

Minutes of WREN Board Meeting 12th March 2021, Zoom

WREN Board Members present: Chris Coonick, Tony Faragher, Simon Miller, Marcus Shirley, Kevin Smith, Ian Welch.

WREN ops assistant: Leonie McGregor, (minutes).

Meeting started 1500, closed 1740.

The Board approved the minutes of the last meeting held on 12th February 2021, subject to one change.

Amanda Pennington resigned from the Board. Amanda was thanked for her many years of service to WREN.

1. Energy Equality Project update:

Both the HIVE and Community Booster applications have been submitted. Beth Leighfield has conducted 10 telephone interviews and has another 3 in hand. She has worked all the paid hours under the Exeter University internship, but is keen to continue the work as a volunteer and happy to have further names to contact for interviews. Beth will present her findings at the next Board meeting, but the general outcome so far is that people are very positive about the idea of a community share scheme. Chris will discuss next steps with Tony, Kevin and Beth.

Chris has had a meeting with the new project manager for RCEF and is working on the final report. It still is hoped that money will be released from the grant to enable AFE to produce a user friendly tool as part of their modelling work.

Simon reported that all the tenants of the buildings in the potential portfolio are happy with WREN looking further at the feasibility of the proposed installations. WPD allowances for the schools differ either up or down from the proposals, and St Minver School may be an extra roof to add in. Marcus raised the possibility of submitting some or all of the installations to WPD's Green Recovery scheme call for evidence which closes on 19th March. Chris will look at the documents and submit a request if appropriate.

2. **NZCom:** Chris gave an update and presentation. WPD's first ever project focused on vulnerable customers is entitled Project VENICE (Vulnerability and Energy Networks, Identification and Consumption Evaluation). The 18 month project is currently being scoped and registered ready to start by 1st May. There are 3 main elements within the project: NZCom, SMILE (smart meter identification led by Frontier Economics) and Vulnerable Customers and COVID (led by Frazer Nash). WREN leads NZCom, and is responsible for project management and community engagement, working with 4 other partners to deliver the 7 work packages within the subproject. Chris will lead on project management, and Simon on community engagement. Simon will be setting up both a community focus group (made up of domestic and business representatives) and a community advisory group which will help steer the outcomes of the project. Suggestions for people to sit on these groups to be sent to Simon. Another project role is envisaged, supporting both Chris and Simon. Kevin is happy to look after the budgets and edit and proofread documents, Ian is also happy to help where required, but neither seek a formal role within the project. Chris will draw up a person specification, once the funding amount is known. NZCom is a significant step which will inform WREN's future trajectory - Chris was congratulated on conceiving the idea and bringing it to this stage.

3. **Business Plan:** Tony circulated notes following a Board strategy meeting. One of the main outcomes was the desire to reconnect with WREN's local supporters, to include the business and domestic community. Kevin has edited the original business plan, Tony will now incorporate the new ideas into this and share the result.

4. **Finance:** As a main contractor in the NZCom project, WREN will be required to register for VAT as the sums involved exceed the threshold for registration. Kevin has been in contact with Richard Alexander for a quotation from his firm for handling both the registration and the VAT returns. The Board authorised Kevin to proceed with the investigations. Cashflow and the logistics of invoicing WPD and paying suppliers' bills within NZCom will need to be carefully considered.
5. **Communications:** Kevin has circulated a draft of the next newsletter which is now ready to be sent having incorporated comments.
6. **EV Promotion and vehicle sharing:** Marcus and Tony have met volunteer Martin Jackson who is now working on the online EV promotion event. Access to WREN's social media accounts was discussed – Simon will add Martin to allow him to post in Facebook and Twitter. The Chacewater Group have planned an actual live EV day on 9th September.
Marcus has had contact with a Newcastle community organisation that operates a shared EV scheme. The scheme runs with minimal administrative input and has around 20 members using a Nissan Leaf. It was agreed that such a scheme could work well in Wadebridge, possibly linked with Concern Wadebridge, and could involve volunteer drivers. Sources of funding were discussed and it was agreed to progress the idea with a basic business plan.
7. **Community Funds:** The 7 St Breock panels are meeting next week. It is proposed to run the Middle Treworder Fund early as there were few applications when the fund ran in October 2020 and monies in hand which could be distributed to projects in need now. Because of lack of time this meeting, a discussion around the WREN Community Fund for environmental projects is postponed until the next Board meeting.
8. **Cornwall Community Energy Network initial meeting:** Feedback is postponed until the next Board meeting.
9. **Other Business:**
 - Marcus thanked everyone for embracing the idea of calculating personal carbon footprints. It had been an interesting exercise and gives a starting point to work from.
 - Marcus had requested information from Citibus on their sustainability policy: they are going to be trialling hydrogen powered buses in the next few months.
 - Cornwall Council DPD consultation: Version 2 of the draft has been published, and a further period of consultation ensues until 16th April. It appears that the proposals on some of the policy has changed in line with comments submitted by WREN and others. Tony, Simon and Marcus will meet ahead of a Zoom call in the process to be attended by Marcus.
 - EV charging: Marcus has been in contact with Steve Wootton (Wadebridge Town Council amenities manager) to share knowledge on charging points. Marcus is also keeping up the dialogue with Ben Simpson at Cornwall Council. Banks of fast chargers are to be installed in CC carparks – Marcus has sent Ben photographs of the sites at Piggy Lane and Goldsworthy Way. On street charging is further down the list, the more individuals requesting this the better. It was decided that EVs should be a feature in the next newsletter. The website page needs to be populated.
 - Chris highlighted the Next Generation Community Energy Peer Mentoring programme, and asked if any Board member had time to look into this for WREN.
 - Chris has submitted dissertation ideas for the University of Exeter's MSc in Global Sustainability Solutions.
 - Chris has been invited to contribute a guest blog for the web publication CarbonCopy.info.

NEXT MEETING FRIDAY 16th April 3 pm on Zoom.

**(then 7th May, 11th June,
9th July, 6th August, 10th September, 8th October, 12th November, 10th December 2021)**