will be advertised in the local press and on the website – [www.scira.co.uk](http://www.scira.co.uk).

## Becoming a wind turbine technician

During the rest of 2010, Siemens will recruit around 40 service technicians to work on the wind farm. Advertisements for the vacancies will be in the local press, websites and job centre, and then the company will view CVs and prescreen applicants via telephone interviews. Suitable applicants will be invited to centres in the Norfolk area where one-day assessments will be held.

By March 2011 offers of employment will be made followed by contract signings and relevant medical and reference checks on potential candidates. The successful candidates will undergo intensive training at Siemens Newcastle and then on-the-job training at existing wind farms around the UK.

They will begin work on the Sheringham Shoal project from April next year.

People interested in registering to become a trainee wind turbine service technician can email their CV to Nia Ogara at Siemens, [wind.recruitment.swp.gb@siemens.com](mailto:wind.recruitment.swp.gb@siemens.com). All CVs received to date will be considered.

## Contact details and more information

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