

The Schools' Energy Co-operative Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

**Held via Zoom Video Conference
On Tuesday 21st September 2021 at 6.00pm**

Present:

Directors of the Board: Mike Smyth (Chair), Richard Watson, Eilish Kavanagh, Andy Rolfe, Laura Moreno and Alan Simpson.

E4All Ltd: Zach Wishart, Rachael Hunter, John Heslop, Annette Heslop and Qefsete Bogiqi.

Members: 27

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mike Smyth (Chair), welcomed members to the Schools' Energy Co-operative AGM. Mike introduced Zach the new Project Manager who joined Energy4All just after the AGM last year, and introduced Rachael who had left and then come back. She looks after the maintenance issues and the things which crop up on a daily basis. Mike then introduced Qef who looks after the accounting, invoicing, meter reading and administration who is based in Barrow at Energy4All. Mike then went on to introduce the Board and outlined the agenda.

2. Energy4All

Mike then gave a brief introduction to Energy4All and its staff. He explained that Energy4All was a co-operative of 31 independent community energy co-operatives (including Schools' Energy Co-op) which co-operate to deliver a shared mission and meet operational and administrative needs, develop and share expertise, deliver future community energy through a shared development team and deliver representation. Energy4All is self-financing and non-profit distributing.

One of the things that Energy4All does for us is organise share offers. In the last year there has been 10 share offers by Energy4All member co-ops. The biggest one was earlier this month in Lochaber to build a hydro site in which just under £2m was raised in just over a week.

Q. Why is there no activity in the south-west?

A. We have done proposals for projects but we don't have any actual members based there. There is a strong group quite similar to Energy4All called Communities for Renewables which is south-west based so they have tended to co-ordinate work in that area.

Mike then showed some photos. The first one, Lochaber which is a 547kW hydro project in the Highlands which will probably become the largest community hydro project in the UK. Construction started in August and it is due to be finished about next May. The next photo was of Kinlochbervie, in the very far north-west of Scotland. This is a 200kW hydro scheme currently under construction, due to be completed again next May. Although a small community Kinlochbervie is pretty much self-funded by the local community.

Mike particularly thanked the staff of Energy4All for continuing their work on behalf of the Co-op seamlessly, despite the Covid issues and having to switch to working from home – not easy as many staff have young children and limited home working facilities.

Overview of the year

Andy Rolfe updated members on the achievements and challenges of the Co-op in the financial year 2020/21 and to date.

The main impact of Covid has been on the roll out of new installations. We feared that there would be some impact on operations, maybe on invoicing, or late payment or low energy from schools. We did manage 6 new sites in 2020/2021 and a further 3 have been completed this financial year, bringing the total number of installations in the Schools' Energy Co-op to 86.

We have continued to work with Harrow and Ealing Councils, Ealing Transition and Salisbury Community Energy. We received our sixth grant from the Greater London Authority towards our work in London. We had some great publicity out of that and the Mayor of London visited one of the sites that was supported by that grant in West Acton Primary School in June 2021. We also got some great publicity from the installation of the solar panels at Salisbury Cathedral.

We returned £143,534 to members by redeeming shares, and paid interest at 5% on the shares subscribed under our first three share offers and at 4.5% on shares issued under the fourth share offer. Most importantly we paid our first substantial dividend to school members: 26 schools received dividends (YE March 19 and 20), ranging from around £100 to almost £900 per school.

Andy said that we installed solar pv on 28 sites last year and we on a further 6 sites in the year in question. The average capacity of those sites is actually higher than the earlier installations. We have done about a third of the capacity which is pretty good considering that during the year the feed in tariff ended and, due to Covid, we had difficulty in getting into schools and getting schools' attention. Since we are now completely outside the feed in tariff it's worth reminding ourselves that in the last round of pre-registrations in 2019, we pre-registered 58 sites, against short deadlines. We have now implemented 36 of those which is pretty good going.

The 6 sites installed in 2020/1 were Avanti House (Stanmore), Salisbury Cathedral, Canons High (Edgware), Hathaway Academy, Selborne Primary School and Nicholas Hammond Academy. Both Selborne Primary School 59.2kWp and Nicholas Hammond Academy 80.54kWp are feed in tariff free sites. Larger sites of 50kWp and upwards work better without the support of a feed in tariff. It's when you have smaller sites of 40/30kWp maybe even 20kWp sites that it gets more difficult to make the site work financially without a feed in tariff.

The 3 new sites installed since April 2021 are Chelmsford School for Girls, West Acton Primary School and Grange Primary School extension. We have one more large installation going in next month at Sutton Academy (165kWp).

Actual generation from our installations was just over the projections. Electricity we generated was equivalent to the consumption of nearly 1,000 typical UK homes. During the year we saved 955 tonnes of carbon dioxide. Overall, we are at 100% of budget from all sites and since we started we have generated almost 10GWh which has saved over 3,4000 tonnes of CO₂. Where we are now, our total capacity is just over 3.36MWp.

We were awarded a further grant from the GLA's London Community Energy Fund and this time the grant has allowed us to claim capital support of up to 1/3 of the capital costs. This time we were awarded £27,725 to support 4/5 sites in Ealing.

It's important to note that Partners are the key to our success. Our top 7 partners which represents 80% of our installed capacity are Bauder, Academy Transformation Trust, PCH Associates, Ambitions Trust, Ealing Council, Harrow Council and Salisbury Community Energy.

We have recently agreed to work in partnership with CREW – Community Renewable Energy Wandsworth, a community energy organisation based in the London Borough of Wandsworth, with a pipeline of 8 schools. We are also seeking to create a relationship with councils/dioceses in East London, Essex and Suffolk. We also continue to work with Ealing and Harrow Council and Ealing Transition, Salisbury Community Energy and several Academy Trusts.

4. Maintenance and operations

Rachael spoke about the main maintenance issues. These include pigeons nesting under the panels and export meters being installed. Putting in an export meter is pretty straight forward technically but all the contracts that are needed along the way seems to be a mystery to lots of people and there are a lot of the schools that are paying for the meter operating service but they don't actually have a contract in place and they are paying a lot more money. Trying to find the right people in schools to get the contract in place is quite tricky. We can't get an export meter contract to start getting paid for export if there is no meter operating contract in place. So that is what is mainly holding the up the export meter side of things. Rachael has been working with the Ambitions Trust mainly and we should be getting export payments from October for 4 of those sites.

Most of the sites in the last financial year have been ticking over nicely. There were 6 major repairs/maintenance issues. The biggest in Duckmanton – one of the inverters looked like it had a fault but it turned out that there was some water ingress in some of the panels. In total 60 panels were replaced. Generation is now going well. Another issue was at Heron Park where they were having some roofing work. When the panels were re-installed, they weren't done very well and that also had some water ingress. We then had some metering issues.

Noah's Ark, London – voltage was low, causing faults on the inverters. One of the inverters needed replacing and then there was a power cut. It was then down for a couple of weeks because the site manager was on holiday.

The biggest non producer was Rudheath Academy which had some major building works but there was a delay in the panels being put back on.

Viking School had intermittent voltage issues.

Warren Wood is also a site where generation wasn't as good as expected. It had lots of different issues.

5. Accounts

Eilish Kavanagh presented the accounts.

Income has increased to just under £400,000 which is an increase of 31% on last year. This is due to having 77 sites fully operating and some starting. The cost of sales and admin expenses has therefore also increased. The majority of cost of sales is depreciation on the sites which is about £150,000 of £203,987.

Other operating income is just over £4,000 this year whereas last year it was £18,551. This is grant income which we haven't been able to use.

At the end of the year, we had a surplus of £143,942 which is up on the previous year and that is surplus which we are able to distribute to members and schools.

The balance sheet shows that cash has gone down due to spending on sites which have been installed as we have not had another share offer.

Share redemption – redeeming shares earlier than the 20 years of the investment enables members to get their money back sooner and be able to invest in another share offer that we may have. It is also good for the Co-op because it reduces the interest we pay.

Last year we accepted requests from members to redeem shares and we redeemed £143,534. We planned a mandatory redemption in March but this was delayed. We recently asked members who wanted to redeem and we have had requests of £50,000. These will be paid in the next couple of weeks and we have decided not to do a mandatory redemption at this time due to the uncertainty in the market.

6. FORMAL MEETING

Motions

Motion 1: To approve the minutes of the Annual General meeting held on the 28th September 2020.				
<i>Proposer:</i> Mike Smyth		<i>Seconder:</i> Anthony Woolhouse		
Results of voting as below:				
Votes Cast	At AGM	In Proxy	Chair	Total
<i>In Favour</i>	22	31	6	59
<i>Abstain</i>	4	4	0	8
<i>Against</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Motion carried</i>				
Motion 2: To receive and adopt the annual accounts up to 31st March 2021.				
<i>Proposer:</i> Mike Smyth		<i>Seconder:</i> Mariana Spater		
Results of voting as below:				
Votes Cast	At AGM	In Proxy	Chair	Total
<i>In Favour</i>	24	34	6	64
<i>Abstain</i>	1	1	0	2
<i>Against</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Motion carried</i>				
Motion 3: To approve the payment of share interest.				
<i>Proposer:</i> Mike Smyth		<i>Seconder:</i> Anthony Oakden		
Results of voting as below:				
Votes Cast	At AGM	In Proxy	Chair	Total
<i>In Favour</i>	25	35	6	66
<i>Abstain</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Against</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Motion carried</i>				

Motion 4: To pay £15,000 to Co-op's school members.*Proposer:* Mike Smyth*Seconder:* Annette Heslop

Results of voting as below:

Votes Cast	At AGM	In Proxy	Chair	Total
<i>In Favour</i>	24	32	6	62
<i>Abstain</i>	1	1	0	2
<i>Against</i>	0	2	0	2
<i>Motion carried</i>				

Motion 5: To approve the exemption from audit.*Proposer:* Mike Smyth*Seconder:* Mary Hogan

Results of voting as below:

Votes Cast	At AGM	In Proxy	Chair	Total
<i>In Favour</i>	22	32	6	60
<i>Abstain</i>	2	3	0	5
<i>Against</i>	1	0	0	1
<i>Motion carried</i>				

Motion 6: To re-appoint Melville & Co, Chartered Accountants.*Proposer:* Mike Smyth*Seconder:* Glyn Thomas

Results of voting as below:

Votes Cast	At AGM	In Proxy	Chair	Total
<i>In Favour</i>	22	32	6	60
<i>Abstain</i>	0	3	0	3
<i>Against</i>	2	0	0	2
<i>Motion carried</i>				

Election of Directors:**Motion 7: To re-appoint Andy Rolfe as a Director of the Co-operative.***Proposer:* Mike Smyth*Seconder:* Anthony Woolhouse

Results of voting as below:

Votes Cast	At AGM	In Proxy	Chair	Total
<i>In Favour</i>	24	34	6	64
<i>Abstain</i>	0	1	0	1
<i>Against</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Motion carried</i>				

Motion 8: To re-appoint Eilish Kavanagh as a Director of the Co-operative.

Proposer: Mike Smyth

Seconder: Glyn Thomas

Results of voting as below:

Votes Cast	At AGM	In Proxy	Chair	Total
<i>In Favour</i>	24	34	6	64
<i>Abstain</i>	0	1	0	1
<i>Against</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Motion carried</i>				

7. Questions and discussion

Q. Anthony Woolhouse asked - when will share interest be paid?

A. Mike said that we are projecting that for next month.

Hugh Baker – said that he was 100% impressed with both the reporting of the AGM and the actual meeting.

Mike then went on to say that he hoped to be onsite in the next 10 days at Sutton Academy in Nottinghamshire

Marianna Spater seconded what Hugh said and thanked the Board for their continued dedication and work. She said that Energy4All was an amazing organisation and gave thanks to the staff.

Q. Alan Simpson asked do we have enough experience now to come up with a standard MOP contract?

A. Rachael confirmed that the MOP contracts were not something that we put together they come from the meter operators. It's not something that we can do we just have to encourage schools to sign up to them.

Q. Is it not something that we can ask Ofgem to try and get a clear simple consistent approach across the energy companies?

A. I agree but I'm not sure how to go about that.

Alan made an offer that if we provided him with a briefing summary that I can take forward then I will see if I can get people to approach regulators on our behalf.

Annette added that all the years she has been working in renewables the biggest issue is always around meters. They have always made it difficult. Any help from Ofgem to try and streamline it and make it easier would definitely be helpful.

Kathy Smyth commented – Alan, this ties in with a conversation that has been going on with Community Energy England. Emma Bridge has asked myself and perhaps other people what we think Community Energy England should be doing and before this conversation tonight I was going to direct Emma towards Community Energy England doing more work on post installation regulatory and metering and other issues because I think that is the function of trade organisation. Now I am not suggesting for one instance you and Rachael don't do something, but I think perhaps that a multipronged approach wouldn't go amiss.

Q. Penny Hockley - Is the Co-op made aware of new schools being built around the country particularly in Oxfordshire?

A. Mike – It's not an area that we would usually go to because they are well served by the Oxford Hub but elsewhere where we do particularly well is references from one in particular roofing contractor. They try to work with us to get solar installed on schools. Quite often if it's a new school they would have energy standards to meet which may require them to install some solar but they could potentially take quite a lot more, but if you're just replacing the roof, you are not subject to that. So, when they are putting new roof up, they try and encourage the school to install solar.

Mike thanked all members for attending and participating in the meeting.

Meeting closed at 20:15pm.

Mike Smyth (Chair)
The Schools' Energy Co-operative