



NEWSLETTER 4 MAY 2018

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2018 AGM Report

The decision to hold the AGM on March 3 was touch and go. Perhaps the weather helped us, people said that they were glad of an excuse to get out of the house after being snow bound for two days. Board members arrived in the City Chambers expecting attendance of about 20, it was great that over 40 people came. There was enthusiastic discussion – a lively AGM. The formal minutes are on our web site.

Our thanks to Councillor Steve Burgess and the member of council staff who gave him the key to the refreshment cupboard. Tea, coffee and biscuits were enjoyed by all. Next time we must remember to take photographs! Our new board member, Jenny Allan, was welcomed. Richard Dixon, retiring director, was thanked for his leadership. Lesley Hinds presented him with a group photograph taken at the share launch in 2015 and a bottle of whisky. The workshops, an innovation for this AGM, are reported below.

Johanna Carrie

Introducing our newest board member...

I was delighted to be appointed to the board of Edinburgh Solar Co-op at the recent AGM and am very much looking forward to engaging with the board and membership, in particular on any proposals for maximising the benefits of the current projects, as well as helping to examine and consider the possible future renewable development and community engagement options available. I was also pleased to see how the membership as well as the board as a whole were so enthusiastic in their endorsement of plans to research and potentially formally pursue future additional projects.

In my day to day work, I am regularly engaged with a wide variety of participants in the renewable energy industry (including in relation to community projects), and am hopeful of being able to use this position to help increase the profile of the Edinburgh Solar Co-op, as well as providing hopefully valuable input from a legal or general commercial perspective on any issues arising on the current projects, as well as when considering proposals for any future developments or initiatives.

Jenny Allan



The Solar Co-op sails on

Having been Chair of the Co-op and then an ordinary Board member since late 2013, I stood down at our recent AGM but of course I am still a member and will keep an interest in future plans for more energy efficiency and renewable energy projects from the Co-op

It is worth remembering the roller-coaster journey that brought us from our early, optimistic expectations, through the hard slog of negotiations, the nervous months of the share offer, the race to meet installation deadlines, to the huge pleasure of having a great scheme up and running. Exciting, nerve-racking and, ultimately, very satisfying.

The whole project probably took twice as long as we had originally hoped but on the plus side, the share offer raised even more than we expected, and the great support from the members at our AGMs continues to be really encouraging.

I would like to thank all of the Board members, past and present, who have contributed over the years, our installers and project managers who have solved some really difficult problems along the way, and Energy4All who have gone well beyond the call of duty in supporting the Co-op. I wish the Board all the best in developing the exciting new plans that are already under discussion.

Richard Dixon

Generation from installation to early 2018

To date, the Edinburgh Community Solar Coop PV systems have generated 1,466,610 kWh of clean, green electricity for our host buildings, saving 658,977 kg of carbon dioxide. Of this total, the PV systems have exported approximately 115,000 kWh to the grid (this figure is likely to be higher but we do not need to monitor the export on our systems smaller than 30kW in size). The difference between these two figures is what our host buildings are using.

We are in the process of completing the installation of display screens in all our buildings. This is to allow the school children and visitors to see what the system is generating as the screen provides a link to our monitoring system. There is also a second page which includes information about the building's electricity use and how much the solar PV has contributed and importantly shows the Edinburgh Community Solar Coop logo.

Richard Whitney, On Site Generation

PHOTOS



Oaklands School



Drumbrae Leisure Centre

AGM workshop feedback

Future Plans workshop

Questions raised:

- Current structure: need simple guide, successful model but do we need a separate structure for future projects?
- Does the current structure restrict future projects?
- Does Co-op have the capability of second share offer?
- Any new projects need to add value and where do we fit in?
- Do we consider projects first and then consider structure?

Project ideas:

- Easy winners
- Storage
- Churches: consider working with religious organisations
- Solar panels at Park and Ride
- Tenement properties should be considered
- Solar farms
- Off shore wind

Members were keen to get involved in planning for future projects. Recommendation from the workshop to set up an evening or weekend for members to get briefing on structure/ future structure options and proposed projects. Then workshops on each project. To set up working groups, members, with one Board member taking lead to progress projects.

Lesley Hinds

Community Benefit workshop

We had a very productive small group discussion at the AGM about the Community Benefit Fund. The session started by explaining that all surplus profits made through our cooperative must be used for community benefit. We will establish a Community Benefit Fund to distribute this money. For the first five years until 2021, the Fund will be used to benefit the schools, community centres and leisure centres hosting our solar panels, and we predict this will amount to approximately £57,000 over the 5 years (between £2000 - £3000 per host building). From 2021 onwards, we need to decide how best to use the funds for wider community benefit.

INTERESTING NEWS

Solar Power Portal

This site carries lots of news.

**SOLAR
POWER
PORTAL**

<https://www.solarpowerportal.co.uk/>

Community Energy Scotland

Database with an impressive list of community projects

<http://www.communityenergyscotland.org.uk/projects.asp>

Local Energy Scotland

A number of our board members attended the recent CARES Conference run by Local Energy Scotland to find out about the latest support available to community energy projects:

<https://www.localenergyscotland/funding/>

Community Benefit workshop cont.

Our discussion focused on exploring ideas to benefit our host buildings over the next 5 years. The following issues were raised:

- The group felt strongly that all host buildings should get an equal share of access to the funds (equalling £2000 - £3000 per building), but none would be obliged to take up the opportunity. We noted that the Community Benefit Fund will build up over time (we currently have £20,000 in the fund);
- We reiterated that the funds should be used for initiatives which will improve sustainability / deliver carbon savings in some way;
- A range of excellent ideas were raised (from community / school growing to LED light bulbs);
- We agreed that the decision needs to be made by the managers / users of the host buildings, and we need to reach out to these people to discuss how to use the fund;
- We considered the idea of working up a range of options that host buildings could choose from, whilst also giving them the option of identifying their own initiatives;
- The group expressed an interest in members of the Coop being represented on any panel established to manage the Community Benefit Fund in the longer term.

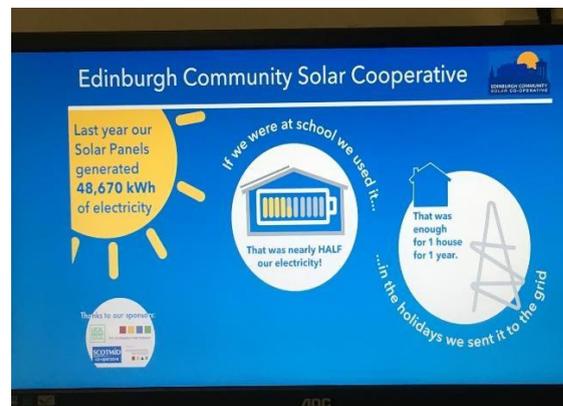
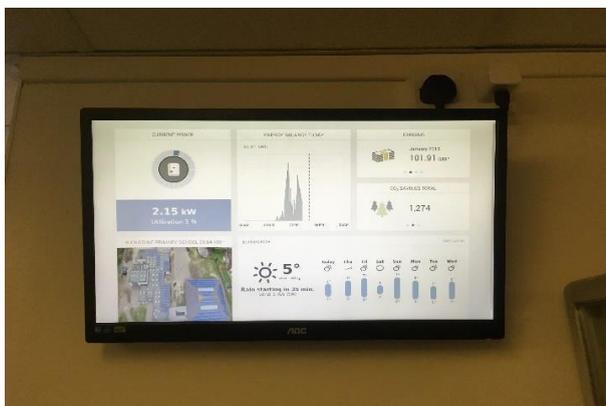
As next steps, a sub group of the Board should work up a proposal / 5-year plan which will set out 'Community Benefit Options' and how the fund could be spent in our host buildings. This would include a range of different options that host buildings could choose between (as well as identifying their own ideas), and set out a phased approach to spending the funds until 2021. This plan will be finalised with input from the whole Board in the first instance and shared with members.

Kate Studd and Drew Murphy

Education workshop

The workshop started with a brief introduction to what we are doing:

1. Generation data for use with classes.
 - a. Schools have a link to the inverter information. This can be displayed in classrooms.
 - b. Some schools are using the display screens in their foyers for classroom use, especially in STEM projects. One school is twinned with a school in Japan, also with PV, so they share generation data across the world.
2. Display screens to raise awareness of the power of the sun. All who use the school can see these. Most are in place, with the last few planned to go in in the next few weeks.



Education workshop cont.

3. Education Resources section in web site. Gaining feedback from teachers has been difficult. We plan to restructure this section and to make it more attractive to both teachers and children.
4. More contacts with our host building communities. As discussed at the workshop, parents' organisations have been contacted. One has had input to their parent council meeting in March. They have agreed to become a Friend of ECSC. Another has invited us to have a stall at their ECO fair in May. With luck they will also become a Friend of ECSC. If you have contacts with parents in any of our schools, please remind them of this offer to find out more about their PV panels. Edinburgh Leisure intends also to become a Friend of ECSC. So far there has been no response from 'our' three community centres. Friends will be invited to our AGM and any other meetings. They will be sent newsletters. We have not yet worked out benefits to them of being Friends, while for us, increased interest and engagement makes us a stronger coop.
5. Improving our web site. As discussed at the AGM we will have a section showing generation data for all our sites. The education resources page will be restructured. A recommendation will be taken to the board that a web designer is employed to make the whole site more appealing and up to date. Members of the Get Energised support groups at the National Museum of Scotland have agreed to give feedback on the education resources section.
6. Looking ahead. We will continue to seek feedback on both the web site and the display panels.

Edinburgh Sustainable Innovation Conference 23 March 2018

ECSC had a stall at this conference in the Dome at the University of Edinburgh's Potterrow building. The conference also had a series of lectures and workshops. Participants were free to visit stalls over lunch time. Jim and I seemed to be in conversations nonstop for an hour and a half. Visitors were varied, some were Edinburgh locals hearing about us for the first time. Others were interested in the idea of community energy projects, Jim may be asked for support from Falkirk and from Birmingham.



Johanna Carrie