

Nadder Community Energy

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Nadder Community Energy

Thursday 21st September 2023 at 6.30pm

at the Victoria Hall, Tisbury

Present: Alan Maryon-Davis (AMD) (Chair), Sue Reed (SR) (Secretary), Maggie Paul (MP), Rosie Buck (RB), Gustavo Montes de Oca (GM), Peter Shallcross (PS), Emma Worth (EW) (Consultant), Richard Ecclestone (RE) (Asset Manager)

Karen Ecclestone, Ione Lacey, David Lacey, Susan Jonas, Janey Stevens, Richard Budden, Lynne Budden, Anthony Kent, Ann May, Chris Walford, Karen Linaker

Apologies: Tim Plumptre (TP), Elizabeth Forbes, Sue Powell, Simon Fowler, Suzanne Uprichard, George Cruddas, Graeme Begg, Andrew Wallace, Judith Hassey, Roger Walker, Maureen Guirdham, Sue Hansford

1. The Chair welcomed everybody and the agenda was approved.
2. The draft minutes of the AGM 2022 were approved by all present.
3. **Chair's report** (previously circulated). AMD summarised his report and overview of 2022-23. He thanked Mike Simpkins and Lucy Stone, outgoing directors, for all their work and support. He then welcomed Peter Shallcross (specialising in land use) and Gustavo Montes de Oca (specialising in IT issues and leading the car club team), both co-opted as external independent directors for their specific skills.
4. **NCE Accounts** March 2022- April 2023. SR showed NCE's revenue and expenditure, with operating profit being £42,357. Some of this will be put aside as contingency funds, some for research and development of new projects and some for the community fund.
Resolution 1. Accounts for the year were approved unanimously.
Resolution 2. Directors were authorised to allocate up to £12,000 to the Community Benefit Fund.
5. **Resolution 3.** Re-election of Director. Alan Maryon Davis left the room and was unanimously voted back onto the Board as a director and Chair.
6. **Asset Manager's report.** RE summarised the performance of NCE's 16 sites in 2022-23. We have around 600kW of solar panels, generating around 53,000kWh per year. This is enough electricity to power 180 average homes for a year. For the year ending 31 March 2023 we generated almost the same amount of power as the previous year with our installations

outperforming expectations by 4.8%

The installations at Totterdale Farm and Bridzor farm are still having minor issues with Bridzor underperforming by 14.5%. Here the possibility of dirt from the farm's dairy herd and pigeons affecting the panels has been investigated. A drone flyover seemed to show that the panels were not that dirty but a clean is being arranged. The other possibility is panel degradation but that is less likely. Totterdale Farm is underperforming by 18% which seems to be the result of water ingress to the cables. All sites have been serviced by T H White in summer 2023. RE is training up a small team of volunteers to be able to provide backup for him if he is away. PS, GM, EW and AMD are involved in this team.

- 7. Project Manager's report.** EW reminded everyone about NCE's second share offer (2018) which installed solar panels on five local schools and engendered a good working relationship with Salisbury Diocese. In 2020 NCE and EW worked together on a feasibility study paid for by the Rural Communities Energy Fund (RCEF) investigating renewable heating for six local schools. This showed that it was indeed cost-effective to install heat pumps in those schools but that the financial model did not work for community energy groups. Therefore, NCE shared the research and EW helped the schools apply for Salix funding from their local authority. Two local schools, at Marnhull and Chilmark, have now installed heat pumps equivalent to 100,000kg a year carbon reduction.

EW moved on to explain that NCE/EW had been approached by Sherborne Academy Schools Trust (SAST) to look into the feasibility of 9 of their schools having NCE solar panel arrays. Of these, 6 have been identified as feasible with roofs of a suitable size and orientation:

- The Gryphon School, Sherborne
- King Arthur's School, Wincanton
- Shaftesbury Senior School
- Shaftesbury Primary School
- Sherborne Primary School
- Sherborne Abbey Primary School

These schools would also work financially as a community share offer portfolio, even without the now-discontinued government Feed-in Tariff. This is because they use a lot of power on site, which would earn NCE a fair margin on sales, and the projected prices for exported electricity would support a 15–20-year community share offer. Shareenergy, the company that administrate community share offers, have reviewed the financial model and will be working with NCE on a possible share offer to be launched this autumn, with installations happening over the Easter and summer school

holidays. EW has also been approached by “Retrofit Action for Tomorrow” (RAFT) to collaborate on a solar array at the Cathedral School, Salisbury, which could be part of the same project.

EW also spoke about the importance of stakeholder engagement and collaboration. The connections between the people involved is what makes these projects possible. With government withdrawal of funding and subsidies for community energy groups, to continue to find new projects collaboration is even more necessary.

It was commented that it would be interesting to find out how much electricity was used in these schools per head of pupil population.

Members present voted unanimously to support this project.

8. Tisbury Electric Car Club. GM explained how the car club is still running at a loss, but has been greatly helped with a grant from Wiltshire Council.

Membership is up to almost 100 and usage is fairly steady, but it may be necessary to raise hiring fees by 15% and the membership renewal from £10 to £15. GM has been able to share knowledge with other new car clubs and with 9 new car clubs that we have helped set up we may be able to share some costs of running the booking software. The club is reliant on a small team of volunteers and the goodwill of members. A recent incident highlighted this, with a member having a problem and helping the team to sort it out quickly and all pulling together to resolve the issue. GM also thanked local lawyers at Brodrick Barker for advising.

9. Community Benefit Initiatives. RB explained how NCE have been working with Tisbury Parish Council (PC) as she is a director for NCE and a Parish councillor and can liaise between both. The Great Big Green Week was an initiative run by the PC, with NCE arranging an **Eco Homes Trail** as part of the week. RB organised a map by local artist Daisy Maryon, with sites of interest such as the hydroelectric generator at Fonthill Lake as well as local homeowners showcasing their renewable technologies and other interesting schemes at various timeslots over the first afternoon. The hosts then gathered at the Victoria Hall for refreshments and to discuss their different technologies. Although there were not a lot of participants on the Trail, the ones who did take part were very engaged and asked a lot of questions. It was felt that it was an interesting pilot for a possible ongoing annual event and a related database (held securely and privately) of people who could be contacted via NCE by anyone interested in these technologies and how they work in practice. This scheme was made possible by money from the Community Fund as well as support from the PC with insurance and printing.

RB then explained how Tisbury PC, NCE and Wiltshire Council (WC) worked

together on providing 'warm spaces' last winter. Time slots were allocated at the Methodist Church and Nadder Centre with an NCE director (mostly AMD) available to give advice on energy issues. This had a very low uptake and is being reinitiated this winter with a subsidised café at the Nadder Centre. Linked to this will be NCE's "**Warmer At Home**" project which involves a small team of volunteers who are undertaking training to be able to give individually tailored advice and support with the possibility of home visits with a thermal imaging camera and being able to refer people on to other schemes or funding by Wiltshire Council or other organisations. In spring we would then evaluate the ongoing need for this service and how it has worked. Costs for this service would be funded by NCE's Community Fund.

- 10. External Links.** MP explained how NCE work closely with other community energy groups, and are members of Wiltshire Climate Alliance, Wessex Community Energy Network, Salisbury Transition Town and Community Energy England. We continue to run a monthly informal **Green Drinks** gathering at the Boot Inn, Tisbury on the last Tuesday of the month. This has had some interesting speakers on retrofitting, renewable energy, insulation, Irish peat bogs, tree planting, electric cars and more, as well as many informal general discussions. NCE are hoping to host some free talks on a variety of subjects in the future.
- 11.** AMD closed the meeting at 8 o'clock and invited everyone to stay behind for drinks and nibbles and to take a look at the eco display showing some of the eco-homes and NCE's activities.