



## **MaidEnergy AGM, Tue 12 March 2019**

Attending: Alex Seaman (Member), Ben Niblett (Director), Leah Robson (Director), Liam Mifsud, Mark Griffiths (Member), Michael Beaven (Director), Nicola Davidson (Director).

Apologies: Sean Walters (Director)

### **Motion 1: To approve the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 17 April 2018**

1 amendment – a typo of ‘member’ instead of ‘members.’

**Motion proposed by Alex, seconded by Nicola, and agreed unanimously.**

### **Motion 2: to receive and adopt the Report of the Directors and the unaudited financial statements for the year to 30th September 2018**

#### **Accounts:**

Michael spoke to the accounts.

They now show the operating surplus for the year.

The charitable donations were the smart display for Magna Carta, paid for by a grant we received the previous year.

Most of the rest of the costs are online metering and charges for subscribing to the feed-in tariffs.

The subscriptions are membership of Community Energy and similar networks.

Depreciation is worked out not as a straight line but by taking an estimate of the lifetime generation of the panels and depreciating it over 20 years. So the balance that builds up is also the fund that can return members’ capital.

After paying depreciation and money back to members we have a surplus.

Some of the expense of interest paid to members is shown in income as a charitable donation, as members returned it to the society.

Last year we received a refund on the legal costs we’d paid out for the Magna Carta site.

One member has requested their share capital back, of £500, saying they helped get the install done. That’s an all-Director decision so we’ll defer till next meeting.

**Action – Directors** decide whether to return the member’s capital, at the next meeting.

50k in the bank – 15k of that is depreciation.



On the notes, the turnover shows about 10.5k of FiT. The meter at Magna is set up but is not sending readings back to the administrator, Good Energy. It's currently stuck with their agent to get it working, and that reduces the amount we can claim for the large site at Magna, although we should be able to get a back claim once working. Currently we're claiming the basic level of FiT on standard estimates, which is lower than we'd get if accurately metered.

#### **Chair's report:**

We're getting good generation from all our panels, there are no issues.

Mark asked why generation was slightly lower than the year before, despite the heatwave; Leah replied that it was only slightly lower and consistent with panels being a year older. We've done visual inspections.

Our turnover was lower without the UCEF grant, which is now over.

Member numbers are steady at 68, but engagement is a struggle. An investor is a member, most from the share offer and a few from the start of MaidEnergy in Maidenhead with £1 shares. We occasionally hear from them. When we wrote to members about the first payout about a third said they wanted to hear about meetings during the year, not just AGMs.

#### **Directors**

Michael and Leah are standing down at the end of their 3 year terms, Leah would be willing to be chair but would like to hand it over if anyone else is willing to, and remain a director. Nobody else wanted to become a director.

**Motion proposed by Alex, seconded by Michael, and agreed unanimously.**

**Motion 3: to approve the distribution of £ £7,533.68 of the Society's surplus for the year by way of share interest (an interest rate of 4%) on shares subscribed by the end of September 2018.**

Our share prospectus said we aimed to reach 5% by next financial year, and we hope to do that, with 4% this year on the way to it. The 4% is of £188,342 (page 10).

£892 was donated back by shareholders, and we expect the same numbers this time.

**Motion proposed by Mark, seconded by Alex, and agreed unanimously.**

**Motion 4: (which was omitted from the agenda in error) to keep the audit requirement.**

MaidEnergy's turnover is now too big for a lay audit to have official status, so members can informally look at the report and accounts but that doesn't count as an audit. Michael suggests we can get an accountant to look them over and say that they reflect what's in the books, which would be cheaper than paying for a full audit which will be a disproportionate cost. Vivian Woodall of the Phone Co-op, who helped us get started, suggested this approach and finding a co-op specialist to do it. We're below the audit threshold. Leah suggested setting a ceiling on what we're prepared to pay: agreed £700.

**Action - Michael** will seek out a specialist who can examine the 2018-19 accounts.

**Motion proposed by Michael, seconded by Alex, and agreed unanimously.**



## 1. Election of the Board

**Michael re-elected as Director. Alex proposed, Nicola seconded, agreed unanimously.**

**Leah re-elected as Chair, Nicola proposed, Mark seconded, agreed unanimously.**

## 2. Activities in 2019/20

We have 12 potential sites, which would total 0.5 MW of power and £380,000 of capital if they all go ahead.

Why didn't we push this hard a couple of years ago? We've been pursuing the bigger project at RHUL, without success though. We didn't have enough time. Also now solar panels and inverters are cheaper so the model works better again. Panels now cost around £86, compared to around £120 a year ago, for a panel that's now slightly more powerful. So there are issues with exchange rates and Brexit uncertainty, but we can still rely on prices continuing to fall.

8p/kw is our working assumption. Most schools are paying either 11p now rising to 13p after April, or 10p for those with half hour meters, so we offer them a saving.

We still think we can offer 5% return on shares, once income's coming in. Michael suggests we could offer inflation-plus instead of naming a rate or 4% or 5%, as our costs are nearly all inflation linked.

Our potential sites are mostly quite small, some around 50kw.

We need to be signing up sites now, and will have to consider sequencing which order to install them later.

Reading's share offer has raised 25% of its target in a week, says Michael. We expect raising funds to be very possible, there's a community of green investors looking for opportunities, particularly before the of Feed-in Tariff closes.

At Magna we found they used power pretty evenly throughout the year.

Some potential sites are interested in battery storage too, such as Ranelagh, who are also interested in heat pumps. We'd need a new model for heat pumps; you can meter the heat, and claim the RHI (Renewable Heat Incentive), and you can predict that from the building. Nicola met a group called the Energy Hub who've been funded to do free research into groups like us interested in pursuing this model.

We had a discussion about exploring these options or just focusing on installing solar, and agreed the solar installations are this year's priority. But it's worth starting the pipeline of future projects beyond that, and for making new contacts with people with engineering skills.

RBWM have an energy manager named James Thorpe, who has a small budget and some time to help community energy, which we can tap into. Nicola's meeting him next week.

We could hold an event in April with all the sites who sign up and talk them through the process for getting it done by the deadline.



How much capacity do we have for work on running the process of installing? That's our biggest limit. But paying OCE – the firm Michael and Nicola run - means we're using their work time, not relying just on directors' and members' voluntary time, and that's made a big difference.

What happens if we can't raise all the money for installs we've agreed to do, or if we spend money setting things up but can't go ahead? We have 50k left that we can cover risk with.

The green sites on the map are more likely, the blue sites are less. Green ones are keener and/or have had EPCs done.

How will we handle the share offer? Could we launch one, but pause it when we have enough for an install, and reserve the right to stop and relaunch? That might be a good model.

We could offer single-site share offers, but it's dubious that there's much of a market there, it's probably best to keep our current model.

Primary schools have more of a community. The leisure centres don't. One of the leisure centres has an 18 year lease, but we think we only need 15 years to pay back, so that's still workable. The leisure centres are all reasonably new.

What are the ongoing costs we're responsible for? Maintenance, which is allowed for in the model and includes replacing inverters. We have remote monitoring and also do site inspections. Insuring the panels is our cost, as we own them, insuring the roof is the site's cost, as they own the roof.

We need to ensure legal costs are limited, Magna's went higher than we wanted or expected, and having a standard contract will help.

So the focus of the next year is going to be installing and fundraising.

Community Energy South report was launched by Amber Rudd in Parliament, Nicola went.

Nicola talked us through the Riding Sunbeams report about solar power directly to railway lines, via lineside substations. The Reading-Waterloo line goes through our zone and is a potential one, the Windsor line is too small. Network Rail are looking to make land available, and then we could raise funds to install ground-mounted panels. Network Rail want to do it this way and include community energy in it rather than just use PPAs with big generators, and engage with communities and get rail users to invest. It keeps it off their balance sheet too. This looks interesting for future years.