

Minutes of WREN Board Meeting 6th February 2023, Zoom

WREN Board Members present: Chris Coonick, Tony Faragher, Simon Miller, Kevin Smith, Ian Welch.
WREN Members present: Leonie McGregor (minutes)
Apologies: Victoria Smyth.

Meeting started 1900, closed 2100.

The Board approved the minutes of the last meeting held on 9th January 2023.
There were no matters arising.

- 1. NZCom update:** The Board congratulated and thanked Chris and Simon for a very positive and successful final event last week. The day was packed with a full programme of events, presentations and demonstrations, and over 200 people had attended, including both primary school and sixth form college students. There has been good follow up and further references to the event on social media. Simon is producing a full summary.

WREN's final invoice to NGED is likely to be sent this month. Chris and Simon to submit their final invoices to WREN once they have completed their work on NZCom.

Next steps following finalisation of the project include:

 - “Warm as a service” policy-led sandbox application. Planet A are in discussions to take this heat pump trial forward. Planet A would lead on this, with Ofgem in an advisory capacity. Ofgem will provide a letter of comfort to aid funding applications to be made and an energy supplier sought.
 - Andy from the Centre for Energy Equality is keen to work with Tim from CEP on improving the functionality and usability of the online tool and linking it with the Fairer Warmth app that CEE have also developed. This could be funded by NGED or by the Energy Redress scheme. WREN would be named on any application but would not be the lead partner.
 - It was agreed that WREN should attend the Royal Cornwall Show, possibly jointly with CEP. Simon will contact Wadebridge Chamber of Commerce to reserve a pitch.
- 2. Energy Equality Project:** The Board discussed sources of funding for a project manager to implement and complete the project. The Good Growth Fund (Community and Place) was considered but does not seem to be appropriate for this project. Vicky is talking to TEVI who may have some remaining funds to distribute. As these would need to be spent and reclaimed before the end of March 2023, these are unlikely to be workable either. The issue of recruitment was also discussed, including the pros and cons of employees versus consultants. Kevin will look at WREN's finances and forecasts to determine the surplus available to fund such a post. He will also produce a summary of the costs to deliver the project and which of these are included in the portfolio costs to be raised by the share offer. It was agreed to post an open advert on the website giving advance notice of a variety of roles, both paid and voluntary, and inviting applicants to submit a cv.
- 3. Low Carbon Energy Advisor:** Tony has registered WREN with the Energy Redress Scheme, which appears to be the most appropriate source of funding for the post. This would be 100% funding for up to 2 years. Tony will be notified when the next application round opens. Self-funding for this post is also being considered by the Board.

4. **WREN Board development:** Tony will collate the work done by the Board on this over the last year. The Board will then continue the process, identifying skill gaps and working on ways of filling those. Tony will be stepping down as Chair by the next AGM in September at the latest.
5. **Communications:** The next newsletter will promote the Community Guide and online tool and give an update on the other outcomes of NZCom. The prospective job opportunities will be advertised. Ian requested that Chris and Simon run a session with the Town Council to help them formulate and move forward with their net zero plans.
6. **Finance:** Kevin presented a profit and loss report for the 10 months to the end of January 2023. This showed that WREN continues to operate at a slight loss over the year, however the reserves will increase with income earned during the NZCom project. An invoice has been requested from Community Energy England for memberships fees.
7. **Housing development approach:** [Ian was not present for this discussion]. A housing developer has proposed working with WREN to develop community owned renewables on a small housing development. It was agreed that further information is required, and that any Non-Disclosure Agreement prior to discussions should allow the seeking of additional details and the ability to share with the Board. Simon will contact the developer to arrange a meeting and seek clarification on the NDA situation.
8. **Other business:**
 - As 8th May is an extra bank holiday, the Board meeting scheduled for then will be shifted to 9th May.
 - Several months ago Good Energy started sending invoices to WREN and the Town Council for the unmetered supply to the war memorial lamp at Coronation Park. This relates to an informal agreement for a free supply made between Juliet Davenport (former CEO of GE) and Stephen Frankel years ago. Tony has provided GE several times in the last year with these details, but they have not responded to or acted on this information and persist in pursuing WREN for the amount (over £500). Tony has now raised the issue as a formal complaint with GE.

NEXT MEETING MONDAY 6th March 7.00 pm on Zoom

Then: 3rd April, 9th May, 5th June, 3rd July, 7th August, 4th September, 2nd October, 6th November, 4th December.