

## Annual General Meeting

Held at 11 am on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2020 by Zoom videoconferencing software.

Present: 16 members including the following directors: Mike Smyth **MS** (Chair), Mariana Spater **MSp**, Andrew Smith **AS**, Andrew Dalton **AD**, Peter Craig **PC** and Laura Moreno **LM** (directors). Paul Phare **PP** (E4A Project development). Guest: Michael Oxley (St Paul's Church warden). A further 11 members had voted electronically or given proxies to the chair

### Agenda

#### 1. Introductions and welcome.

**MS** welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the AGM despite the circumstances. **PP** explained the way the virtual AGM worked and ran through the voting procedure.

#### 2. Wey Valley Solar and Energy4All

**MS** presented the recent work of Energy4All, the community energy co-operative of which the Co-op was an active member and which was the Co-op's manager. He mentioned the recent joiners of Energy4All and their work (Auchrobert near Glasgow and Energise South in Hastings), co-ops with live or recent share issues and their work (Mean Moor, Energise South and Highland Community Energy); new co-ops under development in Glasgow, Inverurie and Dundee and nine existing co-ops undertaking new development, mainly roof top solar but with some hydro.

**MS** then described the likely future focus of community energy through Energy4All, being "behind the meter" generation, particularly solar; community owned renewable heat, and the use of microgrids which enabled local demand management, cost effective electricity storage and higher use of behind the meter renewable energy. He gave as an example of a working community owned microgrid with high renewable energy installation the village of Findhorn nr Inverness.

**AS** asked whether microgrids are easy to retrofit to which **MS** responded that they are not, although there was an example of a retrofit in Woking and it could be particularly feasible in blocks of flats. It is better to develop it on new housing estates at the construction phase.

#### 3. Financial Performance 2019

**MSp** presented the accounts which showed only minor variations from last year. They included the cost of repairs at County School and we are still accruing for rates. The interest paid is reduced because we are reducing the share capital and have repaid loans. She had no further comments as everything is looking broadly the same year by year, which is good news!

#### 4. Operational Performance 2019

**MS** explained the work done at County School during the year to repair damage caused by pigeons and the installation of preventative equipment to prevent a resumption.

**MS** mentioned we were now suffering from pigeon damage at Broadwater School but because of the COVID-19 lockdown we had been unable to obtain access to undertake the repair and install the preventative measures.

We had also had some monitoring issues at Boxgrove as we had not been able to see the system on the generation portal but this has now been resolved.

Overall, the generation this year to date has been good.

**MS** explained how the COVID -19 lockdown and the closure of the schools are affecting our finances. He confirmed that the Co-op wouldn't be materially affected as the main income (about 85%) comes from the FIT which is based on generation not on site usage. Other co-ops, like our sister Schools' Energy Co-op, would be more affected as a greater proportion of its income came from the selling of electricity to the schools which unfortunately is much lower now since the schools are mostly shut.

Raymond Dill asked whether we sold at this moment more electricity to the grid and at what rate so the losses from reduced sales to schools would be offset. **MS** responded that we sell the electricity back to the grid where we have export meters (all but Boxgrove and George Abbot and sites of less than 30kW where export was deemed) and that the rate we get paid is about the same to what we get from the school (on average).

## 5. New projects

**LM** presented the new projects the Co-op has been working on:

St Paul's Church - this is a FIT pre-registered project for which we had to cancel the installation as the lockdown was announced on the day we were due to start construction. 5 members of the church would join the Co-op to fund the installation through a mini share offer for church members.

Godalming College contacted us earlier this year to seek for an extension of their solar PV system. The extension was previously considered in 2015 but rejected by the local grid operator as there wasn't enough capacity then. We reapplied for consent and a few days ago this was granted for a 100kWp extension. So we have now done a desktop study and sent the proposal to the College. This project does not qualify for any subsidy so our PPA is inflation linked and on a 25 year agreement.

**Tony Oakden** ask why the PPA we have offered the College is at a lower price, without subsidy, than the PPA offered to the church with a subsidy. **MS** explained that this was due to the much lower construction price for the College system (£770 per kWp compared to £1280 per kWp at the church), reflecting scale and easier roofs to work on.

**Jeremy Coventry** asked about the different mounting systems on the roofs, their costs and other aspects that affect the cost of an installation. **LM** responded that metal roofs are the cheapest to build on, then normal tiled roofs and then flat roofs. Slates and rosemary tiled roofs were very expensive – often prohibitively so - to build on. Access and scaffolding also had a very high impact on the cost of a system, for example if plant is needed to lift the material onto the roof.

**LM** explained we had also received enquiries from other schools to which we have made proposals and are waiting for responses: Midhurst Rother in Midhurst, Town Farm in Staines and St Martins Primary in

Dorking. **MS** pointed that we have also been approached by community energy groups in Haselmere and Redhill and were in contact with Godalming Town Council.

## 6. Formal AGM

All the motions were proposed by the Chair Mike Smyth for simplicity.

**Motion 1:** to approve the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

**Seconder:** Tony Oakden

For: 24    Abstentions: 2    Against: 0    Motion Passed

**Motion 2:** to receive and adopt the Report of the Directors and the unaudited financial statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019, together with the report of the accountants thereon.

**Seconder:** Mariana Spater

For: 27    Abstentions: 0    Against: 0    Motion Passed

**Motion 3:** to approve the distribution of £46,653 of the Co-operative's surplus for the year by way of share interest (an interest rate of 6.25%) and to pay a dividend to schools of £11, 250.

**Seconder:** Richard Lentle

For: 27    Abstentions: 0    Against: 0    Motion Passed

**Motion 4:** to disapply the obligation of the Co-operative to appoint auditors pursuant to Section 84 of the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 so that an audit of the accounts of the Co-operative shall not take place for the Co-operative's year of account ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.

**Seconder:** Jane Vessey

For: 27    Abstentions: 0    Against: 0    Motion Passed

**Motion 5:** to appoint the firm of Roffe Swayne, Chartered Accountants, as the appropriate person to make a report on the accounts and balance sheet of the Co-operative for the Co-operative's year of account ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 at a fee to be agreed by the Board.

**Seconder:** Jeremy Coventry

For: 26    Abstentions: 1    Against: 0    Motion Passed

**Motion 6:** to reappoint Andrew Smith as a director of the Co-operative.

**Seconder:** Peter Craig

For: 26    Abstentions: 1    Against: 0    Motion Passed

**Motion 7:** to reappoint Andrew Dalton as a director of the Co-operative.

**Seconder:** Tony Oakden

For: 26    Abstentions: 1    Against: 0    Motion Passed

**Motion 8:** that the Board may install solar panel arrays on suitable sites up to an aggregate capital cost of £400,000 and may use retained earnings, borrow, issue bonds or issue shares for the purposes of financing those installations provided the anticipated project Internal Rate of Return normally exceeds 6% and the projects are primarily located in Surrey or its neighbouring counties (including London). This consent will expire at the Co-operative's Annual General Meeting in 2021 for projects not committed to prior to that date.

**Seconder:** Andrew Smith

For: 24    Abstentions: 1    Against: 1    Motion Passed

**Motion 9:** to authorise the Board to redeem up to 10% of the share capital of the Co-operative and to fund this from reserves, borrowing or the issue of new shares.

**Seconder:** Andrew Dalton

For: 25    Abstentions: 1    Against: 1    Motion Passed

#### 7. Any other business.

Jeremy Coventry asked about Microgrids. Is this the way that we may move in the future to have more localised generation and distribution moving away from the big 6 grid controllers? **MS** responded that he thought it is. He pointed that renewable energy by its nature was very local anyway (apart from big wind farms) and that microgrids will enable communities to build more solar on roofs and to manage the generation so it can be linked to for example EV charging points, batteries, etc..

Jeremy Coventry asked about EV charging points and car park based generation. **MS** commented that there was not a natural match in the generation to the demand profile; but using car batteries for storage would be a very important development which was being worked on but was still at a fairly early stage.

Andrew Dalton asked whether developers are considering microgrids in new projects to which **MS** responded that unfortunately they build at the cheapest rate possible and only include renewables where building regulations force them to do so. Further, national Government seeks to prevent local authorities from having higher standards than set out in the building regulations so Councils can do so little about this despite the climate emergency etc.

Finally, **MSp** thanked the board and E4A for their support. **MS** thanked everyone too and hoped to meet everyone in person next year, but we would see if we could include a remote facility so those unable to be present in person could still join in.

Close of formal business: 12.46