

## Westmill Solar Co-operative Minutes of board meeting

**Westmill Solar Board meeting Tuesday 26th January 2020, 15:30 – 18:00**

Location: Zoom Conference Call (due to the Covid-19 pandemic)

### Westmill Solar Directors:

Tom Parkinson (Chair) (TP), Martin Allman (MA), Mark Luntley (WW Chair) (ML), Nina Alphey (NA), Mairi Brookes (MB), Andy Crawford (AC), Angela Bryant (AB)

### Westmill Wind Directors:

Ruth Conchie (RC), Douglas Parr (DP), Dr Alan Ruddell (AR), Josh Brown (JB), Aude Duquesne (AD), Ryan Rushton (RR), Mike Blanch (MBI)

### In attendance:

Belinda Bramley (Ethex)(BB), Sam Parkinson (Ethex) (SP), Sarah Flood (Ethex) (SF), Annette Heslop (Energy4All) (AH)

Agenda Item	Duration	<i>Action</i>
Welcome & Introductions	<p>TP welcomed those in attendance and outlined the agenda for the meeting.</p> <p>Conflicts of Interest of note:            AC – Councillor for Vale of White Horse (VoWH)            ML – Chair of Westmill Wind Co-op (WWC), Board member of Energy4All, REScoop and Community Energy England            TP – Co-op Energy, Mid Counties Co-op            MB – Low Carbon Hub</p>	
Approval of Minutes and matters arising	The minutes of Q4 2020 Board meeting were approved subject to edits and comments from WW on joint meeting.	
RINA report, contract renewal and panel degradation review	<p>RINA report was taken as read.</p> <p>MA led with the PID panel degradation review. Thermographic survey encountered potential degradation through PID of solar modules. Regular occurrence of modules installed at the time of Westmill site installation.</p> <p>RINA to investigate whether we have a case for warranty claim with module manufacturers. Will most likely require</p>	<i>RINA/MA</i>

	<p>further investigation of panels beyond thermographic survey.</p> <p>NA questioned whether the fact RINA were carrying out investigations meant that we had agreed to extend contract beyond the initial 3 months from the last meeting. MA confirmed that we had agreed to extend the contract.</p>	
<p>Ethex report &amp; Q4 accounts (inc. audit timetable and forthcoming LPPI meeting)</p>	<p>SP led with findings of report.</p> <p>WSC has experienced its best performing year since incorporation (~5,500MWh).</p> <p>Issue of previous Quarters FiT payments with Octopus Energy resolved. All FiT payments for 2020 now accounted for.</p> <p>Westmill Solar Bond intertest payment was distributed on 31/12/2020. Couple of amounts of outstanding interest owed based on lack of bank details. Ethex to follow up.</p> <p>Ethex had received a couple of share withdrawal requests. The board agreed to those member withdrawal requests made prior to this board meeting</p> <p>BB led on the Q4 accounts.</p> <p>Income outperformed budget, due to significantly better generation figures than budgeted for every month.</p> <p>Operating costs were below budget. Due in large to business rates rebates for the three years 2017-2020 and a reduction for 2020-2021</p> <p>Upcoming audit scheduled with Critchleys. Westmill has the same audit manager as previous year and so Ethex envisage it being very straightforward again. Already been in touch and would like to start w/c 08/02/21.</p> <p>TP asked for initial feedback regarding members' interest payment of 12% for 2020. Board was happy with the proposed interest payment for this year.</p>	
<p>Bank mandate update</p>	<p>There have been significant delays to the changes to the Barclays and Handelsbanken mandate. Barclay's mandate form has been sent to Andrew to sign as well as request</p>	

	<p>for POI and POA documents. Handelsbanken mandate also missing signature from BB.</p> <p>Larger observation about what we do with our surpluses. In the short term we are happy with current bank situation but further discussion need needs to be had as part of our larger long term strategy discussion</p>	
Community Funding update	<p>Community funding report taken as read.</p> <p>Pilot Westmill Community Grant Scheme was a great success. NA keen to prepare another round for 2021 and to allocate £40K. Board agreed to approve this.</p> <p>NA proposed to include Westmill Wind in the scheme, for example they could contribute a lump sum to the grant scheme pot. Board happy for NA to progress in asking WW whether they would like to participate.</p> <p>Community Energy Audits run by the Low Carbon Hub (LCH) in 2020 continued under appropriate Covid-secure measures, where practical and permitted. LCH have appetite to expand this further and requested £15,000. NA proposed to split into two tranches, if it looks like they will not need all funds we can reduce or remove need for second transfer. Board approved.</p> <p>The current 2020-21 Less CO2 schools' energy efficiency programme has been delayed by the pandemic. No funding requested this year. All eleven schools who signed up were offered energy audits, funded by WSC.</p> <p>As previously discussed, we intend to propose to members a 20:80 formula for community funding for 2021. NA outlined proposal for upcoming pipeline spending. Board happy and approved NA's proposal and to move forward.</p>	<p><i>NA/Ethex</i></p> <p><i>NA/Ethex</i></p> <p><i>NA/Ethex</i></p>
2021 strategy planning / member comms (inc AGM resourcing)	<p>TP proposed an extra meeting to discuss future Westmill Solar strategy and One Planet Living presentation for early March. TP to send Doodle poll to board for dates in early March 2021.</p> <p>AGM – continues to be uncertainty around whether we can hold AGM in person still. The board was of the decision that Westmill should not host an in-person AGM even should large gatherings be permitted.</p>	

	Discussion to be continued with Westmill Wind board when they join the meeting.	
AOB	<b>Reading Hydro</b> – TP sent around request from Reading Hydro about additional funds for construction. Asked the board whether they were comfortable with the idea of committing funds in principle? Board happy for TP to continue talks. TP to deliver any update to discussions when they arise.	<i>TP</i>
BREAK	Rest of meeting held jointly with Westmill Wind Directors	
Virtual Trading Dividend update	Ryan Rushton (RR) led with update on Trading Dividend.  Pilot scheme was launched on 20/01/21. Invite to sign up to Your Co-op Energy's community renewable energy tariff gone out to 81 Westmill Solar and Wind members.  Deadline for sign up scheduled for 05/02/2021. Once closed, WSC and WWFC to send out questionnaire to participants to gain feedback.	<i>RR/AB/ Ethex/Energy4All</i>
2021 AGM (and Board timetable for 2021)	Date for the 2021 AGM is scheduled for the 19/06/2021  TP suggested a joint committee made up of WSC and WWF board directors and Energy4All and Ethex to help organise this year's AGM.  TP shared that the WSC board had been reluctant to hold an in-person AGM given the current Covid-19 pandemic. Both Boards in agreement that it seemed unsafe.  Agreed to an online AGM again but perhaps with additional features such as guest speakers and breakout rooms to make the day into more of an event.	<i>ML/TP/NA/RR /Ethex/Energy4All</i>
Broadening the membership	AD led with the agenda item.  Part of the long-term strategy and sustainability of the co-ops is how to renew or increase memberships of both Co-ops.  Both Co-ops have an ageing membership and would like to involve and introduce a younger membership.  We want to put in place a policy to actively encourage new members on a regular basis – not just an opportunity for those 'in the know' who take the trouble to ask.	

	<p>Promoting a 'Refer a friend' type arrangement amongst members could be quite effective – but only if existing members don't feel 'diluted' and it may not diversify the membership as much as we would like.</p> <p>With WSC, Ethex previously ran a secondary market and shares are transferable, so there is scope for members to transfer shares to children should they wish.</p> <p>TP and AD have asked the board to read the attached membership strategy document and to feedback externally any comments.</p> <p>TP and AD to take feedback and come back with possible options to increase membership.</p>	<p><i>Boards</i></p> <p><i>TP/AD</i></p>
<p>Project LEO update</p>	<p>MB updated the board on the current position with Project LEO.</p> <p>Currently MB and DP are involved in more detailed planning and scoping out concrete projects that we can commit to.</p> <p>MB to send round a written process update to the boards and asked the boards to feedback externally and will take these in forward discussions.</p>	<p><i>MB</i></p>
<p>Visitor Centre update and WeSET MoU</p>	<p>MBI led with agenda item.</p> <p>WeSET had a baseline budget for the project but has gone through a second tendering process that has come back with large increase in the total budget of the project.</p> <p>External funders have been contacted about the increase in budget and whether they could support with the increased costs.</p> <p>Have been seeking additional grant funding but have been unsuccessful. Are investigating possible cost cutting options.</p> <p>WeSET trustees have an upcoming meeting scheduled to determine whether to continue to go ahead or to stop the project with the latter being the most likely option.</p> <p>Both boards have looked at Memorandum of Understanding and determined that it is not dependent on the visitor centre being completed. Should still be</p>	

	<p>looking to have this signed off as it sets out an alignment of the visions between WeSET and the two co-ops.</p> <p>MBI would like to set a time up in April to invite both boards to a meeting with WeSET trustees to talk about what WeSET should be doing and a wider vision piece.</p>	<i>MBI</i>
COP 26	<p>TP led with the agenda item.</p> <p>2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference taking place in Glasgow in November 2021. As two of the largest energy co-ops TP and ML wanted to open up to the boards their feedback as to whether we should look to be involved.</p> <p>Community Energy England and ResCoop both have offer for a location at the conference with whom we could work.</p> <p>DP commented that it can be very difficult to make noise if we do not go without a clear and thought-out message regarding community energy.</p> <p>TP and ML to proceed with investigating possible involvement and feedback to board externally.</p>	<i>TP/ML</i>
	<b>Meeting Closed at 18:15</b>	