



NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2022

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Chair's Report: Drew Murphy

I am honoured to continue as Chair of ECSC for a second year, having been nominated by the Board following the AGM in March. This past year the Board's attention has rightly been dominated by the incident at Davidson's Mains Primary School and efforts to get the Phase 1 sites inspected and generating electricity again. Whilst we continue to work to ensure the impact of this is minimised and that the Board is providing good governance of our existing solar generation assets, I hope that with initiatives such as our relaunched community benefit fund, the co-op will be able to begin to move forward again. Indeed, we have begun initial exploration of opportunities for further development, and will keep members informed. Communications is another area the Board is keen to progress. A communications strategy was produced last year but not fully implemented. We will be revisiting this and working to improve our communication both with members and also externally to raise awareness of ECSC.

AGM

For a third year in a row the AGM was held remotely, thanks to all who participated. Thanks also to Energy4All for their support in coordinating the meeting.

ECSC board

- Kirsty Lewin stood down from the Board. Many thanks to her for all her hard work, particularly around governance and communications.
- Lesley Hinds and Niall Emmerson were re-elected to the Board.
- Mick Patrick was elected to the Board.
- Following the local elections in May, Councillors Sanne Dijkstra-Downie, Ben Parker and Margaret Arma Graham have been assigned to the Board by the City of Edinburgh Council



Drew Murphy, ECSC Chair

Motions

All five motions were approved. This included approval of last year's AGM minutes, annual accounts, and re-appointment of auditors, as well as an additional motion to amend the rules of the society.

Member share interest of 4.5% and 4.75% paid to Phase 1 and Phase 2 shareholders, respectively.

Drew Murphy
Chair
Edinburgh Community Solar Co-operative

New Board Member – Mick Patrick

Mick has been focused on working and volunteering in the third sector for some years, after more than twenty years in high-tech industry (microelectronic design and related engineering design software). He originally moved to Edinburgh to take an MSc in 1993 and (as for many others) found it too good to leave.

Mick has experience as a charity Board trustee and Chair, as well as working as a trusts and foundations fundraiser. He's been an investor member of ECSC since it started.

Values-driven, Mick is committed to striving for a sustainable future in the face of the climate crisis and to social justice. In 2021 Mick founded BANZAI – Bruntsfield Area Net Zero Action Initiative, and continues working with like-minded people seeking to galvanize grassroots community involvement in increased collaborative net-zero action locally and across the city. He's passionate about the need for rapid acceleration in the pace of change to tackle the climate and ecological emergencies. This includes the move to renewables and energy efficiency, building resilient communities and encouraging more widespread public engagement in individual and collaborative action as well as activism to help drive necessary system change.

Mick is keen to build on the established success of ECSC and see further installation of larger scale solar PV in Edinburgh, where there are many suitable sites yet to be developed. He is also involved with the [Big Solar Co-op](#), which is working across the UK to use volunteers and economies of scale to make development viable in the post-FIT age on the greatest possible variety of mainly community and commercial roofs. He is keen to help ECSC explore possible collaboration in Edinburgh and to find the resources to enable further local developments.



Mick Patrick

New City of Edinburgh Council Board Members

Councillor Sanne Dijkstra-Downie

Party: Scottish Liberal Democrats

Ward: Ward 4 - Forth

Sanne works for the University of Edinburgh, developing partnerships with donors and organisations who support its work on climate change and sustainability. In her spare time she can often be found (with a camera or a litter picker!) on Wardie Bay beach.

As a parent of two young children, she is well aware of the challenges faced by families who struggle to combine work, childcare and schooling – especially at the present time.

Sanne said “Being a councillor is sometimes seen as difficult to combine with life as a working parent. Yet if those with **young families are underrepresented at council level**, their concerns can go unnoticed. So I think it’s really important that we elect people with a range of backgrounds to make sure that **all groups are represented in local decision-making.**”

Originally from the Netherlands, Sanne has been outspoken on the need for better and safer cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, so that people of all ages can enjoy being active in a greener and healthier city.

Councillor Ben Parker

Party: Scottish Green Party

Ward: Ward 10 - Morningside

Ben Parker was elected Green councillor for Morningside ward in the 2022 Council Elections.

Originally from North Yorkshire, Ben moved to Edinburgh for University in 2015 and has lived in the South of the city ever since.

Ben has previously worked as a shop manager for a local FairTrade shop, and he now works for a Scotland wide, disability housing information and advice charity.

Ben has a particular interest in housing policy, as well as transport/active travel. Locally, he has been involved in setting up a safe walking, wheeling and cycling group promoting the Greenbank-Meadows Quiet Route, and he is interested in thinking more about what can be done to make the Bruntsfield/Morningside high street a safer and more welcoming place for people to meet and gather.

Councillor Margaret Arma Graham

Party: Labour and Co-operative Party

Ward: Ward 11 - City Centre

Margaret is a childcare manager in the 3rd sector. She has worked and volunteered in the City Centre ward for 30 years.

“The poverty working families endure impacts greatly on children. This is unacceptable and needs to be tackled and challenged in equal measure. Highlighting this and bringing forward solutions will be my main focus.”



Cllr Sanne Dijkstra-Downie



Cllr Ben Parker



Cllr Margaret Arma Graham

Phase 3

The solar co-op board are now beginning to look at the shape of phase 3. A number of community organisations around the city are thinking about energy use and have been in touch with the solar co-op to discuss how we might work together. We have now spoken to around half a dozen community groups and made initial site visits to consider their viability. All are keen to get Edinburgh Solar Co-op solar panels on their roofs.

Edinburgh Leisure, who were involved in phase 1 and phase 2, are keen to explore ways in which the solar co-op can help address its current energy challenges while working to achieve net zero. The solar co-op is in early discussions with Edinburgh Leisure about a number of sites, looking at both roof mount and ground mount. Finally, there were a number of buildings not included in phase 2 due to grid restrictions in the east of the city. These restrictions should be lifted in 2023 and we are hoping to reconsider the sites with the council. In total, we may be looking at around twenty sites in phase 3 although it's very much early days.

Jim Lee

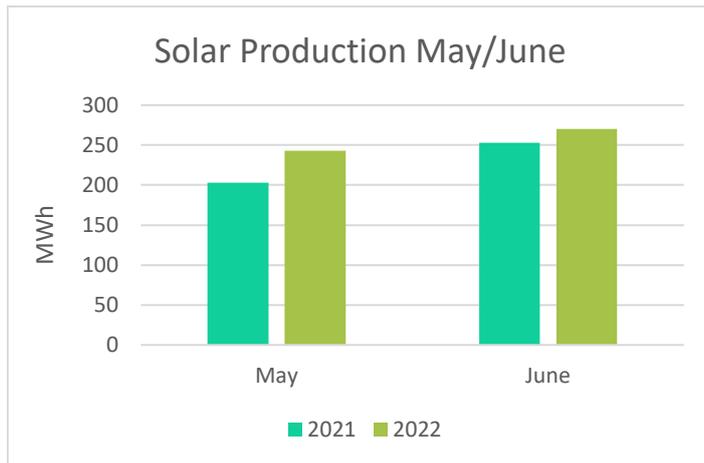
Community Benefit Fund

Our community benefit fund makes grants available to a variety of groups across the Edinburgh area to support and promote environment and health & wellbeing focused initiatives. This year's applications for the fund closed on 30th June. These are now being reviewed by our panel and successful applicants will be announced by the end of August. More information on the fund can be found on [our website](#).

Mark Bitel

Finances

The past two months have been particularly good in terms of solar generation with 243MWhrs produced in May, despite Phase 1 re-powering still being incomplete at the time. To put that into perspective, that's enough electricity to power 65 homes for a whole year or, if not restricted by things such as oceans, to drive an electric car around the entire planet nearly 33 times. It's also 40MWhrs more than we produced in May 2021 and so far, June is shaping up well too.



Reviewing revenue is a much more difficult task however. That's because our revenue is derived from a number of different sources, each of which pay a different price and some of which pay different prices depending on the building. Sale of electricity to the City of Edinburgh council, the users of the buildings, is the main source, but some buildings also generate revenue from the Feed-in Tarriff (FiT) scheme when they export to the grid. The final source of revenue is the sale of export to electricity companies (PPA). This is particularly important for Phase 2 where FiT is less favourable, but is now something we've applied to Phase 1 as well, due to the soaring energy prices providing us with better PPA prices than FiT on those buildings.

With this complex picture of different rates, revenue is reviewed on a quarterly basis with the last review being at the end of March. At that time, due to the issues with Phase 1, Phase 1 revenue was far below budget for the time of year (-50%) while repair and recommissioning costs were significant. I'm pleased to report however, that Phase 2 had generated revenue 11% in excess of budget and with June and July normally being the months that bring in the most, we're optimistic that Phase 2 will remain budget positive for the remainder of the accounting year.

Niall Emmerson