

Westmill Solar Board meeting
Tuesday 28th January 2020, 14:00 – 17:30



Location: Shrivenham Memorial Hall, Shrivenham

Directors:

Tom Parkinson (Chair), Martin Allman, Mark Luntley, Bob Pedley, Nina Alpey and Mairi Brooks.

In attendance:

Belinda Bramley, Alastair Maxwell, Sam Parkinson (Ethex), Andrew Crawford (prospective Director), Fran Tattersall (WeSET, from 16.00).

Agenda Item		Discussion, decisions and actions	by
14:00	Introductions	TP welcomed those in attendance and introduced AC and BB to the other board members. TP invited all prospective board members to get involved and put forward suggestions.	
14:05	Approval of Minutes and matters arising	TP briefed the board of the discussion to go ahead at the Board Meeting. TP requested the agenda and papers are shared via the Dropbox rather than email so that everyone can access the latest version ahead of the meeting Conflicts of Interest: AC – Councillor for Vale of White Horse (VoWH) ML – Chair of Westmill Wind Co-op (WWC), Board member of Energy4All and REScoop NA – Director of Low Carbon Hub CIC The minutes of Q3 2019 Board meeting were approved. Matters arising not covered by the agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Younger member inclusion 	Ethex
14:20	RINA report, operational issues and review of asset manager role	MA led with findings of the report. Performance of site is slightly lower than expected. Work continuing on camera system and FiT meter installation. MA to check that installation does not impact sites meter readings or FiT rate of PPA with Co-op Energy In line with remaining proactive around the performance of the site, MA recommended the use of a thermal imaging drone survey to help identify any prospective performance issues with the solar panels. Board agreed to proceed with this. MA to proceed with British Solar Renewables (BSR) Oxford University’s Robotics department have enquired whether Westmill would consider allowing them to test and trial their new autonomous robotic system used to	MA MA MA

		<p>survey and identify issues with solar panels. Board agreed in principle but asked that there be a “quid quo pro” with them promoting community renewable energy.</p> <p>As per last board meeting’s actions, MA had identified a number of potential O&M contractors in addition to RINA. MA to speak with all, feedback and recommend to the board before the next board meeting.</p> <p>Ethex to contact Richard Thompson about Elite Security callout policy and procedure</p>	Ethex
14:45	Ethex report & Q4 accounts (incl share transfers/withd rawals))	<p>AM led with main points from the Ethex report.</p> <p>BB has been appointed interim COO at Ethex and interim Company Secretary for Westmill Solar..</p> <p>Formal policy for Non-Community Funding investment being developed following investment in BHESCo.</p> <p>BP shared his thoughts on how cash balances can be optimised AC offered ideas on this too. Treasury policy to be developed.</p> <p>One share withdrawal request. Board had no objections to request. Ethex to action withdrawal.</p> <p>BB thanked BP for his help and went through the management accounts – despite performance being in line with previous years, the Co-op showed a loss of ~214K after provision of a 12p share interest and £86k of community funding. This was due to an accelerated interest charge associated with the early loan repayment to LPPI, LPPI’s legal costs and the incidental legal and promotional cost for 2019’s Bond offer. These exceptionals will be disclosed separately in the annual accounts.</p> <p>AC asked about provision for decommissioning costs. BP explained that these could be covered by the 18 months of revenue which continue after repayment of the LPPI loan. NA asked if the chart of accounts could be tidied up; BP confirmed he had also asked for this.</p> <p>Business Rates – looking at an increase on last year. MB and Ethex continuing to investigate any reliefs available via discussion with local councils. Ethex organising formal revaluation of site.</p> <p>Mini BMW visited site with the intention of using it as part of the promotion of their new EV. Offered monetary incentive of £300. Board to research ‘market’ costs and</p>	<p>BP/Ethex</p> <p>BP</p> <p>Ethex</p> <p>Ethex</p> <p>MB/Ethex</p> <p>Board/TP</p>

		feedback increased incentive. This could then be used to relay and improve the on-site track. TP to ask FT, WWC and WeSET for their input.	
15:05	Review of year-end and audit	Audit date set for 18/02/2020. Board to be kept up to date. Critchleys auditor Gary Pready has made initial contact with Ethex for planning purposes	Ethex
15:10	2020 AGM update and further Wind/Solar co-operation	<p>AGM to be hosted 06/06/2020 at STEAM Museum with Westmill Wind Co-op.</p> <p>Charlie Luxton has confirmed as keynote speaker.</p> <p>Board agreed that it is important to diarise meetings between representatives of both boards, E4all and Ethex to ensure that things do not get forgotten or “drift away”.</p> <p>ML suggested a pre-AGM meeting between WWC and WSC boards the day before AGM. The meeting would be used to discuss the Long-term future of site, technological changes –how to take advantage, embedding cooperative values and widening membership. Ethex to email Board members for availability and evening meal availability.</p>	Ethex/NA ML Ethex
15:25	Co-op Energy update and affiliate agreement status	<p>PPA price from Co-op Energy to increase at the end of January 2020. Ethex to note increase in generation for invoicing as they are received.</p> <p>Mid counties are planning to reissue a new Affiliate agreement possibly with a more limited scope. Once received by Ethex, details will be circulated.</p>	Ethex Ethex
15:30	Building relationships with local councils	<p>The board discussed the importance of Westmill Solar getting involved with local councils and helping promote renewable community energy.</p> <p>AC said that VoWH council has set up a Climate Emergency committee, encouraging all community groups to put forward ideas.</p> <p>TP mentioned that Wessex CE network are organising a local authority / community energy climate conference with Bath and NE Somerset Council. The board discussed whether WSC should look at organising something similar.</p> <p>MB stated that a revolving loan template for Oxford City Council to Low Carbon Hub is public. She will find it, as a potentially useful resource.</p> <p>MB to draft an event targeting local authorities and pairing with community energy groups. Board happy to support.</p>	MB

		AC gave his apologies and left the meeting at 16:00	
16:00	WeSET presentation and Q&A	<p>FT presented on the current progress on the development of the Westmill on-site centre.</p> <p>The board appreciated the amount of time and effort that FT and the trustees had put into the project.</p> <p>The board was hesitant around the timeline of the project, the lack of critical path analysis and the repayment of loans. There was also a concern that the level of demand predicted from centre is not matched and that the centre may end up being under-utilised.</p> <p>The board were in general agreement that they wanted to help support the project further but that there needs to be an even greater focus on the project management side of things to ensure that the timetable can be met in time to drawdown the Leaver grant</p> <p>MB offered to provide more direct support on this. The board agreed that additional remuneration should be considered for her additional work.</p> <p>BP also offered to help with some of the practical financial elements of the project. To discuss further with FT.</p>	<p>MB</p> <p>BP</p>
17:00	Community Funding update	<p>NA shared with the board her community funding strategy for 2020. The accompanying document set out WSC spending availability and amounts earmarked for the year.</p> <p>The board thanked NA for the work she had put into the strategy. The board agreed to her proposed community funding allocations /budgets.</p> <p>NA negotiated an arrangement with Low Carbon Hub and EiE to extend free energy audits of community buildings (funded by WSC) to anywhere within 25-mile radius of the Westmill site. Nomination form being finalised. Ethex to include in next Westmill Solar newsletter.</p> <p>NA aiming to launch the Westmill Solar Community Grants Programme at the AGM, with £30K put aside as a pilot for this year. Further details to be brought to Board meeting in April. Ethex to include in future Westmill Solar newsletter and to be shared at this year's AGM. It was proposed that we also publicise the scheme to other potential partners. A panel (including volunteer members) to be convened in the autumn to assess applications, and recommendations to be presented at the October Board Meeting for approval.</p>	<p>NA/Ethex</p> <p>NA</p>

		<p>NA to contact new Education officer at WeSET as to a current update/ position on what and how much they may need to finish the school's education toolkit.</p> <p>£18K of 2019 community funds still available to be used as opportunities become apparent through the year.</p>	
17:30	Members' event preparation	<p>TP explained the breakdown of the "Welcome Event" following the board meeting. Keen to encourage a local member to join the board.</p> <p>Board members to speak on following areas: TP - Introduction NA - Community Funding BP - Westmill Non-Community Funding investment MB - Building relationships with local councils ML - Westmill Wind Coop FT – WeSET</p>	
	AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ML to send around info package about REScoop 	
17:40	Close		