



Minutes of the Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy 2019 AGM held at Devizes Town Hall on Wednesday 4th September 2019 at 2pm

1 Welcome & apologies

The Chair, Lesley Bennett opened the meeting by welcoming everybody and noting apologies received from members by post. Particular note was made to welcome Julian Barlow from Wiltshire Wildlife Trust who will be co-opted to the WWCE board.

It was noted that there were 34 members present and the meeting was therefore quorate (being at least one thirtieth of the total members)

2 Chairman's Welcome (Lesley Bennett)

Lesley gave members a brief history of the inception of WWCE and relationship with Bath and West Community Energy (BWCE). The tender process for onboarding a new asset manager was discussed and the decision to move away from Mongoose, to focus more on the wildlife side of the Bencom and ultimately the decision to engage with Communities for Renewables (CfR) as asset managers. There was also mention of Neville Registrars who maintain the member register and deal with share transactions, and how they interact with CfR.

3 About Asset Management (Tom Cosgrove from CfR)

Tom gave an introduction to CfR (refer to slide). He spoke about how solar portfolios operate and how irradiance effects the results over time – with particular emphasis on long term average expectations for the portfolio versus actual outputs. Details of the very good performance of the sites during the summer of 2018 are shown on the attached slides.

4 Land Management (Rob Gilies)

Rob highlighted the focus on biodiversity, and the role of the new O&M contract with British Solar Renewables (BSR).

At Chelworth there is more established biodiversity and the group is trying to maximise the positive eco survey that took place at Chelworth site this year. There has been a notable increase in several indigenous species of butterfly, newt and owl. The Land Management Team will focus on improving biodiversity at Braydon in the next 12 months.

WWCE are hoping to introduce a new project through Naturesave called 'Solar Bee', whereby solar farms can apply for a new type of Beehive technology – the bees will be introduced in early 2020 ready for next season.

There then followed a detailed presentation on Thermosolar Hives from Tom Worsley, a beekeeper.



5 Community Fund (Peter Newell & Alison Craig)

Peter gave an introduction to the purpose of the fund, which is to get local community groups to take initiatives in carbon reduction and environmental sustainability.

There is currently £17k available in the fund for grant applicants. Now welcome applications for grants of under £500 as well as larger ones.

Special thanks were noted to those who had contributed to applications.

Damien Haasjes and Rebecca Goddard from WWT are now administering the fund.

Alison Craig then gave a presentation on the use of the fund to deliver an educational module on renewables in Salisbury to young adults (14-19 years old). The pilot module was very successful and well received and they're now looking to extend it from a 3 day module to a 3 week module.

6 Finances (Angela Wright & David Lewin)

Angela briefly talked through the group financial performance for the year ended 31 March 2019 and how despite a 'group loss', operationally the group had performed well in the period.

David then spoke through his proposition for a 4% interest payment to members based on good performance for the year just passed, whilst proposing an interest rate that was seen as being sustainable going forwards per the long term model to 2042.

David also explained the 3 main reasons for the increase in interest rate from previous years – those being; an increase in RPI, a reduction in costs and a change in future assumptions. The group hopes to be able to increase interest rate paid to members in the future, but must safeguard working capital and bank covenants first.

A proposal was put forward to donate £10k to the community fund and applications were again encouraged.



7 Resolutions

- 1) Approve minutes from 2018 AGM (result: Approved)
- 2) Proposal to pay members 4% interest this year (result: Approved)
- 3) Proposal to approve audited accounts for y/e 31/03/19 (result: Approved)
- 4) Proposal to re-appoint Alan Brookes as auditors for y/e 31/03/20
(result: Approved)
- 5) Proposal to re-elect David Lewin to the Board as he retires on rotation
(result: Approved)
- 6) Proposal to donate £10k to the community fund this year (result: Approved)

8 Long Term Prospects for WWCE (Lesley Bennett)

Lesley updated the members with the proposition to consolidate the rooftop sites into Chelworth legal entity to reduce the administrative burden of the group.

Now the cost of solar is reduced – members are invited to let WWCE know about any new projects that may be of interest to the group

CfR are pursuing a £40k grant to look for any new project from the Rural Community Energy Fund.

Meetings with Wiltshire council have shown they are dis-interested in energy saving, despite the climate emergency. WWCE are investigating ways they can assist various task groups looking to reduce carbon emissions locally.

WWCE are still looking to arrange a member open day at Chelworth – will keep members updated through the newsletters.

9 Questions from Members (Lesley Bennett)

? Why isn't the interest paid 7% as proposed in the prospectus?

This, as mentioned before is due to; removal of LECs, Braydon overspend and too high projections in RPI initially.

? Why has the cost of installations reduced?

This is due to a reduction in panel cost as supply increases and tariffs initially imposed on Chinese panels have been lifted.

? Why have we stopped using Sheep?

There are still sheep at Chelworth, we can't use sheep at Braydon due to the infrastructure.

10 End of Meeting

There being no further business the meeting was then ended.