

## Minutes of WREN Board Meeting 16<sup>th</sup> April 2021, Zoom

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

WREN ops assistant: Leonie McGregor, (minutes).

WREN Intern: Beth Leighfield

Meeting started 1500, closed 1745.

The Board approved the minutes of the last meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

- 1. Energy Equality Project update:** Beth presented her findings from the interviews and research she conducted on the community share scheme, having previously circulated her report. Beth was thanked for this and her clear presentation which forms a significant part of work needed in preparation for the share scheme. A discussion followed on many of the points raised, including how best to communicate the offer, how people could invest small amounts, how to explain the offer in clear and simple language, and to address the concerns Beth's research uncovered. The possible threat to the business model of agile tariffs such as the one Octopus is offering also needs to be understood.

Both the HIVE and Community Booster applications decisions are awaited.

Simon is continuing the conversations with the building users, such as obtaining key usage data. St Issey Hall AGM is in May, and the possibility of a WREN presentation was discussed which could answer some of the questions to help the committee decide whether to go ahead with the solar installation.
- 2. RCEF:** Chris is continuing the conversation around use of the remaining funds with Smeranda, the new RCEF project manager. Initial feedback is that RCEF will not fund any further work on the Peer to Peer platform. The other elements of the funding are still under discussion. If no decision is reached by RCEF within the next week, it was agreed that a contingency plan was needed to avoid jeopardising the timings for the considerable amount of work yet needed to prepare a share offer by 1<sup>st</sup> October.
- 3. NZCom:** The launch of the project has been delayed a month by WPD to now start on 1<sup>st</sup> June. Chris and Tony have met John Catchpole and his colleague to discuss WPD's draft contract. The aim is to ensure that WREN's contracts with the partners in the project contain the same obligations. There is an ongoing discussion around resistance to the provision of business smart meter data which will preclude the inclusion of vulnerable businesses in the programme. Applications have been received for the post of Community Engagement Assistant. Simon will collate these and send to Tony, Chris and Ian ahead of shortlisting, with a proposed interview date 23<sup>rd</sup> April.
- 4. Strategy Plan:** Tony had circulated a draft strategy plan. This is not a business plan as such, but includes 2 projects each with their own business plans. An executive summary and appendices are to be added, along with reference to a new, separate communications strategy.
- 5. Finance:** Kevin produced a Board report forecast for the complete financial year ending March 2021. The figures are in line with expectations. Anticipated consultancy income of £1,000 had not been received within the financial year, but is expected this year. The transfer to restricted funds of £2,523 represents WREN funds paid as match for TEVI. It was agreed to pay Simon's invoice for Energy Equality work from the Co-op account which will show a temporary negative balance on the RCEF project. Kevin and Leonie had a meeting with Richard Alexander about VAT registration. Richard recommended that both WREN and WEC now move to Xero to comply with Making Tax Digital rules. Alexander & Co's fees are £125 + VAT for the registration and £125 per quarter to complete the returns. The Xero package is £10 per month. These costs will be funded by

the NZCom project. Registration will only go ahead once the contract with WPD is signed. The Board authorised Kevin to sign the agreement with Alexander & Co if required.

6. **Communications:** Social media was discussed and it was agreed that it would be ideal to have a dedicated volunteer who would work to agreed guidelines. Simon will put a call out on social media and Kevin will include this in the next newsletter.
7. **EV Promotion and vehicle sharing:** Martin Jackson is working well on the online EV promotion event, and has written an article which could be a blog post or newsletter item. Marcus will produce a draft basic business plan for a shared EV scheme. Tony will talk to Jeremy Rowe, the new manager at Concern Wadebridge, about the idea.
8. **Community Funds:** The 7 St Breock panels have met and all the funds were allocated. A list of awards will be published on the website, and recipients will be paid as soon as the funds arrive from RES. The WREN Community Fund for environmental projects was discussed. Tony reported that the fund did not run last year because of Covid, and is relaunching this year. Ideas on how to promote the fund and projects that may not be aware of it to be emailed to Tony.
9. **Cornwall Community Energy Network initial meeting:** Tony has circulated his own notes from the meeting, the official minutes written by Jake Burnyeat are awaited.
10. **Other Business:**
  - Chris reported that an Exeter University Global Sustainability Solutions MSc student will be writing a dissertation on one of the WREN suggested topics. Matt Adams is starting in May on the topic Roadmap to Peer 2 Peer.
  - Marcus has submitted WREN's response to the Cornwall Council DPD consultation 3<sup>rd</sup> round.
  - Ian reported that there will be no elections on 6th May for the Wadebridge Town Councillors, as no seats are contested.
  - Ian also reported that National Grid has bought Western Power Distribution. It is not thought that this will affect the NZCom project.

**NEXT MEETING FRIDAY 7<sup>th</sup> May 3 pm on Zoom**

**(then 11<sup>th</sup> June, 9<sup>th</sup> July, 6<sup>th</sup> August, 10<sup>th</sup> September, 8<sup>th</sup> October, 12<sup>th</sup> November, 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021)**