

Thursday 28th February 2019, 6-8 pm

VENUE: City Hall, Committee Room 2

6 – 7pm Carbon Offset Funds presentation, Jon Buick, GLA

Points of note:

- Jon provide a power point presentation – slides were distributed post-meeting to Members
- Carbon offset funds relate to the London Plan requirement for zero carbon homes
- For each tonne of carbon that cannot be reduced through the use of onsite measures – developers have to pay £60/tonne as a carbon offset payment. This goes as part of a Section 106 planning payment to the local authority. The carbon funds are ring-fenced and can only be spent on carbon-reduction projects.
- Local authorities are different stages of establishing and using carbon offset funds. The GLA will be conducting an annual survey into borough performance of carbon offset funds.
- Groups are advised to get in touch with their local planning and/or energy teams to ask whether a carbon offset fund is in place; whether community energy groups can apply to access funds and the application process and if their borough has any special criteria in terms of projects supported.
- A good carbon offset project will save carbon, benefit communities and can be monitored to provide good evidence to how funds are used. There often tends to be an element of flexibility however in terms of funds can be spent – and benefits can include action such as energy efficiency surveys undertaken, the number of attendees at awareness-raising events and so on.
- Following Jon's presentation, Liz Ainslie (Islington Energy Advice Team) gave an update on the Islington Community Energy Fund, which uses carbon offset money to support community energy activity in the borough. A new phase of the Fund was launched earlier that week.

7 – 8pm: Members' Meeting
Minutes

Attendees

Apologies

Syed Ahmed (CEL)
Sydney Charles (En10ergy)
Tanuja Pandit (PUNL)
Martin Narraway (PUNL)
Andre Pinho (Brixton Energy)
Sarah Holliday (BBB Centre)
Clare Silcock (SELCE)
Juan Frias
Cecily Church (Guinness Partnership)
Fleur Disney (CEL)
Sobia Mahmood (SELCE/ Transition Town Ilford)
Glyn Thomas (Hackney Energy co-op)

Pamela Harling (En10ergy)
Grant Venner (Ealing Transition)
Andy Rolfe (Ealing Transition)
Alan Jones (SE24)
Mike Smyth (SEC)
Ben Pearce (PUNL)
Afsheen Rashid (Repowering)

1. Welcome from the Chair

The Chair thanked Jon and Liz for their helpful presentations. Great to hear progress in local authorities – and the launch of a new phase of the Islington Community Energy Fund. A reminder that the deadline for this Phase is the 1st June 2019.

2. Review of previous meeting minutes and action points

- An action on providing members further information on carbon offset funds had been met through the organisation of today's presentations
- SA (CEL) and Afsheen Rashid (Repowering) will also be presenting on this community energy funds at a special ALEO (Association of Local Energy Officers) Carbon Offset event to be held at City Hall on 1st March.
- Groups had responded to an action on sending information through on potential projects that could cost less than £10,000. These ranged from air quality monitoring and moss walls to communication training for groups and volunteers working with people in fuel poverty, specifically 'soft skills' rather than technical advice. CEL will look to highlight these projects whenever opportunities with funders arose.

ACTIONS:

- a) **Ask Andre Pinho to write up a note relating to how a local authority might use carbon offset funds to buy shares in CE projects, which doesn't disqualify projects from FiTs.**
- b) **Send slides on Islington Community Energy Fund to members**

3. Governance update

FD provided an update on behalf of Alan Jones, CEL Treasurer:

- Good progress has been made by Alan Jones, to transition CEL from an unincorporated body to a Community Benefit Society, which is now completed. Special thanks to Alan for his hard work over the past few months in liaising with Co-Ops UK to make this happen!
- An AGM will take place in October or November 2019. The current Board is as follows; *Chair*, Syed Ahmed, *Vice Chairs* Alex Hartley and Ben Pearce, *Secretary* Sydney Charles and *Treasurer*, Alan Jones.
- The CEL bank account is being changed to reflect that CEL is now a Community Benefit Society. This is to be completed shortly.

4. LCEF update (rolling item)

SA gives a brief introduction to the fund for new attendees. The London Community Energy Fund is a £400,000 fund, now in the second phase, which launched in December.

Syed invites groups to share any issues or points of note:

En10ergy Scheduled to install solar on Fortismere School science block in the Easter holidays. En10ergy has some funds but may also ask parents to invest in the project.

PUNL: One project will be ready to install in a few weeks. One point of learning is that it took much longer to sort out the legal side for this project than originally anticipated – it also cost more.

TP raised a point about the potential benefits of using a standard lease instead of a bespoke lease for each project, i.e. may be less expensive and take less time, depending on the site owner.

SELCE has some funding to investigate housing co-ops. The site may need to install a new three phase power supply and get a new MPAN.

Holly Lodge EVs The application is in the process of getting approval from council.

The groups noted that the GLA have been very supportive - "Sydia is a star!"

ACTIONS:

- c) **FD to explore how best to improve access to lease templates for CE groups**

5. Post-FiTs Hackathon & Smart Export Guarantee consultation

SA reminded the group that BEIS published an announcement about FiTs in December, followed by a consultation in January for a more 'market based mechanism', i.e. Smart Export Guarantee. He also introduced the concept of the hackathon for new attendees, that is, an event to explore financial viability of CE rooftop projects, post-FiTs.

- FD updated groups on the follow-up hackathon event, which has been postponed because members are already busy working to make their own projects viable. There is also an event coming up in April from Community Energy England (CEE), called 'Life after FiTs'. CEL will look again at the Hackathon, building on the outcomes of this event.
- SA notes there are a few projects developing large-scale rooftop solar without FiTs. However, this requires a combination of certain elements and so is not always feasible for typically smaller CE projects.
- SA asked for any input in the SEG consultation and there was some discussion around this between members. Topics include informal export meters to reducing ongoing costs, fair price for exported energy and Power Purchase Agreements with no standing charge.

6. Events update

- Westminster Hall solar Debate, 5th March – groups to urge their MPs to attend
- CEL/ Friends of the Earth event on 5th March
- Next CEL meeting is 'assessing the impact of community energy' with Jodie Giles from Regen

7. AOB

SC advises that the Esmee Fairbairn funding which pays for the CEL Officer's salary comes to an end in October 2019, so we need to consider how we will move forward on this. SA highlighted that CEL are aware of this issue and will be liaising once again with Esmee Fairbairn, and potentially other funders, on the merits on further funding. The two year period has been a busy one for CEL, and we will be able to report back a successful series of actions to funders.

ACTIONS

- d) **FD to send details of Life after FiTs, Monday 8th April at Simmons and Simmons**
- e) **FD to forward email about Westminster Hall Debate, asking groups to send template letter to their MPs.**
- f) **FD to distribute the Green Alliance Community Energy Manifesto to members**

Our next meeting is Thursday 28th March 2019, 6-8pm at City Hall, Committee Room 3

Please note, CEL will not print out copies of previous minutes unless requested, to help save on paper.