

Thursday 31st October 2019, 6-8 pm
VENUE: City Hall, Committee Room 3

Minutes

Attendees

Mrs Sydney Charles (En10ergy)
Glyn Thomas (Bannister House Solar)
Ahmet Demirtas
Asa Thomas (Happy Energy)
Anna Rebbman (KCL)
Matthew Nicholas
Alex King (En10ergy, MHSG)
Jamies Baxter (CREW Energy)
James Angel (KCL)
Mike Smyth (Schools Energy Coop)
Carleene Lee-Phakoe (LB Newham)
Mas Patel (Newham Councillor)
Thomas Corben
Giovanna Speciale (SELCE)
Martin Narraway (PUNL)
Sarah Holliday (BBBC)
Pamela Harling (Wolves Lane)
Tanuja Pandit (PUNL)
Tim Watson (CREW Energy)
Andre Pinho (Brixton Energy & Repowering London)
Duncan Law (CEE)
Sobia Mahmood (Transition Ilford)
Dermot Barnes (En10ergy)
Alan Jones (SE24)
Afsheen Rashid (Repowering London)
Syed Ahmed (Energy for London)
Sydney Charles (En10ergy)
Hannah Short (CEL)

General Meeting

Welcome from the Chair, Syed Ahmed

26 London Boroughs that have signed up to Climate Emergencies → want to emphasize that community energy should be a part of that, which is why one of our speakers today is Newham Councillor Mas Patel

Intro to Crowdfund London with James Parkinson

→ All about working with Boroughs to deliver physical regeneration, and what innovation looks like when it comes to regeneration. There is a deficit in funding in terms of communities coming to City Hall → communities are well-placed to suggest changes. We want people on the ground involved in the process of

what's happening, so you can start to create resilience and collaborative solutions. This is a bridging model to demonstrate that there is local support for the project

These projects tend to be about incubating projects, and are about crowdfunding.

- Small grants fund → Crowdfund London can pledge up to 75% of those funds

There's a lot of mutual benefit of going through this as compared with a grants system → will help to access skillsets locally, and helps to build awareness for what you're trying to do locally

3 phases of getting something done, process runs for about 6 months:

- Create
- Fund
- Launch

Deadlines:

Expression of interest form to fill out by the 18th of November

13th Jan → online pitches to go onto Spacehive, then working on the campaign for 3 months, then we will make pledges, crowdfund the rest.

More interested in local community engagement vs. money (minimum £2 investment)

95% success rate once the GLA has made a pledge → good likelihood that if you have a good idea and benefit that it will happen.

We will help you figure out how you might pitch what you're doing. Need to show that you're thinking about these things and that you are clear about what you think the impact may be. i.e. what's the case for putting public money towards this.

Q: What's been your favourite project?

Something that starts quite modest but becomes bigger e.g. taking over a vacant unit on the high street, and turning it into a community space (in Kingston), pay as you feel, local allotment in Tolworth, thoughtful

Q: I've looked at it before and our group didn't like the payment mechanism

→ lots of limitations to the fact that it's an online platform → we work with this specific platform e.g. it looks like you have to set up a direct debit

Q: Is the platform totally passive?

- The group is the driver of being active, especially once we decide who we are going for
- E.g. Energy4All and FX are push platforms

How Local Authorities can take action on the Climate Emergency with Councillor Mas Patel

Once you declare an emergency, what do you do?

Councils have a very important role → at the micro level. In most cases we are the major Landlords e.g. in Newham there are 16,000 Council homes, 800 public buildings

- Local planning authority → play a huge role in terms of development of the estate. We have some of the biggest infrastructure projects happening in the Borough e.g. Canning Town centre → thousands of homes being built.
- 5 Crossrail stations → Newham is a major player in terms of transport links
- We've fought to be considered an inner London Borough

→ air pollution is a major killer → highest number of deaths in London, possibly the UK and Europe. In larger part thanks to City Airport, Blackwall tunnel. We also have some of the highest rates of poverty in the country → poorest people are breathing the poorest quality air. Some of the worst rates of asthma in children in Newham. Other key council services → huge fleet of vehicles → moving them to electric vehicles

- Some of the worst rates of recycling as a borough. London has the largest number of green tech jobs in the whole world, but there isn't a centre

In April Newham declared a climate emergency. Part of the motion was to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, carbon neutral by 2030, have a green audit all council survey

- Strategic intent → 2 papers passed in Cabinet → 2 separate strands on air quality and climate emergency → air quality plan has been signed off and approved. Installed air quality monitors around schools in Newham, so that we have an evidence base of what impact various measures are having
- Newham plan is going to be an annual plan → what has worked vs. what hasn't worked, rather than having a 5-year vs. 10-year strategy.
- Brand is called 'Newham Climate NOW' → anything related to climate, air quality → will be branded with this logo. Want to have a microsite off the main website with air quality info
- Offer affordable power and heating e.g. Barking and Dagenham beam energy
- Need to move to larger-scale projects
- Divest-invest pension fund
- Create low carbon and climate resilient communities
- Newham climate advisory group → trying to get the right people on board, want ordinary residents to be there
- Newham has the highest percentage of people who practice a faith → faith-based community groups are a great way to target people. Are going to be offering carbon offset funds to community groups.
- Citizens Assembly coming up → helps create as unbiased as possible a group to make plans
- Open Forum as a way for people to engage → 60-70 people who were engaged
- Ability for residents to walk into a public meeting and question Councillors etc. is quite powerful
- Funding is a major limitation
- Council doesn't have the money that they used to have → so have loads of budgetary pressures
- If there is political leadership, there will be a way to access funding

Q&A: Newham has the highest proportion of fuel-poor households in all of London → would love to work with you to try to help those fuel-poor

Q: Are housing plans incorporating the climate emergency?

A: We are still at the beginning of the journey → would love to come back in 12 months and tell you how we've done. In housing we are trying to incorporate passivhaus building standard. Hoping new builds will be built along Passivhaus standards → 2-3 years more realistic

Q: Have you spoken to the GLA at all about their London Power scheme?

A: We were thinking of launching our own one → but since the GLA launched it, we have decided to just go with that rather than re-create the wheel.

Q: What role would you like community energy to play in Newham?

A: We don't have community energy groups → we're proposing that you have a meeting in our Borough to encourage them to get going.

Q: CREW friend wanting to set up a project in Newham

A: There's been a culture of not doing anything in the Borough re environmental issues → this past summer we dived into these issues, so hopefully more will be happening soon.

Q: Top 3 things you'd do if you had a magic wand

- Enough EV charging points
- Re: new builds and housing , would change the local plan → your buildings have to be carbon zero
- Get all residents engaged in what the Council is doing and the realities of climate change

Q: Please insist upon actual performance → we don't want any carbon offset funds!! All buildings built to these standards need to be monitored for 3 years after they've been built, with ramifications

A: This should be part of the Mayor of London new London plan. Also planning inspectors report → Need to also report on the operational efficiency of buildings

2019 AGM

Groups present:

Brixton 1, 2, 3
CREW Energy
BBBC
Wolves Lane
PUNL
En10ergy
Repowering London
Lambeth Community Solar
NKCE
Energy Garden
Highgate Society Sustainable Living
SE24
Schools Energy Coop
CREW Energy
SELCE
Energy for London
Solar SOAS
Muswell Hill
Energy 4 All
Ealing Transition
22 membership groups → out of 25 members

Meeting is quorate

Transition Ilford also present, as well as a few individuals (though not members)

Community Energy London Annual Report 2019, Chair, Syed Ahmed

Despite being in a really difficult time financially → had lots of new funds made available

Key takeaways

- Big concern is about interest withering away
- Good year where the government wants to highlight and take an international lead on the climate
- GLA support has been hugely helpful
- Meeting with Sylvia Baron monthly → investment in time and partnership
- Most Boroughs and councils don't know about community energy
- There are 26 climate emergency motions to date → need to maximize on those

Highlights

- Brilliant event earlier this year with Friends of the Earth
- CEF coincided with London Climate Action Week → in excess of 300 people came along to CEF events

Downers

- Paralysis of policy → despite Claire Perry speaking a very strong game on community energy, we've seen nothing come from this
- Community energy strategy completely vanished
- Failure of getting CE recognised in terms of the net zero commitment

If people have comments for the annual report, please send them

CEL Financial Accounts 2018

Just looking at the money that has gone through the accounts. This doesn't show that Repowering London helped to secure £50k to Community Energy London → that has been instrumental in keeping CEL going and paying the CEL Officer. Receiving a further £9,750 funding from the GLA! Relatively piddling amounts reflected in the actual CEL bank account. We were incorporated this year as a community benefit society.

Our financial year is January to December. Maybe going forward we will include our financial accounts in our annual report.

AP 1: Send budget for £9,750 to members

Appointment of Auditors

Resolution to disapply need for auditor - Alan proposes, Mike seconds. Resolution passes.

Q: What would the budget be for the year → would look to £50k to pay for a year

Q: How much is the Officer working? Working 4 days a week

Q: Who line-manages → in the past it has been the Chair and Afsheen, in future it would be the Chair

Q: What is the plan for next year → focus on this at the November meeting

Election of Directors

Candidate: Giovanna Speciale (SELCE)

CEO of SELCE, launching a share offer tomorrow £250,000, active in the solar, does lots of fuel poverty work, developing a strategic approach in our local area, standing for the Board because I think working together is the only competitive advantage we have in a crowded market.

Presenting ideas about a slightly different approach to what we've been doing. Funding for a resource library would be good – there are loads of ways in which we exceeded the sum of our parts. Difference was that it was community of practice → took a broadly networking approach. It would be good to have the officer working with each individual group, to establish what they need to get out of the network and what they can contribute. This will help generate new ideas new ways of doing things, new partnerships, flat governing structure. That's the direction I propose → focusing on what the needs of groups are.

We need to start really sharing what challenges we face and how face these challenges. All our groups generate solar but we want to have other people as part of our network. We also need to think about our governance, to have a flat governance structure, so that we are responding to what people want

Seconded by many people → elected

Candidate: Jamie Baxter (CREW Energy)

Areas of focus is fuel poverty energy café and energy efficiency projects. We've had a good year of securing funding for projects, including energy efficiency, heat pumps. Look to bring CREWs experience to CEL and feeding back and forth with our experience. Been doing talks and knowledge building around electric vehicle charging. Have been involved in UCL, and want to focus on engaging students and getting them involved from an early age. Mainly work in solar projects and EV charging projects as well as wind, heat and battery storage. Need to build on the network and thinking a bit outside the box, as well as support knowledge and capacity-building

Seconded by SE24 → elected

Candidate: Jason Pritchard (City of London Community Energy)

Not present – officer read out his paragraph:

My name is Jason Pritchard. I am the Founding Director of City of London Community Energy (CoLCE) and I am a Councillor in the City of London. I would like to nominate myself to be a Director of CEL at the forthcoming AGM. I have been involved in my first community energy project over the past 12 months and having had the seeds of an idea in the Summer of 2018, Community Energy London were very supportive during the initial stages with helping me develop the idea and to connect with people and informed me of grants and financial help that was available for a project of this nature. This assistance was so important and I feel I would like to give something back and to show my gratitude for the support. I believe that CEL is very important as it brings together groups from across London to share ideas and to provide inspiration for others to get involved. I have attended some quarterly meetings and found them very informative and would love to get more involved. I am an elected member in the City of London having been elected to represent Portsoken ward in Aldgate in 2017 and I am keen to learn more and to develop more community energy projects across the square mile over the coming years. I would relish the opportunity to get more involved with CEL.

Seconded by Energy for London → elected

Candidate: Sarah Holliday (BBBC)

Applied for the same fund as Newham Council, received LCEF funding which was great. Received carbon offset funding. Standing because it's a really exciting time for CE right now e.g. Election, Green New Deal. Exciting time to bring the wave of enthusiasm amongst young people, excited about making the movement more inclusive, especially working in Tower Hamlets. Currently work for Nesta.

Seconded by Solar SOAS → elected

Candidate: Sydney Charles (En10ergy & Highgate Society Sustainable Living)

Been part of CEL for a while, and being involved in various community energy project e.g M&S project. Also done lots of work on insulation and quick tips for warm homes. Done things before related to investing your money into green sources. Also run an event on waste. Part of transition highgate. Been a Director of CEL since 2017, official person for GDPR. CEL has made very good progress. But we need to be realistic about what Hannah can do in 4 days a week. We need to think about where we are getting funds. Hopefully with new blood on the board we will be able to move forward.

Seconded by Repowering London → elected

Candidate: Syed Ahmed (Energy for London)

There have been around 32 monthly meetings, and I've attended all but 2 of them! Got involved by helping Repowering on some policy stuff in 2012, was asked to be a Director. This has been a personal highlight in my career. CEL in an ideal place to sell this message to groups and to make things happen.

Seconded by many people → elected

Welcome to our new Directors!! Director positions will be decided during our first meeting.

Priorities for 2020

- Funding

Securing new funds, are our current slug from the GLA runs out at the end of Feb, and any other priorities will be impossible if we don't sort this out.

- Supporting new and existing groups

Finding out how groups need help, and also reaching out to new communities and making it easier for groups to set up.

- Political engagement

Leveraging the current moment of Council climate emergency declarations, GE and the mayoral election coming up in May 2020.

→ Very simple, but all super key!

Any Other Business

Duncan is currently developing national political asks around CE for CEE → if you have input, or if you haven't already let us know about your MP, please let him know.

Schools Energy Coop → share offer launching on Monday

PUNL → 2 coming up in November

SELCE → just launching their share offer, also have the event 'What on earth should I do about climate change?' coming up on the 14th of Nov!

Lambeth Community Solar → share offer currently open!

If anybody is having problems with getting projects finished by March, please speak to Duncan → trying to get legislation to extend deadline.

Final huge thank you to the old Directors!! We want to formally thank them for their efforts and work. They have made huge contributions to setting up and running CEL. We are very grateful for all you have done.

Special thanks also to Afsheen for being involved and supporting!

There was a LCAW meeting with deputy mayor, plans are currently afoot for next year! So we will keep everyone updated on that.

Closing Remarks

Need to think about how we can work collaboratively. How do we tell people about CE. We need to have a strategic approach, and to shout about each others share offers!

Thanks so much for coming to the monthly meeting and AGM!