

AGM 2016

Minutes

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Andy O'Brien, Peter Thompson, Gareth Hoskins, Jeff Kenna, Andrew Lee, Daniella Radice, Eric Booth, David Bunker

APOLOGIES: Chris Speller

1. Peter Thompson welcomed everyone to the AGM, explained the agenda for the evening, and introduced the directors and staff to the meeting.
2. The film 'How the Lawrence Weston was won' was shown, detailing the successful development of BEC's Lawrence Weston Community Solar Farm.
3. The minutes of the 2015 AGM were presented, and approved, 51 in favour, with 16 abstentions. This includes 15 internet votes.
4. Peter gave a chair's report for 2015-16, and showed photos of the recent developments.
5. Andy O'Brien thanked the work of volunteers with BEC over the past year.
6. Andy O'Brien presented the accounts for the financial year ending 30 April 2016, with an apology for the delay in making them available to members, this was due to staff absence at the accountancy firm, and the complexity of BEC accounts for the last year. BEC has 4 companies, of which 3 are active, and there is a level of lending between these internal companies due to cashflow issues associated with fundraising through bonds, shares and bank loans alongside construction and core costs.
 - a. A question was raised about the purchase of Puriton.
 - Puriton was bought close to the finish of the project, the shares cost £1.5mil, and there were still some construction costs to be paid.
 - b. A question was raised on the tax payments allocated in the accounts.
 - David Bunker explained that this was a notional liability.
 - c. David Bunker highlighted the difficulty of presenting accounts mid-project. By April 2017, a consolidated balance sheet of each subsidiary will be prepared.
 - d. A question was raised on Feed in Tariffs.
 - i. Puriton is currently generating above estimations, and selling the electricity on a Power Purchase Agreement. No FiT has been received yet, as Ofgem are behind on accreditations. Puriton is now accredited, but there is a lag time in providing quarterly readings, and then receiving payments. We are due to receive around £300,000 in November 2016.
 - ii. LWCSF is still awaiting confirmation of accreditation. It is still in the PAC Testing mode, but has been generating electricity. When received, FiT payments will be backdated to 27th June 2016.
 - e. A question was raised on the cost of commercial bank loans, and opportunities to refinance them with more community investment.
 - Refinancing will certainly occur in 2017. For the LWCSF, a major investor was Bristol City Council, with a loan that was always intended to be repaid quickly. A fundraise for this is likely to be launched in February 2017. BEC will also be looking to refinance Puriton, and it is likely that this will be through a bond.All bank financing has been modelled.

- f. A question was raised on what percentage of BEC's installations are bank-owned.
 - DB replied that it was between 60% and 66%.
 - g. A question was asked on how long the financial models for solar panels were.
 - Financial models are based on a 20 or 25 year duration, however the solar panels can continue to produce electricity for up to 40 years, however there is an annual degradation.
 - h. A question was raised on business models without FIT.
 - Things should be clearer next year, BEC is looking into battery storage as an option.
 - i. A question was raised on cashflow, and whether interest payments can be afforded.
 - BEC has adequate cashflow to pay interest payments this year. BEC is also seeking to line up all interested payment dates, so that hereon there will be one annual payment date, regardless of what time of year a share was bought.
7. The annual accounts for the financial year which ended on 30th April 2016 were received. (53 in favour, 1 abstention. This included 17 internet votes).
 8. The AGM approved a return of 5% to be paid to members on their investment for the year 2015-16. (59 in favour, 3 abstentions. This included 19 internet votes).
 9. Peter Thompson presented the resolution on amending the size and composition of the board of directors. The resolution proposes the creation of 2 executive-director posts, to be appointed by, and accountable to, the board, and increasing the size of the board to a maximum of 12 directors, enabling the elected directors to co-opt 2 members, and 2 non-members to the board to fill skills gaps. At any one time, the majority of the board will be members elected from, and accountable to the AGM.
The AGM approved the resolution on board composition, with 53 for, 3 against and 1 abstention.
 - a. A question was raised about the gender balance of the board, and suggestion that this be written into the rules.
Peter Thompson advised that a resolution could be brought to next year's AGM on this. In the meantime, the board are actively looking into increasing diversity on the board, and part of the rationale of being able to co-opt people will be to address diversity shortfalls, and well as skill gaps.
 10. A presentation was made by the 3 of the candidates for the board: David Bunker; Andy O'Brien; Daniella Radice. Peter Thompson read out a statement on behalf of Chris Speller, who was unable to make the meeting.
 11. A short presentation was given by Raquel Messeguer on the TransitionLab events she had coordinated for Bristol Energy Cooperative throughout the year.
 12. A presentation was given by Will Houghton and David Cook and the work and plans of the PV Monitoring Group.
 13. It was announced that David Bunker, Andy O'Brien, Daniella Radice, and Chris Speller were elected, following the counting of in-house votes and online votes).

This completed the statutory business of the AGM.

There was a presentation from Mark Kenber of Mongoose Energy on the state of community-owned renewable energy in the UK, and Mongoose's plans for an electricity-supply company.