

Community Climate Champions

Notes of Quarterly Meeting held on Wednesday 19th October 2011 At Llanddewi Rhydderch Village Hall

Present:

Cllr Giles Howard	Monmouthshire County Council
Mark Youngman	MCC Transport Policy and Compliance Manager
Sam Froud- Powell	Severn Wye Energy Agency Pathfinder Officer
Janet Rawlings	Chepstow FoE/Transition Chepstow
Haydn Cullen-Jones	Transition Monmouth
Ben Winstanley	MCC Sustainability Surveyor
Roger Hoggins	MCC Head of Infrastructure and Sustainability
Phil Powell	Transition Chepstow
Hazel Clatworthy	MCC Sustainability Community Officer
Nik Peregrine	Transition Chepstow
Jennifer Goslin	Transition Chepstow
Phil Inskip	Railfuture
George Ashworth	MCC Head of Planning
Cllr Val Smith	Monmouthshire County Council
Cllr Michael Faraday	Llanbadoc Community Council

Apologies

Gerry Moss	St Arvans Memorial Hall
Vivien Mitchell	Transition Chepstow
Jon Prince	
Sue Harrison	Abergavenny FoE
Eileen O'Haire	Severn Wye Energy Agency
Ian Hoccom	MCC Energy Manager
Jim Jenkins	Better Trains for Chepstow
Richard Lewis	Abergavenny Climate Action
Jeremy Cohen	Wye Valley Community for Safe Cycling

Phil Powell chaired the meeting and everyone introduced themselves.

Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting

- Prior to the meeting a drop in event had been held on renewables, particularly targeting village and community halls. There was a good turnout (about 50+ attendees from across the county).
- Hazel has offered to sit on the Vital Villages Selection Committee.
- Ian Bakewell has been in touch with Haydn and an event in Monmouth is being planned for 26th November from 10am – 4pm.

Eco Open Homes

Hazel explained that MCC would like to work with the Community Climate Champions to organise an Eco-Open Homes weekend during Climate Week in March. Phil, Haydn

and Richard (in his absence!) agreed to form the team with Hazel to help plan that event. Hazel to organise a meeting. **Action: Hazel**

Richard and Phil have together produced an eco open homes leaflet for North West Monmouthshire which was launched at the recent Environment Fair. Rather than focusing on a specific date, the contact details of around 10 homes/businesses are listed so that interested people can get in touch at any time to organise a mutually convenient date to visit. Everyone agreed the leaflet looked good.

Monmouth is looking to do a similar leaflet for their area, rather than wait for Climate Week, because of the potential reduction in FiTs from April. Chepstow are going to wait and see what the response to the NW Monmouthshire leaflet is, and whether it generates many visits.

Transport Update

Mark Youngman explained his roles and responsibilities which include car parking, school crossing patrols, bus shelters, walking, cycling, Safe Routes for Communities etc. Mark also chairs the Rail Working Group of SEWTA (South East Wales Transport Alliance).

We are in the 2nd year of a 5 year programme of capital works for our Regional Transport Plan, but the budget for this is just £9 million to be spent across all 10 local authorities in the SEWTA region, and hence funding is very short. We have had success in bidding for funding for Safe Routes in Communities over recent years, and also for Connect 2 Monmouth lottery funding.

Rail issues

Phil Inskip raised concerns about rail provision in the county, in particular the need for an hourly or half hourly (at peak times) stop at Chepstow, especially as train services run through, but they just don't stop. Phil, together with BT4C and STAG were concerned that this aspiration does not appear in the Regional or Nation Transport Plans, despite 5 years of campaigning. Mark disagreed and said that the documents are open to interpretation and that SEWTA and MCC have lobbied long and hard with WG and the train companies for these services.

There was lengthy discussion around these issues. Mark reported that the SEWTA Rail Strategy Review technical report will be publically available in a few weeks, as will the Chepstow line study and the Chepstow station study.

Wye Valley Cycle Route

George explained that there are still some gaps in the information provided by Sustrans, which means that a planning decision has not yet been able to be made. George agreed to pass Jennifer the details of the Sustrans contact and the specific information that is still outstanding, so that she can get in touch with Sustrans to help move things along. **Action: George/Jennifer**

George reminded the group that MCC support the Wye Valley Cycle Route in principle and always have.

Planning and Wind Turbines

This issue was raised because of the recent decision by Planning Committee to refuse planning permission for a wind turbine at Tredilion farm. George explained that the decision was based on landscape reasons because unlike other turbines in the area that have been granted permission, this one was on a prominent and visible ridge in an area important for tourism and its natural beauty. The applicant is able to appeal if he wishes.

George also explained that MCC needs to produce Supplementary Planning Guidance on renewable to clarify what is acceptable and what is not likely to be acceptable, so that applicants are clear from the start about what to expect. However, we are waiting for clarification from Welsh Government on the proposed changes to permitted development rights for renewable first. Everything is ready to go to appoint consultants to produce the SPG as soon as notification comes from WG.

He also pointed out that of the 27 applications for wind turbines in the county 25 of them have been approved. There have been 40 approvals for PV, including the solar farm at Llancayo, with 10 more currently under consideration and no refusals.

Phil P asked about large turbines, since those that have been granted have all been relatively small. George explained that no applications have come in that are large and MCC's stance would depend on the location. Welsh Government have identified Strategic Search Areas for wind and we would not expect applications for large turbines to come in outside those areas.

Update on UK Green Deal

Ben explained that he had been to a meeting about changes to utility company funded schemes such as CERTS (grants for all to do loft and cavity wall insulation) and CESP (targeting low income properties. Overmonnow II is the only area in Monmouthshire eligible for CESP funding).

Under the UK Government's Green Deal proposals, an assessment of a property will be carried out to identify what energy saving measures need to be taken. Then the insulation etc is obtained from an approved Green Deal provider, such as B&Q, and the cost of it passed to Swalec etc. who recoup the costs of the measure through the energy bills for that property, split into chunks which *do not exceed the savings being made (the "golden rule")*. Unlike the CERTS grants, the Green Deal scheme will mean that the full amount of the insulation etc will be paid by the householder, but over a longer period of time.

More detail will follow.

Update on PV on MCC buildings

Ben reported that 8 sites have been prioritised, and the intention is that the installation will be carried out using C=MC2, MCC's new Community Interest Company. The first phase of 8 all have permitted development rights, and second tranche will be following.

[post meeting note: due to DECC's recent announcement on the reduction of FITS for solar, MCC have scaled down the size of some of these projects to enable them to be installed with no additional work or permissions required.]

CCC Future joint work and initiatives

This discussion was based around the work that the groups have done identifying who their key partners are/could be. It was felt that the Eco-Open Homes scheme is a good joint project, but each local group is making its own networks and links with other groups in its area. The groups all felt comfortable with this local level of working and didn't feel the need to try and make another County-wide project happen at present.

Any Other Business

- Mark mentioned that it is important for local groups to keep walking and cycling initiatives on the agenda after Safe Routes for Communities projects have happened, to ensure that those routes are well used. Jen and Nik reported on the very successful Bike Club that Transition Chepstow's transport group are running at Pembroke Primary school, and that there is potential for bikes taken to the Five Lanes Civic Amenity Site to be used by the group to practice bicycle maintenance on. Haydn reported a similar project at Monmouth Comprehensive.
- Phil announced a site for a community solar farm in Raglan at Llananant Farm. The next phase is the planning discussions. The plan is to fund the scheme by a community loan and share issue for individuals. The farm is aiming to become a centre for sustainable activities.
- Bridges youth are working with the Pathfinder project on a number of climate change projects. The young people also want to refurbish bikes and do a sponsored ride over the 2 Severn bridges. Haydn suggested that maybe this could be done with Transition Chepstow. Haydn to liaise with Jen. **Action: Haydn**
- Update on the Bridges project to go on the agenda for next meeting. **Action: Haydn/Sam**
- Phil reported that Wyesham Church are seeking diocesan permission and planning for solar panels.
- Haydn reported that Bridges has successfully bid for a Cohesion Fund grant to run the event at Bridges on 26th November, which will incorporate a Give It Away, Take It Away event. Chepstow reported that their recent Give It Away, Take It Away event was very successful with very little left at the end.

Date of the Next Meeting

Tuesday 17th January, 7pm, The Gallery, Bridges Community Centre, Monmouth