

Proposed Questions for the British Sugar Factory meeting 21 September 2026

1. Land at the back of the factory off Grange Road has been put forward as a call for site. What would be the expected use for this?
 - Put forward during the 1st call for sites request as part of the BS continuing operation. It was intended that this would act as a buffer against the Taylor Wimpey development.
 - There are no plans for housing and the land should be designated as employment use.
 - It appears to have been incorrectly categorised as 'other' use and British Sugar will need to seek reclassification with the Council.
 - No decisions have been made about this land and British Sugar cannot commit to its future yet.
 - There is already infrastructure on site for a sewerage works. However, it was clarified that the water treatment on site is not designed for domestic use and it is not known whether the change over could be achieved and there are no plans to do so at the moment.

The meeting moved on to the businesses 'Plans' for the current site

- A consultation is ongoing and separate to this beet campaign is expected to run from November 2026 to February 2027. After this the silos will need to be emptied so the site will have some operation into autumn next year.
 - At this point the site will be changed to a 'closed site operation'.
 - There will be no campaign in 2027/28. After this, plans can be made and in theory the business can look at asset transfer and then demolition activity may start on site.
 - Removal from site would be well thought out and planned in terms of railway lines and river.
 - ABF will work together with British Sugar to understand the future use of the land and that could take many years to come to a final decision.
 - There are no suggestions at this stage as to what will be the likely use.
 - Other sites have sold off parcels of land as their closure progressed
 - In Cantley they will maintain all sites in the interim.
 - No decision to use silos for storage in other campaigns but they would need to be sure there is no future use.
2. Are the following areas being included in the total land allocation when the factory closes or is there scope for the Parish Council to eventually take them on for the community to use
 - Recreation Ground
 - Bowling Green
 - Little Car park – for the railway
 - Social Club
 - Tennis Courts
 - Fun Day land
 - Land for allotments

- ABF will continue to own these until such time as they decide to sell them.
 - BS will continue to maintain them as they are now. Including the circular footpaths. Council could look at placing an Asset of Community Value on land plots which would benefit the community.
 - Early conversations about making the tennis courts available for residents to use can still be pursued.
 - A proposal can be put forward by Council for land acquisition which the business would look at. It was suggested Council could liaise with VH.
3. Maintenance of public footpaths. Will this be continued by the factory or does Highways now need to be notified of any issues.
- As long as British Sugar have a presence on site these will continue to be maintained.
4. Who will maintain these areas of land once the factory have vacated?
- British Sugar will continue to maintain the site and all external plots until such time as they are disposed of.
5. How long is it estimated to decommission key parts of the factory and what might that entail?
- See 'plans' above.
6. What are the mid to long term obligations on British Sugar to monitor and manage the site? Such as the settlement ponds, environmental considerations regarding waste water and solid wastes.
- This isn't known currently but once clearer plans are being made they will happily attend Parish Council meetings to discuss what is happening.
- As the lagoons rely on throughput of water can this be maintained and if not what happens with them?
- After 100 years on site it is difficult to know how the area will respond once operations stop.
 - The site is a permitted installation regulated under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations (EPR). The decommissioning and permit surrender process is overseen by the Environment Agency and must be completed in accordance with the applicable regulatory requirements. All relevant obligations must be fulfilled and the necessary evidence provided to demonstrate that the site is in a satisfactory condition prior to surrender of the permit.
 - There has been no communication with RSPB at this stage.
7. Will the site be classified as "contaminated land" and is this likely to restrict future use of the site?
- A detailed analysis will determine this.
 - British Sugar will work in consultation with the Environment Agency to review available historical information and undertake appropriate site assessment work to establish the condition of the site. The findings will inform the decommissioning and permit surrender process.
 - Many years ago there was a meat factory on site and the contamination is unknown. Assessment would involve legacy contamination from 50-80 years ago.
 - Environment agency will be involved in assessing the site.

8. The site is owned by Associated British Foods. Are there opportunities to repurpose the site for alternative food processing? E.g. pasta foods.
 - British Sugar are still in consultation and priority is out affected workforce.
9. Could the storage silos continue to be used in some way - e.g. flour or grain storage.
 - Will depend on need although it is feasible.
10. Is it likely that the site will continue to be used as a lorry park, and therefore continued lorry traffic?
 - Currently this provision is specifically for British Sugar contractors, and this will continue whilst they remain operational.
11. Are there obligations on the site owner to maintain the flood defences?
 - Whilst in ownership of the land this will continue to be carried out.
12. Will there continue to be a security presence on the site following the end of production?
 - Yes this will continue 24/7 whilst buildings/assets are on site.
 - Once the site is cleared this will scaled back.
13. How many employees can be transferred to other British Sugar or ABF sites?
 - British Sugar is still under consultation on the proposals, so it is too early to say.
 - Business will retain as many employee and their expertise as possible but some won't want to relocate.
 - They will also look at other ABF companies in the area.
14. What will happen to the medium pressure gas main feeding the factory?
 - Ownership of the gas supply was transferred to the gas company once it had been built and they will decide on future use.

Final Word from British Sugar

- This transition is still in its very early stages and they are nowhere near making decisions which will satisfy the public.
- Regular information will be shared at the various stages.
- An open day and tour is planned for villagers in early 2027. Numbers will be limited and details will be shared once plans are made.