TIME FOR A PLAN B?

Contingency plans are to be drawn up for the £200m incinerator to be built at Saddlebow, following the successful bid for the contract by Cory Wheelabrator. But the council did reveal that cabinet members and officers are to work on "contingency arrangements", including alternatives to "energy from waste" in case the contract does not go ahead.

Officers have previously warned that if the council pulls out of the contract with Cory Wheelabrator, it could cost as much as £10m.

If the secretary of state decides to allow the recent public inquiry, the council could consider award planning permission, it could leave the council with a £1M cost.

A motion over whether to pull out, which was due to be discussed yesterday, was withdrawn and a motion agreed that concluded it was "premature" to discuss that issue until after alternatives were looked at and independent reports have outlined the likely cost of terminating the contract.

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Andrew Papworth

Archaeologists behind a project to uncover west Norfolk’s medieval heritage believe they may have stumbled upon a treasure trove of artefacts that could reveal more about a village’s age-old role as an international pottery centre.

Experienced Cambridge University and former Time Team archaeologist Dr Carenza Lewis said the group found more in one of the 1m x 1m patches in Lynn Road, Grimston than she has ever seen in any other test pit in East Anglia.

When her ex-Time Team colleague and medieval pottery expert Paul Hibbitts arrived the next day to take a look at the finds, he said it was likely to be Grimston’s finest pottery site dating back to the 11th century.

If further examination that turns out to be the case, the discoveries will add more evidence to the theory that what is now a sleepy village just a few miles north of King’s Lynn was once a significant area for pottery production.

“It was a really impressive discovery which shows this could have been a huge centre for production,” Dr Lewis said. “It is really exciting to be digging here.”

The team had already organised excavations in Fairwood, Gayton and Gaywood between March and May as part of the project supported by Cambridge University and Cambridge Community Heritage. It is also funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

About 30 residents turned out in Grimston on Saturday and Pot Fest on Sunday to find out more about the history of where they live.

Not all of the discoveries were medieval. One group digging in the grounds of the old Grimston Primary School came across a large corroded iron structure.

“It turned out to be a long-lost second world war air raid shelter which had been hidden in the garden,” Resident and volunteer digger Olav Turpin explained.

“I heard it was hollow and then we realised it was corrugated iron. Perhaps they just covered it over with earth because they wanted to forget about the war.”

Dr Clive Bond, director of the project, said: “People are interested in the history of where they live, how old things are and where the history of their village begins. Sometimes, people may even be competitive about where the earliest farming or buildings occurred.”

“This is a first-time experience for a lot of people. There is a very simple methodology to get people to learn about, excavate and be enthused about their village, about where it’s come from and ask some serious questions about why the church is where it is, for example.”

Uncovering Norfolk’s past

Norfolk has a rich and varied history — and historians and archaeologists are continually finding out more about the area’s past.

Archaeologists’ discoveries began in 1923 with the establishment of the Norfolk Archaeological Trust, which used to buy famous historic buildings in the county such as Bishop Bonner’s Cottage in Downham, the Greenlander Fishery House in King’s Lynn and the Great Hall in Oak Street, Norwich to carry out its work.

Since then the trust has bought many other important sites such as a significant part of the Roman town of Venta Icenorum, at Caister St Edmund, to help it uncover more about how Norfolk was used in the past.

Later it bought surrounding parts of the area which had been controlled by the Iceni tribe in the Iron Age with the goal of protecting it as a heritage asset.

Examinations have also taken place on the site by teams from the University of Nottingham and the television programme Time Team, which has proved particularly fascinating as it is one of only three known Roman settlements which has not been built on since. A full skeleton was found on the site in 2006.

Middleton Mount, a mound where one of Norfolk’s 18 castles was built in the 12th century, was also owned by the trust, which has also worked hard to preserve the Benedictine monastery founded at Binham Priory soon after the conquest.