

COMMUNITY CLIMATE CHAMPIONS

Notes from meeting held at Sessions House, Usk
On Wednesday 20th July 2011

Present:

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| Haydn Cullen-Jones | Transition Monmouth/Monmouth FoE |
| Vivien Mitchell | Transition Monmouth |
| Phil Powell | Transition Chepstow |
| Marcus Perrin | Transition Chepstow |
| Jim Jenkins | Better Trains for Chepstow |
| Gerry Moss | St Arvan's Memorial Hall |
| Richard Lewis | Abergavenny Climate Action |
| George Ashworth | MCC Head of Planning |
| Roger Hoggins | MCC Head of Operations |
| Ian Hoccom | MCC Energy Manager |
| Hazel Clatworthy | MCC Sustainability Community Officer |
| Cllr Val Smith | MCC |
| Cllr Giles Howard | MCC |
| Eileen O'Haire | Severn Wye Energy Agency Vital Villages project |
| Sam Froud-Powell | Severn Wye Energy Agency Pathfinder Officer |

Apologies:

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| Ian Bakewell | MCC Head of Housing |
| David Spencer | Llantilio Pertholey Community Council |
| Sue Parkinson | Monmouth Green Transport Day |
| Janet Rawlings | Chepstow FoE/Transition Chepstow |
| Jon Prince | Usk |

Val started the meeting by clarifying that any rumours that she is involved in organising a demonstration in Caerphilly against Prosiect Gwyrd are incorrect and she is not associated with it in any way.

We discussed that it is difficult for Hazel to both minute and chair the meeting. Marcus suggested that members of the group could take it in turns to chair the meeting and kindly agreed to chair this one.

1 Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting

- George reported that the planning application fees for smaller solar applications would be £335, although the Llancayo development was much higher because it is a much larger scheme with buildings etc.
- Jim reported that unfortunately the hoped for improvements with bus links to Chepstow station haven't happened.
- Hazel followed up on why the Chepstow article didn't make Community Spirit, and it seems the article didn't actually reach Jessica Roberts, MCC's Communications Officer who compiles the publication. Janet now has the correct details of who to contact with articles. *Post meeting note: Jess reported that Community Spirit is not being produced at the moment. The funding for the first year has now run out and we're waiting on a decision from the LSB as to whether there will be anymore.*
- 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**
- Reference in the Kafka Action Plan to "FiT accredited consultants" was incorrect and should read MCS accredited installers.

2 Presentation by Eileen O'Haire, SWEA on Vital Villages

Eileen explained that Vital Villages was launched in June 2011 and is funded through Axis 3 European funding as part of our Rural Development Plan. Eileen is able to offer:

- Energy advice to communities in Monmouthshire
- Grant support for renewable energy projects
- Grants for energy efficiency measures in community buildings
- Grants for community gardens

Energy efficiency grants and environmental improvement grants are up to £2500. The renewable energy grants are up to £50,000 to Social Enterprises for capital projects (rather than feasibility). However, State Aid rules have changed and it now means that if a group receives a grant like this, they won't be eligible for FiTs or RHI. However, it could still suit some halls.

To apply groups should contact Eileen to arrange a site visit on 01452 835087 or Eileen@swea.co.uk

Grants will be awarded by a selection panel. Are there any volunteers who would like to be on the panel? **Action: All**

3 Update from Sam Froud-Powell, Pathfinder officer

Sam recapped on what the Pathfinder project is about (see minutes of the last meeting). The 18 case studies from across Wales have now been selected, and will shortly be listed on their website, and one of them is Bridges Centre in Monmouth. They will be partnering with Transition Monmouth and working with their youth committee. They will be working on sustainability with the various Bridges Committees and trustees and hope to encourage sustainable behaviour change amongst groups who use the centre. They aim to put together a small group of eco-champions who will look at all of the Bridges activities. They would like to develop a framework that could be used to support other community centres doing similar work.

Sam also explained that he still has some capacity (2 days a week, but spread over the 5 counties he is covering) to support other groups, but not on the research side.

Marcus mentioned a Scottish Government report on behaviour change that might be helpful: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/340440/0112767.pdf>

4 Update on Kafka Reducing the Barriers to Microgeneration

Hazel gave an update on the Kafka project to reduce barriers to microgeneration. A stocktake meeting was held on 8th July where a panel assessed progress towards the actions in the Action Plan 6 months on from its production, and officers from WAG, MCC, BBNP, CCW and EAW were there to answer any questions about areas of work that haven't happened yet. Some members of the Kafka Steering Committee are meeting to develop some indicators to quantify whether or not it has become easier and more straightforward for renewables applicants.

A final stocktake will be carried out in February or March 2012. Giles mentioned the need for case studies at the end of the process to gauge improvements.

5 Village Halls PV update – Phil Powell

Phil offered that he is happy to organise sessions around the county to involve more village halls or community councils. It was suggested that if we vary the venue for the meetings, we

could also invite the community council local to each venue along to our meeting. It was also agreed that we would organise one of these information sessions prior to the next Community Climate Champions meeting.

We talked about the need to make more village halls aware of the potential for renewables. Eileen is going to the next Village Halls Forum in September, and will be making contact with many community halls, and she is happy to share that information to give ideas for where we could have CCC meetings or events, and also pass on information from the group to the halls.

Jim mentioned the need to better publicise what this group does.

Eileen also mentioned that Stroud have done a very effective Eco-Open Homes project. See http://www.stroudopenhomes.org.uk/?page_id=74 which gives information on how to run one. Marcus also mentioned that the Forest of Dean are doing a similar scheme. See <http://forestecoopenhomes.org.uk/>

6 Review of CCC and Membership

There was a wide ranging and lengthy discussion on this. The following key points were agreed:

- We need to raise awareness of the group and what we do, by increasing publicity. Suggestions included articles in Community Spirit or a quarterly newsletter and on-line.
- The group was generally happy with the format of the group at present because it is manageable and works well.
- However, it was agreed that the influence of the group ought to reach further so that more farmers, businesses, village halls, community councils, schools etc are aware of the group and actively involved with carbon reduction projects, even if it is not necessary or appropriate for them all to come to the meetings.
- It was felt that although some of these groups could be invited to our meetings if there are relevant topics being discussed, it is likely to be more effective to go out to their own meetings and organisations e.g. FUW/NFU, One Voice Wales, Chambers of Commerce etc.
- It was also agreed that there is little representation on the group from rural areas, Caldicot or Usk. However, representatives from Caldicot and Usk do get minutes of the meetings. This is probably because there is no carbon focussed groups working in these areas.

The following actions were agreed:

- Each Transition/FoE group will meet to consider who the key groups are that need to be reached in their locality and come back to Hazel with suggestions of who the key groups in their area are and what the key messages would be that would interest them by **early September**. **Action: All**
- It was agreed that the CCC group should try to organise an eco-open homes event, similar to Stroud's to raise our profile, inspire people, make contacts etc. All to come back to Hazel with a suggested list of homes, schools, businesses, halls etc who have renewable/eco technologies that might be willing to take part in such an event. **Action: All**

7 Any Other Business

- Richard explained that a number of people in Abergavenny are interested in Anaerobic Digestion and asked for MCC's stance. Roger explained that they are in an existing contract, so are not actively progressing AD, but would be interested in principle.

- A public meeting is being held on September 14th at 7pm in the Shire Hall to organise a 2012 Gardening Festival. All welcome.
- Ian Bakewell is working on energy efficiency in Overmonnow and is interesting in working in partnership with Transition Monmouth. Ian to contact Haydn. **Action: Ian B**
- Phil explained that he is still interested in any community projects or a share of a farmer's barn roof!
- Jim distributed some leaflets to go out in the Midlands to promote the extra trains stopping in Chepstow.
- George explained that the LDP is at the deposit stage, with the deposit draft having been agreed on 1st July. Consultation will start in September for 6 weeks, then there will be a consultation on the alternative sites for 7 weeks. Finally the Deposit Plan and alternative sites register will go to an inspector who is likely to preside over an inquiry in June 2012. The Deposit Draft contains a Renewable Energy Policy, which will set the context for consultants to develop Supplementary Planning Guidance for energy.
- No-one was sure when the WAG guidance on permitted developments for renewables will come out, following consultation.
- Phil reported that a statutory instrument has been put before Parliament campaigning for a change to the problems re. FiTs registration for hydro schemes. He also stated that DECC are considering changing the rules re. FiTs registration for organisations such as housing associations who have many small installations. In future these may all be classed as one large installation.

8 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on **Tuesday 18th October 2011** at 7pm. Venue to be confirmed, but hopefully at a Village Hall, with a renewables information event prior to the meeting.