The Parish Council have identified an opportunity to explore renewable energy systems in the Thwing and Octon Parish to benefit residents. The Parish Council owns some land parcels that could be used to site renewable energy systems – initially solar PV and wind turbines, and recently undertook a community plan process in which they received strong community support for the idea. The Parish Council would also like to assess the potential for a local solar scheme on household rooftops, potentially through a community owned scheme, or other suitable delivery mechanism. In addition to these larger scale opportunities, the Parish Council is responsible for street lighting in the parish and would like to explore how to reduce the cost of these systems – potentially through combined solar and/or wind powered lighting with high efficiency LED lamps.

Challenges & Risks

The results of the renewable energy feasibility study provide evidence of the difficulties of decarbonising for rural off-gas grid communities like Thwing and Octon Parish Council and that more support is needed from government and policy. The financial feasibility of these technologies and scenario will depend on the community’s will to participate and the use of their own buildings. Covid-19 has massively impacted the timeline of the project and the planned engagement activities. The kick-off meeting happened two weeks before the first lockdown in England and most of the planned following activities were postponed and restricted community engagement.

Lessons Learned

The importance of community engagement and the difficulties of this during the COVID-19 pandemic. Any future projects like this to budget for a Project Manager to oversee and direct. Currently, there are no financial incentives available for power generation technologies.