



exeter community energy

## **Minutes: AGM**

**Tuesday 24 Sep 2024 18.30 – 19.30**

**Venue: Northernhay Room, Exeter Community Centre,  
17 St. Davids Hill, Exeter, EX4 3RG**

### **1. Taking of attendance**

#### **Attendance (including via Zoom)**

##### **Directors (7):**

David Bacon, Andy Extance, Ionna Elliot, Emma Sueref, Jen Cook, Stephen Wood, Peter Dempsey, James Rowan

##### **Members (25): Quorate**

Chris Mark Allen, Chrissy Allott, Robert Ashton, Nina Ashton, Nicola Beglin, Colin Bowder, Andy Carter, Chris Cant, Sally Clarke, Martin Crothall, Erica Eden, Roy Eden, Mark Gill, Susan Kay, Tim LeGood, Sharon Lewis, Mic Morgan, Hilary Noakes, Peter Nickol, Mark Richardson, John Scott, Genevieve Terry, David Thompson, Godfrey Whitehouse, Ve Wright, Jonathan Dawson, John Anderson

##### **In attendance:**

Matthew Axe, ECOE Advice Team leader  
Harry Bonnell Retrofit PM  
Bernadette Chelvanayagam  
Jackie French, Retrofit Assessor  
Alicia Frost Home Energy Advisor  
Matt Hext, Home Energy Advisor  
Rachel Kelly, Solar PV4 PM/O&M Coordinator  
Prana Simon, Home Energy Advisor  
Louisa Radice  
Gemma Fitzsimmons  
Pixie Frost  
Philomena Wood  
Richard Wong  
Dan Grey

##### **Apologies (23):**

Elizabeth Allwen, Margaret Anderson, Claire Ash-Wheeler, Sue Aubrey, Jill Baines, Nicola Beglin, Les Bight, Tara Bowers, Colin Boyd, Mike Cox, Sue Cox, Graham Heysett, Bridget Oliver, Steve Pratt, Jane Stanley, Prina Sumaria, Lucy Thompson, Julia Wilson, Eliot Wright, Paul Wright, Phil Wright

**Obituary:** Harry Bonnell briefed meeting that Andy Cook from Retrofit team passed away

### **2. Information on voting procedures**

Voting procedure by Zoom was explained. There was one proxy vote.

**3. Vote to agree 2023 AGM minutes**

**Approved:** In favour: 12 (room) + 5 online (unanimous) + 1 proxy = 18, Abstentions: 0, Against: 0.

**4. Presentation of Annual Report**

**4.1 Policy update (David Bacon presented Prina's slide deck)**

The new government is reviewing future energy and infrastructure policy and relaxing onshore wind restrictions. Heart of Devon wind turbine feasibility is in progress at Morchard Bishop but multi-year wait for grid connection.

**4.2 Solar PV 1-3 (Rachel Kelly)**

Generation is down 5% due to sunnier weather and depreciation. Revenue up 24% but this includes payments from two sites Beacon & Westbank. Some changes to carbon calculation/classification 2022-23 shows increased use of coal and gas due to Ukraine disruption. Current installed capacity = 430kW.

**4.3 Healthy Homes for Wellbeing (Matthew Axe Operations Manager)**

Funds have increased significantly due to £992k from WWU to Mar-26. We were able to increase the team size and planning to open a new Energy Advice Centre in Exeter. LEAP local energy action partnership gives access to energy suppliers via a dedicated App. Outreach and home visits are up 96%, and three new local care partnerships established. Community Action team and energy advisers to identify venues for energy events.

**4.4 Retrofit (Harry Bonnell, Retrofit Project Manager)**

Funded for a couple of years by LADD and HUGS2 funding. Team includes retrofit assessors and coordinators. Launched Able-to-Pay service. 29 detailed assessments since Oct-23. Two-year lead project - light touch (60-90 mins) home visits between gov grant funded works = 'EPC+' or 'Whole Home Light' - consortium of five regional organizations - sharing capacity and resource. Full Home Assessment and scenario support - £600. Open to all, attending other ECOE events (Healthy Homes) and external events including RentSmart, Build it Live @ West Point 2-weeks ago. Partnered with Plymouth architects Studio Skane and working with a number of contractors. Contact [retrofit@ecoadvice.org.uk](mailto:retrofit@ecoadvice.org.uk)

**4.5 Solar PV 4 (Rachel Kelly – Project Manager since Mar-23)**

Total electricity generation across all ECOE sites for 2023-24 was 363 MWh which is enough to power approx. 97 homes and gives a carbon saving of and 62t CO<sub>2</sub>e.

Increased from £25k REACH funding. Not all identified sites are feasible Exploring Barnfield and St Peter's school, and a potential 40W rooftop array on hold pending site development. Application for ground mounted solar array at Langdon NHS - secured £40k with Share Energy but potential capacity of 3.6MW, too large for ECOE business model - most generated power would go to grid. Two sites 350-400kW sites more appropriate, other sites in Tiverton and Exmouth. The Share Offer document has been sent out to get standard mark. At ~450kW the hospital would consume all the energy generated and would double ECOE's installed capacity. The FiT ended in 2019 – Power Purchase Agreements are required as part of the lease

and discussion with the leaseholder is required. We're aiming to reduce energy costs by 10%.

#### **4.6 Social impact**

No presentation

#### **4.7 Community Fund (Emma Sueref – Fund Manager)**

Community fund - £36,381 total funds have been allocated to 38 local community organisations for improving energy efficiency activities and workshops since ECOW was set up. £9,549 was distributed in FY23/24 to Exwick Community Centre, Hurley Burley Nursery, Love Food CIC, and Pippins Community Center, for new heating systems, insulation, healthy efficient cooking and secondary glazing. £5k have been allocated this FY and documents are in preparation for launch in November - the deadline is in December – giving sufficient time to review applications. We could possibly do two per year.

### **5. Annual accounts 01/4/22 to 31/3/23**

#### **5.1 Presentation of accounts (Ionna Elliot – Finance Director)**

Accounts were shared by email and hardcopy. Approval required for submission to FCA. ECOE is in a healthy financial position, recording a £176k surplus on the profit & loss account, turnover was ~£1m mainly due to Healthy Homes grant awards, and share capital was £309.4k.

#### **5.2 Accounts questions**

The requirement for external audit was discussed but is not recommended because of scrutiny applied by current and previous financial directors, and cost estimated at 0.5-1% of turnover. Some members expressed the importance of having the accounts independently inspected, even if not a full audit. Ionna Elliott explained that the accounts are scrutinized by chartered accountants in the process of preparing them, which provides a high level of assurance. Member John Anderson commented that an audit is more costly, but only an accountant would notice the difference.

### **6 Voting to:**

#### **6.1 Approve Directors' recommendation to pay shareholder interest at 5%, year ending 31 March 2023**

**Approved:** 18 + 7 online + 1 proxy = 26, Abstentions: 0, Against: 0

#### **6.2 Approve the Accounts for year ending 31 March 2023**

**Approved:** 18 + 6 online + 1 proxy = 25, Abstentions: 0, Against: 0

#### **6.3 Agree for the Accounts not to be audited**

**Approved:** 17 + 5 online + 1 proxy = 23, Abstentions: 0, Against: 0

#### **6.4 Approve Directors' recommendation to pay £5,000 from the profits of solar PV, plus such other amounts as are decided by the Directors into the Community Fund**

**Approved** In favour: 17 + 1 online + 1 proxy = 19. Abstentions: 0. Against: 0.

Question: Can we transfer other amounts? Answer: £5k is the minimum, or more with members interest included.

7 **Appointment of directors**

7.1 New directors: (combined vote)

Jen Cook, Stephen Wood, Peter Dempsey, James Rowan

**Approved:** 15 + 5 online + 1 proxy = 21. Abstentions: 0. Against: 0.

8. **Strategy discussion – (David Bacon Chair)**

The Chair explained the transfer of Healthy Homes and Retrofit Advice to the Charity Climate Action Hub Exeter, part of Exeter Community Alliance.

A new energy advice centre named 'Pulse' is to be located on Queen St – later maybe 'Pulse Exeter', with another in Torbay, to address historic naming issues. The premises will be run by the charity (who chose the name) and shared with other members of ECA. We hope to have it ready to host our 10th anniversary party. Energy from rooftop Solar-PV will be sold back to the building's users to support 5% interest.

Grant funding for Healthy Homes and Retrofit, for example £900k WWU grant over two years, will transfer to the charity. The move to charity status enables Healthy Homes to access the Energy Redress fund which is managed by EST from supplier fines, and other charity funding.

In answer to questions (Erica Eden), separate accounts and reporting will be required. ECOE took advice from PEC Plymouth Energy Community and others on charity structure. There will be a separate management committee for the Charity to run Pulse which will include two ECOE directors, and no vote planned.

Sheila Swarbrick, Chair Exeter Community Initiative talked about the similarity with her organisation's merger with Magic Carpet.

The charity will also provide an energy advice service but we'll be using separate ECOE, CAH and Pulse branding (trading names), charity and company structures will be separate (Jen).

Healthy Homes - Centre has the advantage of rear access to the adjacent Harlequin Centre, Chris Wood, Chair of Trustees of CAH, will continue to work with ECOE Energy Advice Service.

Godfrey Whitehouse was involved in CAH. 20-25 organisations used CAH's previous premises for a wider set of activities including a drop-in area, Extinction Rebellion (XR), repair cafe etc. It was assured that all these can continue, including the climate awareness display. WWU grant will fund it.

10. **Awards, Recognition and Thanks**

HEA (Home Energy Advisor) of the year - Julie Glover, Energy Advisor, East Devon

HH4WB special award - Matt Hext

Retrofit special award - Andy Cook

Congratulations to all and a formal ceremony is planned at the new Energy Advice Centre.

11. **AOB**

- 11.1 Logins to personal accounts reduced – Members (Peter Nichol) requested that annual statements be provided to better manage funds – **Action - Board to review at next meeting 8-Oct**
- 11.2 ECOE is trying to reduce the borrowing by repaying original capital, and is actively considering membership - 195 members - option to withdraw shares. Options are to reduce membership or withdraw original shares, but need to maintain engagement.
- 11/3 An indicative vote was taken to move towards a nominal membership generated 12 in favour.

Members (Sheila Swarbrick) noted that loans and interest were sometimes returned without proper notification. **Action - Board to review and improve process of repayments and notification.**