

COMMUNITY CLIMATE CHAMPIONS

Notes from meeting held at Usk Scout Centenary Hall
On Tuesday 18th January 2011

Present:

Vivien Mitchell	Transition Monmouth
Haydn Cullen-Jones	Monmouth FoE
Janet Rawlings	Chepstow FoE/Transition Chepstow
Tim Melville	Transition Chepstow
Phil Powell	Transition Chepstow
Gerry Moss	Transition Chepstow/St Arvan's Memorial Hall
Liz Barnett	Abergavenny Climate Action
Jon Prince	Usk
Ian Hoccom	MCC Energy Manager
Amanda Peters	MCC Policy and Partnerships Manager
Hazel Clatworthy	MCC Sustainable Development Co-ordinator
Roger Hoggins	MCC Head of Operations
Simone Lowthe-Thomas	Severn Wye Energy Agency

Apologies:

Cllr Val Smith	MCC
Cllr Giles Howard	MCC
George Ashworth	MCC Head of Planning
Ian Bakewell	MCC Head of Housing
Sue Parkinson	Monmouth Green Transport Day
Richard Lewis	MCC Supporting Community Enterprise
Anthony Perrett	Transition Chepstow/Caldicot Town Council

1 Presentation from Dr Simone Lowthe-Thomas, Severn Wye Energy Agency

Simone's full presentation will be e-mailed separately. The key points were as follows:

- SWEA aims to alleviate fuel poverty and encourage sustainable use of energy.
- Projects include work on affordable warmth, health, fuel poverty, advice and awareness, behaviour change, SMEs, community buildings and schools.
- Projects have included: Warm and Well with Gloucester County Council, 7 Local Authorities and 20 partner organisations; Target 2050 Homes in Stroud which has piloted a "pay as you save scheme"; Young Energy People in Gloucestershire working with secondary schools; and European Sustainable Energy Award for Prisons.
- Simone gave details of the WAG Pathfinder Project which will launch in March. 6 officers have been appointed to cover all areas of Wales, mapping what is happening on energy in communities, doing trials and research. Our officer will be based in Cardiff.
- Ynni'r Fro is a WAG and EU funded grant scheme for community scale renewable energy generation, and is a 5 year programme, coming the end of its first year. The main targets are income generation, job creation and energy generation. Ynni'r Fro funds 7 development officers (Simone is the development officer covering Monmouthshire), can offer preparatory cost grants up to £30,000 and capital funding up to £300,000. However, some details are still being clarified in the light of State Aid rules. Only social enterprises are allowed to apply.
- Projects underway include: 1MW anaerobic digester in Powys, 100kW Hydro scheme on the Severn, 30kW Hydro scheme (TAP), a 4-6MW wind scheme, a 250kW farmer/Transition group wind scheme and a 1 MW Hydro scheme.

Simone's contact details if anyone would like more information or to discuss a project are:
simone@swea.co.uk or 01982 551006.

2 Village Halls PV update – Phil Powell

Phil's presentation is attached for more detail. The key points raised were:

- Village Halls are often the only community buildings left in many villages and are an important resource.
- Getting FiTs through installing PVs would provide an index linked long term income which could fund the hall and maintenance costs, increase community links and reduce carbon.
- Financing is the biggest hurdle. If village hall users could help with loans, the FiTs could pay shareholders interest, service the loan and give a useful amount to the hall. Phil outlined 3 models for administering a loan scheme:
 1. village halls could organise their own loans administration.
 2. Gwent Energy Company CIC could take on this responsibility for an administration charge.
 3. Robert Owen Community Banking Fund Ltd (part of Wales Credit Union) could do this for a set up fee and annual administration charge.
- Ideally quotations should be obtained now in order to decide on how to administer finance and canvas for loans etc in Feb-March, ready to install in April/May, or at least by July in order to benefit from the summer income.
- There is interest from around 15-20 halls at the moment. Phil to circulate information pack for halls so that Hazel can send round, so that members of this group could approach their local halls.

Action: Phil

Gerry represents the St Arvan's Memorial Hall, who have had a letter from MCC Planning stating that planning permission will be required because the hall is in a conservation area. Gerry's concerns are as follows:

"The £600+ estimate for planning permission is by the treasurer based on the hall's floor area and MCC's standard list of planning application charges. The related key questions for MCC become:

1. Can the planning procedure be 'fast tracked' to facilitate getting an early installation date (re this summer's sunshine, early FIT income, etc)?
2. Can a correspondingly reduced planning fee be used?
3. To encourage PV take-up by village halls in Monmouthshire might MCC be able to give a grant for any related planning fees?

There are apparently a lot of village (and small town) centre Conservation Areas across Monmouthshire so this issue could become relevant for other village halls potentially interested in PV systems."

As George was unable to make the meeting, Hazel will follow these questions up with George.

Action: Hazel/George

3 Green Deal for Monmouthshire

Roger reiterated how the Green Deal for Monmouthshire paper was approved by Cabinet in October. The Green Deal is being led by a Programme Board, comprising of members of the energy and renewables industry, officers and members. A Green Team of existing officers is being brought together from across the authority. The team will look at renewables, FiTs, RHI, area renewal, generating employment and attracting renewables companies to the County. Amanda commented that a lot of disjointed work being carried out across the authority is now being pulled together.

Roger explained that the work of the Community Climate Champions was important and should continue under the Green Team. Janet said that it was important that the Green Team still work in partnership with other departments such as Transport, Highways and Waste and

not in isolation. Haydn mentioned that it would be useful to once again pick up the review of the Terms of Reference and priorities of this group which has already started, in the light of this restructure.

4 Any Other Business

- Amanda updated the group on the Kafka project to reduce barriers to micro-generation in Monmouthshire. The Collective Performance Review took place in December and brought together citizen case studies, with front line officers and senior managers and politicians from MCC, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, Environment Agency Wales, Countryside Council for Wales, Welsh Assembly Government and others. These participants all had to make commitments which will form the basis of an action plan. Hazel will circulate more information in the near future.
- The Environment Partnership Board had asked that HC *“will discuss the possibility of representation from the Community Climate Champions group on the EPB, as it would be useful to have input from a community activist group.”* The group felt that they were not clear what the role of such a person would be – to share information or lobby etc. It was also felt that it would be hard for one person to represent the views of the Community Climate Champions which comprises of people from many different groups. It was agreed that someone would be happy to attend if there are particular items of relevance.
- Phil explained that Caldicot Town Council are looking at a place to set up a wood recycling project, and were interested in finding money for a feasibility study. No one knew of any funding. It was discussed that it would be useful to speak to Homemakers about the potential for linking up. Roger was not sure whether there would be enough wood supply in Monmouthshire.
- The group would welcome a view from George on solar farms, both in terms of how they would be received and also on planning application fees. **Action: George**
- Roger to clarify who groups need to contact and what details would be required if they were making a case for an MCC loan for a renewables scheme. **Action: Roger**
- Vivien asked for a response from George on how the development of 400 homes on Wonastow Road is sustainable. Chepstow reiterated this question for the proposals in their area. **Action: George**
- Janet reported on the good news that Arriva Cross Country will bring additional train services to Lydney and Chepstow for a trial period of one year commencing 24th May 2011. Despite these improvements the Chepstow line will still not have a regular hourly service. There was discussion on how to make people aware of the service and use it.
- Janet also said that there is no marked bus stop at Severn Tunnel Junction and that buses to Chepstow station arrive 2 minutes after the trains arrive. There is also a lack of car parking. Roger to address these issues with the Passenger Transport Unit. **Action: Roger**
- Amanda said that the next issue of Community Spirit has Countryside/Environment as its theme. It was agreed that the Village Halls project and the Chepstow trains would be suitable stories. Chepstow reported that the article they wrote on request on Give It Away, Take It Away was not included. Amanda to follow up. **Action: Amanda**
- Haydn reported on the Prosiect Gwyrdd proposals and the growing lobby for incineration or energy from waste. A meeting has been requested with Cllrs Simon Howarth and Val Smith because of concern from residents and the tie in to a 25+ year contract.

6 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on **Wednesday 13th April 2011** at 7pm. Phil to see if we can use Mabey Bridge's conference room in Chepstow. **Action: Phil**