

Annual General Meeting 2022

Wednesday 13 July 2022, 2pm - 3pm

Present: 49

1. Welcome, introductions, and apologies

Helen Seagrave, Interim Chair of Community Energy England (CEE), opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.

Philip Coventry, Acting co-Chief Executive, covered the meeting and voting guidelines for the meeting. The meeting was held on Zoom and its polling function was used for voting for Directors, approval of the 2021 financial accounts, approval of the 2021 minutes, a motion to approve an amendment to CEE's Bye-Laws and election of directors.

Philip then gave an introduction to CEE and the organisation's vision and mission, and introduced the organisation's reframed strategic priorities, which were readdressed this year by the board.

2. Minutes of the previous AGM

A Zoom poll was launched for approval of the minutes of the 2021 AGM. The minutes were approved, and no questions were raised.

3. Our Organisation

Helen gave attendees an update on the structure of the CEE Board and executive team and its governance. She noted that CEE chair, Afsheen Rashid, and CEE Chief Executive, Emma Bridge, are both on maternity leave. Helen has taken on interim chair during this period and Philip and Duncan are co-Chief Execs. Helen thanked Mark Luntley and Mark Kenber, who have chosen to stand down from the board, for their invaluable contribution which will be missed. Helen explained that the board committees (finance, governance and impact) were in place to help improve the operations and output of the organisation both internally and externally.

Helen highlighted that there had been some changes within the executive team structure, with both COP26 Coordinator, Henry Bettley, and Membership & Executive Support Officer, Charlotte Heywood, moving onto new roles and the introduction of Communications & Events Officer Kim Woodcock and Networks & Learning Officer Shannon Jackson. Helen mentioned that there is a new Membership & Operations Officer currently being recruited. She then invited the executive team to present on activity and impact in 2021.

4. Our Activity and Impact in 2021

Policy and Advocacy

Policy & Advocacy Officer, Flora Robertson, gave key highlights from CEE policy and advocacy activities in 2021. These highlights included that CEE successfully lobbied for and supported the evidence gathering for the Environmental Audit Committee's inquiry. This led to CEE gathering 75 organisation signatories for a joint letter in support of these EAC recommendations to the government. Flora also described CEE's ongoing letter-writing campaigns to the Secretary of State, which led to feedback that Lord Callanan had received a

deluge of letters, and that this was well received and had a positive impact in BEIS. As a result of this, Lord Callanan asked his team for a briefing on community energy.

Flora thanked members for all their work and contributions to increasing the voice and reach of community energy.

Duncan Law, Acting co-Chief Executive (Policy & Advocacy), went on to describe the work CEE undertook at COP26. This work included supporting a team of 12 community energy activists during the 2 weeks of COP to interact with over 65 key stakeholders, including 5 ministers and 16 MPs, and to distribute thousands of community energy policy briefings. CEE also co-organised a rooftop event with the Lord Provost and members of the Glasgow City council.

Duncan commented on the great events that took place during COP by our members particularly Art and Energy CIC and Plymouth Energy Community's 'Moths to a Flame' art project.

Connections, Resources & Growth

Philip updated attendees on key activities and events in 2021. Philip started by covering CEE's 2021 in numbers. This included 7 online events during 2021, 10,000+ newsletter views, 120,000+ website views, 963 views of our event videos on YouTube and 82 discussion threads on our Loomio practitioner forum. Philip described one of the highlights of the year, Community Energy Fortnight, themed 'We the power'.

In 2021, CEE collaborated on a number of projects including State of the Sector Report 2021 which, this year, was created in-house with Community Energy Scotland and Community Energy Wales. Philip stressed that we are continually grateful to members for completing the State of the Sector survey. CEE also contributed to two further research reports on cities and community energy in the North East.

Philip then went on to update attendees on membership numbers and breakdown of membership by category in 2021. He reported that the collective voice of CEE had grown, with membership at the end of 2021 at 280 with 21 new members. Philip expressed his gratitude to members for the high retention rates of membership, which allows CEE to remain the voice of the sector, and stated that membership fees provide a backbone of financing for the organisation. Philip noted the importance of CEE's 5 Principal Supporter Members, who support the organisation with increased financial support, and CEE's funders, with whose support CEE was able to make its impact in 2021.

Philip opened the floor to questions from attendees. A question was asked about the Local Electricity Bill, including its integration into the Energy Security Bill. Duncan updated that it fell at the end of the last session for the 2nd time, but now more than half of the members of parliament support the bill and it is expected to be submitted again. The government has conceded the principles of local supply but queries the mechanism.

No further questions were raised.

5. Financial Accounts

Philip introduced the draft accounts for the year ending December 2021, which had been prepared by Third Sector Accountancy. Philip highlighted that CEE operates on a not-for-profit basis, and any surplus is added to member funds for the next financial year.

Philip explained that philanthropic grants make up the majority of the CEE income, and CEE seeks to avoid sources of grant funding that might overlap with our members. CEE's main funders in 2021 were Friends Provident Foundation, Esmee Fairbairn Foundation and Power to Change, with additional funding from BEIS. Membership fees make up 18%, which is a significant figure but not as large as other membership bodies. Philip urged all members to consider paying a higher level of membership or consider events sponsorship if their organisation is able to as this helps the ongoing sustainability of CEE.

Philip explained that the finances ended the year in a better place than we started due to a number of smaller grants, and this retained income will help the CEE remain a sustainable organisation when some major grant funding ends in 2022.

Attendees were then offered the chance to ask questions.

No questions were raised.

A vote was put forward for approval of the draft accounts for the year ending December 2021 through Zoom's polling function, with only CEE members having the opportunity to vote. The accounts were approved.

6. Motion: Proposal of Amendment to Community Energy England's Bye-Laws

Philip put forward a motion to propose an amendment to CEE's Bye-Laws, which currently state that CEE can only be chaired by a representative from a community member organisation (article 14.1). The amendment is a special resolution to dis-apply article 14.1 for 1 year until the next AGM (see addition of 6.11 in the Bye-Laws to enable this). This will allow the board of directors of Community Energy Association (England) Limited to appoint a non-community member as their chair until their first meeting after the next annual general meeting (being the annual general meeting to be held in 2023) in accordance with the bye-laws. This was proposed to allow Helen Seagrave, whom the board collectively selected as interim chair in March 2022, to remain as interim chair of CEE while Afsheen Rashid is on maternity leave.

A vote on the motion was put forward on Zoom's polling function, with only CEE members having the opportunity to vote. The motion was approved.

7. Voting for Appointment of Directors

Philip started by thanking both Mark Luntley and Mark Kenber, who have chosen to stand down from the CEE board of directors, for their considerable contribution to CEE during their time on the board. Philip then set out the remaining members of the board.

Philip reported on CEE's rules for numbers and nomination of directors in accordance with the organisation's Articles and Bye-Laws. In line with CEE's constitution, new directors from any member category could be elected onto the board this year. The ballot was competitive, meaning that only four nominees could be elected.

Nominees Peter Capener, Helen Ryder and Helen Seagrave were present and were given the opportunity to provide a brief overview of why they wanted to be on the board of CEE. Connie Muir and Alastair Mumford were not present, and Philip read their nomination statements on their behalf. Voting was carried out anonymously via Zoom's polling function, with only CEE members having the opportunity to vote. Philip informed attendees that votes would be checked and the result would be reported later in the meeting.

8. Looking Ahead

Partnerships and resources

Shannon Jackson, the Networks & Learning Officer, stressed that membership was core to all of CEE's activities and that membership was continuing to grow strongly with an influx of new members linked to the Rural Community Energy Fund projects.

Shannon went on to describe the new resources for the sector that CEE has been working on, including a new national map of the sector and a funding database focusing on local authority funds. Shannon stressed that both of these resources are intended to continually develop so CEE welcomes additional contributions to them from members.

CEE is continuing the theme of CEF 2022, 'Efficiency First' by launching training for community energy organisations for winter 2022-2023, which will focus on upskilling for energy advice.

Influencing policy and regulation

Duncan briefed attendees on CEE's plans for impact and input around policy in 2022 and beyond. This included continuing to harness both members and MPs to advocate for community energy, harnessing the 267 MPs who have community energy in their patch, and the creation of a number of working groups to focus on specific sector issues such as energy efficiency and ethical sourcing. Amongst other things, Duncan highlighted that sector funding would continue to be a key area of work for the CEE policy team. On the back of the government's refusal to fund a National Community Energy Fund at the present time, the policy team will continue to lobby for national funding but also work to harness the available

funding through local authorities and explore options for a community energy revolving fund. CEE is also exploring applying for funding from the Energy Redress scheme and BEIS for ongoing energy efficiency work.

Duncan explained that the energy bill is currently in its second reading and CEE we will try to get it amended. Contract for difference reform hasn't made huge progress but we will continue to look into this.

Key projects, events and communications

Kim Woodcock, the Communications & Events Officer, gave an update on events that have taken place in early 2022 including the successful spring series and our first in-person conference since 2019 in Bristol in June. She then went on to talk about our key upcoming events focussing on the Community Energy Awards, which will be held on 10 November in City Hall, London. Details of this year's award categories and invitations to the event will be announced shortly.

9. Director Nomination Result

Philip confirmed that Pete Capener, Alistair Mumford, Helen Ryder and Helen Seagrave were voted on to the Board. Philip thanked all nominees for putting themselves forward.

Any other business

No other business was reported.

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