

## Annual General Meeting 2020

**Monday 29 June 2020, 11am – 12.50pm**

**Present:** 52

### 1. Welcome, introductions, and apologies

Afsheen Rashid, Chair of Community Energy England, opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.

As this was the first of Community Energy England's AGMs to be held online, Afsheen covered the meeting and voting guidelines. The meeting was held through Zoom and its polling function was used for voting for Directors and approval of the 2019 financial accounts.

### 2. Minutes of the previous AGM

Approval of the minutes of the previous AGM was proposed by Chris Stuart-Bennet from Low Carbon Gordano and seconded by Mark Kenber from Brighton and Hove Energy Services Co-operative. No questions were raised.

### 3. Report by the Chair

As Chair of Community Energy England, Afsheen Rashid updated attendees on Community Energy England's activity and priorities over the last year. Afsheen gave attendees an update on the structure of the Community Energy England Board and Executive Team and its governance. She noted that in 2019 Community Energy England introduced board subgroups under the headings of Finance, Governance, and Impact, to help improve the operations and output of the organisation both internally and externally.

Afsheen reminded members of Community Energy England's Vision and Mission, then gave an overview of the organisation's activities over the past twelve months and how they supported the Vision and Mission. She also updated delegates of CEE's refined priorities in the following areas:

#### **Advocacy and Influence**

Afsheen noted that in 2019, Community Energy England increased its Advocacy and Influence work with the addition of Duncan Law, Policy and Advocacy Manager, who joined in May 2019. She also commented on Community Energy England's work with partners, stakeholders and key government officials to disseminate the benefits of community energy and lobby for policies more supportive of community energy. This included asking more parliamentary questions, and attendees were shown a timeline of the consultation responses submitted by Community Energy England through 2019.

#### **Collect and Collaborate**

Afsheen covered Community Energy England's second strategic priority, Connect and Collaborate. Community Energy England works in close partnership with several other industry experts and membership bodies to ensure that work is not duplicated. Afsheen noted that Community Energy England shares information on community energy through its social media channels, member and stakeholder newsletters to connect the sector. In 2019 the Community Energy England Board and Executive Team represented Community Energy England and the wider sector at a wide range of events, from large conferences to small community events. Community Energy England hosted its own events in 2019 to help the sector connect and collaborate, including the annual Community Energy Conference. The conference provided practitioners in the movement with an opportunity to network and exchange ideas.

Afsheen noted that Community Energy Fortnight was one of the key ways that Community Energy England connected the sector in 2019. With the theme of People Powered Futures, the Fortnight saw 56 events across the country, and highlighted how partners and stakeholders collaborate and demonstrate cross sector connections.

### **Gather Data and Inform**

Afsheen then discussed Community Energy England's final strategic priority, Gather Data and Inform. Community Energy England disseminates its own research and that of its members and stakeholders in the sector widely. Afsheen noted that the State of the Sector Report is Community Energy England's largest and most high-profile project and the 2019 report was the third. The results of the report were widely circulated, and the infographics are regularly used by Community Energy England members in their presentations.

Afsheen also noted that Community Energy England developed its Social Impact Tool with partners in 2019. The tool aims to provide practitioners with a simple and effective way of monitoring social impact. Afsheen commented that Community Energy England hosted a practitioner-specific event on examples of business models for a post-subsidy requirement. She noted that Community Energy England also worked with Centre for Regional Economic & Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University to launch a report to gauge the opportunities and challenges for the community energy sector in Yorkshire and the Humber, and the value of improved regional coordination.

### **Membership**

Afsheen then gave an update on Community Energy England membership, including membership numbers and feedback from the annual member feedback form. Afsheen noted that membership had grown steadily in 2019 despite a general slowdown in the sector. Afsheen thanked Community Energy England's Principal Supporters and Funders for their support.

No questions were raised.

#### **4. Financial Accounts**

Afsheen introduced Mark Luntley, Community Energy England's new Treasurer. Mark highlighted Community Energy England's surplus and noted that the organisation operates on a purely not-for-profit basis. He explained that Community Energy England maintains a surplus in case of income drop, noting it was normal for similar organisations. Community Energy England's draft accounts, prepared by Third Sector Accountancy, can be found here ([https://communityenergyengland.org/files/document/405/1593529850\\_C37draftaccounts2019V4.pdf](https://communityenergyengland.org/files/document/405/1593529850_C37draftaccounts2019V4.pdf)). Mark highlighted that Community Energy England's accounts for 2019 were unaudited, as Community Energy England was exempt.

A member questioned the risk level associated with being dependant on grant funding. Mark confirmed that this was an ongoing risk for Community Energy England, but deliberately carrying over surplus from previous years reduces this risk. He highlighted that Community Energy England was funded by three bodies, which reduced risk, but he noted that the organisation would not be sustainable without its funders. It was confirmed that financial resilience and income diversification will remain an important focus for the Chief Executive and Board.

#### **5. Voting for appointment of Directors**

Emma Bridge, Chief Executive of Community Energy England, reported that, as per the organisation's rules, Directors are obliged to stand down after thirty-three months' service. Rachel Hayes (Public), Ollie Pendered (Community), Afsheen Rashid (Community) and Deborah Trebilco (Community) were all obliged to stand down by rotation. All four Directors re-stood for nomination. Martin Crane stood as a representative from Carbon Alternatives (Corporate) (full details of director nominations can be found here: [https://communityenergyengland.org/files/document/403/1593529850\\_DirectorNominations2020.pdf](https://communityenergyengland.org/files/document/403/1593529850_DirectorNominations2020.pdf)). Members were asked to vote for, against, or to abstain from voting for the nominees, and were informed that the ballot was not competitive. Member organisations unable to attend the AGM were given the opportunity to vote online prior to the AGM.

All candidates were present and were given the opportunity to give a brief overview of why they wanted to be on the board of Community Energy England. Voting was carried out anonymously via Zoom's polling function, with only Community Energy England members having the opportunity to vote.

All candidates were voted on to the Board.

#### **6. Report by the Chief Executive**

Emma Bridge highlighted the huge changes of the last months, which included the switch to online events such as the Annual General Meeting. Emma drew attention to Community Energy England's recently released 2030 Vision, activities during Community Energy Fortnight and the shifting of perspectives due to the impacts of Covid-19. Emma noted that Community Energy England had successfully lobbied the government and secured a six-month extension

to the Feed-in Tariff deadline for organisations whose projects had been stalled due to Covid-19.

Emma then discussed how Community Energy England would be working within each of its strategic priorities. She noted that Community Energy England's Advocacy and Influence work would be focussed on influencing regional as well as national government in the coming months. Emma highlighted that much of Community Energy England's work would focus on the shared goals and the need for community buy-in as society begins to rebuild after the effects of Covid-19. She also commented on the importance of the Black Lives Matter Movement and its impact on Community Energy England, recognising its complexity and the need to collaborate and engage as many communities as possible. Emma noted that much of Community Energy England's work in gathering data would be on the dissemination of the most recent State of the Sector Report, as well as working with researchers. She also updated delegates with changes to the Community Energy Hub, which was in the process of being streamlined and brought into a new How To section of the Community Energy England website.

Emma concluded by noting that Community Energy England wanted to provide value for members and was developing its newsletter to share as much information as possible. The Executive Team and Board would focus on showcasing the unique elements of community energy during the rebuild period and engaging key government officials in this narrative.

## **7. Any other business**

No other business was reported.

Afsheen thanked all members for their continued support and closed the meeting.