

Wiltshire Community Wind Energy
Phone conference meeting
25th November 2010 7.00pm

MINUTES

Present:

Rachel Ross (RR)	Chairperson
Jack Mason (JM)	Treasurer
Gill Wheeler (GM)	Member
Rowena Quantrill (RQ)	Climate Friendly Bradford on Avon
Cliff Harris (CH)	Member

Item		Action
1&2	Welcome and Introductions	
	<p>Rachel Ross chaired the meeting and welcomed those present. This was the first time a meeting had been held in phone conference format. All those taking part had been able to link in without difficulties, and quality was good.</p> <p>Gill reported she had recently fitted solar panels.</p> <p>Rowena said they had not yet found a landowner interested in installing a wind turbine. The Climate Friendly Bradford on Avon group was currently investigating the bulk-buying of solar PV.</p> <p>JM reported Wiltshire Climate Change officers were receiving enquiries re ‘solar farms’ (PV panels in fields)</p>	
3	Apologies for Absence	
	Moura McDonagh	
4	Membership	
	Around 40 on mailing list. JM reported a steady trickle of interest. A number of people, like Cliff, considering investment in renewable energy and specifically wind turbines.	
5	Landowner attitudes and possibilities of promoting a site ourselves?	
	<p>JM reported that Feed in Tariffs (FiTs introduced in April 2010) had changed the picture regarding financial viability. Previously it was either house-scale or wind farms like Westmill community wind farm north east of Swindon, which were seen as viable. Large scale wind power opportunities in Wiltshire are limited to a number of sites. However the farmers that the group had met are reasonably positive about farm-scale (medium size) wind opportunities. However in many cases the financial rewards although apparently attractive were not likely to change their farming business fundamentally in many cases, and there was a lot of uncertainty and work envisaged to implement wind power. Therefore farmers were frequently not motivated to implement the option.</p> <p>CH suggested that individual investors might be able to help with this.</p> <p>JM stated that for a reasonable site you might get a 6-7% financial return. Marshfield Farm planning application has 37m tower + 34m diam. Rotors = 54m high, cost about £650,000. Next down: 80kW, height 30m total, cost £230,000, to power equivalent of 30 homes.</p> <p>There followed a discussion regarding CH’s potential investment proposal – approach farmers on a land rent basis, with investor taking FiT, or sharing FiT 50/50 if farmer invests also.</p> <p>GW asked about vertical axis turbines – more acceptable? JM said that as far as he was aware they were still quite small- early days. They can work in lower wind speeds and more turbulent air.</p>	

Item		Action
	<p>There followed discussion as to whether WCWE should promote a suitable site as a group and seek investors (say 10-20) via other local environmental groups. Looking at finding £250,000 for medium sized turbine. It was agreed that JM would consult group members first, and secondly approach 2 farmers to gauge interest. RR sounded a note of caution re the complexity of managing investments and the need for professional advice. Perhaps WCWE's role is more that of linking up landowners and potential investors. RQ said that Transition Bath had set up a Provident Society, which may provide a suitable model.</p> <p>JM stated that if the group were considering promoting a site themselves then this would be a major change, and it may be better to set up a separate entity to do this.</p> <p>CH raised issue of cost of investigating feasibility/applying for planning permission. This could cost an additional £10,000 for an 11kW Gaia turbine, £35,000 - £40,000 for something like the Marshfield application. For a small turbine, one could do wind speed monitoring oneself, but for larger scale, would need to use consultants.</p>	JM
6	Update on sites	
	For Site Updates see Annex A (on request).	
7	Recent planning application in and around Wiltshire	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Whitehall Farm in the north of county, expected to get permission for 11kW Gaia turbine b) Ecotricity at Honda in Swindon: hold up re radar at Brize Norton now resolved in principle. Going to planning committee in December for 3 large turbines. c) Application is in for 4 large turbines at Silton (North Dorset) by Ecotricity – controversial, but due to go to committee soon d) Marshfield Farm has reasonable local support – at the time of writing about 50 comments on application mostly positive, but some of these from out of the area. The site is located west of Marshfield just in South Gloucestershire. WCWE has provided some advice. 	
8	Recent events	
	RR had given informal talk on WCWE to Salisbury Green Party in November	
9	Correspondence	
	Nothing to report. RR to contact Sarah Cosentino in council Climate Change Team to promote WCWE's search for sites via Wiltshire World Changers network.	RR
10	AOB	
	<p>RQ suggested the group contact Richard Bowles of Hartley Farm, who is looking to be carbon-neutral and is considering wind power. He is supportive of Climate Friendly Bradford on Avon.</p> <p>GW suggested contacting Young Farmers, as NFU do promote diversification.</p>	JM
11	DONM	
	<p>JM suggested meetings should be more frequent to give the group momentum and the telephone conference option had worked well and would make this easier.</p> <p>Date: January 27th 2011 at 7pm via telephone conference.</p>	