



Harborough Energy Ltd Board Meeting 25th May 2021 Minutes

Held on: Tuesday 25th May 2021 at 6pm

Venue: Via Zoom Video Conference

Attendees: Peter Jones (Chair), David Robbins, John Twidell, Gavin Fletcher, Darren Woodiwiss,

Apologies: Neil Burke, Sharon Burke

In Attendance: Amanda May (Street Home Solutions), Donna Hanlon (minutes)

Actions in bold and list of actions at end of minutes

1. Welcome and apologies

PJ welcomed all to the meeting. Amanda May from Street Home Solutions was thanked for attending to update the meeting on the Warm Homes Scheme.

2. Minutes of Board meeting held on 18th March 2021

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate reflection of the last meeting and duly signed by PJ (via electronic-signature).

3. Action Points not covered in Agenda

PJ advised that he is somewhat concerned about getting a reply back to Neil Adams to finally resolve his query. PJ will send Master Accounting a polite chaser. **Action: PJ**

4. Warm Homes / Street Homes Solutions

Amanda May kindly updated the meeting on the Warm Homes scheme, a summary of the key points were as below:

Stats and Trends

- The Covid pandemic has resulted in delays with the provision of statistics.
- Despite strict Covid procedures being in place, many residents have been reluctant to have visitors to their homes to conduct surveys. Reasons for this have included shielding individuals and having children at home. This has resulted in an unusual year which has adversely affected the trends.
- A question was raised regarding numbers of installations carried out so far. DH advised that she had reviewed this in March 2021 and the numbers at that time had been;
Harborough District – 1012 installations
Hinckley and Bosworth District – 352 installations

- It was unanimously agreed that these are impressive numbers that are beneficial in both reducing carbon footprint and helping people save on energy bills.
- AM confirmed that now restrictions are being eased, the numbers are increasing.

Schemes / Background

- LA Flex – This scheme is currently being run for both Harborough District and Hinckley and Bosworth Council.
- The Green Home Voucher Scheme – The government have recently terminated this programme 9 months before it was due to finish. There is a chance a new similar package may be launched in the next 12 months (for people looking for alternative measures such as solar, air sourced heat pumps, double glazing if only single glazed currently etc).
- There should be a new round of funding for LA Flex (ECO 4) in January 2022. This will incorporate measures that have been missed before.
- The EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) process may be amended. There have been issues surrounding the EPC process as current software indicates that if a property was built after 1990 always shows that insulation is in place. This is not always the case. Currently AM has 12 such cases like this ongoing and although this is not substantial, the types of properties these affect have tenants in that will then stay in fuel poverty as nothing can be done to chase landlords. Landlords could face a £5000 fine if it is found that there is no insulation on their properties, however until there is more accurate EPC software, it is hard to pursue this. AM is keeping a record of these cases, is liaising with the councils and will also be using this information for a steering group for Government.
- A query was raised about how the properties are currently assessed. AM explained that due to Covid, an external assessment is carried out in the first instance. This includes a boroscope inspection from outside the property. If no insulation is present then a full technical survey would be arranged where a Surveyor would enter the property with full PPE. Following a query from JT re mould and damp, AM confirmed that amongst other things the Surveyors do look for this. If insulation is needed, air bricks are also fitted to make sure there is plenty of ventilation.
- GF asked if the market has now been exhausted for cavity wall insulation in Harborough and Hinckley District. AM explained that as the scheme has been active in the Harborough District for 4 years, there is now historical data available to follow up on. In addition, as Hinckley and Bosworth only commenced in Autumn 2019, this area has not been explored so much due to the Covid lockdown, therefore there is a lot of scope to follow up on in that area.
- AM advised of a current issue that has arisen where many enquiries are being received from concerned individuals who are receiving cold calls from companies signed up to the Leics County Council framework for Warm Homes. They are contacting Harborough Energy for reassurance that this is legitimate, however this cannot be given as Leics County Council operate their framework differently – the use a list of installers who haven't been vetted and they don't favour one particular company. Some concern was raised about this and whether anything could be done, however GF advised that although this is unfortunate, it is unlikely until the programme finishes. GF suggested that the best option would be to highlight the great things about the scheme we run, rather than asking Leics County Council to change the way they run their programme.

Local Authority Liaison

- AM advised that a monthly report is sent to Harborough and Hinckley and Bosworth Councils detailing installations carried out and carbon savings achieved.
- BEIS (Government Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) have advised that having liaised directly with local councils, Market Harborough is sitting at the top of the leader tables for accessing funds and helping people within the region.

- Due to the success of the Harborough and Hinckley Scheme, Blaby District Council have made contact to see if Street Home Solutions and Harborough Energy can make the same offering for their area.

Blaby District Council

- Blaby District Council have written their Statement of Intent with assistance from Harborough and Hinckley and Bosworth Councils.
- Street Home Solutions are ready to go with running the scheme in this area subject to a MOU being signed by Harborough Energy. All marketing is in place ready to commence.

Credit rating for SHS

- AM explained that the downgraded credit rating for SHS was likely to be a result of the company accounts just having been placed. AM advised that for 6 months of last year there was no work coming in whatsoever due to Covid. Fortunately, due to a home office and self employed staff, there have been little overheads which has meant that they have managed to keep going during this difficult period. Now things are back up and running, figures are coming in to show that this situation is now changing for the better. The Directors all confirmed this was understandable and accepted this explanation.

All present thanked AM for attending. PJ expressed thanks for the impressive work that has been done so far.

AM left the meeting at this point.

Discussion was subsequently held regarding the adoption of Blaby District Council onto the Warm Homes scheme and the signing of the MOU. GF asked the following of the meeting; 1) is the meeting happy to proceed with this and 2) Does My Admin have the capacity to support another Local Authority?

In reply to GF's second question DH advised that the actual Warm Homes work does not take up an enormous amount of time as AM tends to do the majority of what is needed. There will be additional work in terms of enquiries received but this is not an onerous process. There will naturally be some set up work involved to standardise things but once this is all set up it should run like it does in Harborough with little input other than for monitoring purposes.

DR shared his concerns re scaling up any further without any more formal reporting in place. He advised that he is happy to proceed with Blaby, providing quarterly reporting can be set up on areas such as outcomes, payments, measures, complaints etc. PJ agreed that reporting is needed to include numbers by local authority, number of enquiries (for the period and since start of scheme), conversions (for the period and since start of scheme) and energy savings.

JT asked if DH could bring some order into it and ensure regular information is provided. It was highlighted that AM does have this kind of information available as it is provided to the Councils, so it is more a case of managing this more strictly and pulling the information together, rather than starting from scratch.

GF suggested that it would be useful to get hold of some samples of feedback received from customers for each board meeting and also highlight any customer complaints that may have been received.

DR flagged that he would also like to know there are meetings between SHS and the local authorities, as in the MOU there is reference to regular reviews of delivery of service. It needs to be clarified that this is being done prior to signing any further MOU.

In conclusion, it was agreed that DH works with AM to get a formal structure of reporting in place including dates of reports being due, regular updates of any meetings with councils, customer feedback and a six monthly Board catch up with AM to check we are comfortable with how each local authority is being actioned. **Action: DH**

GF advised the meeting that the Warm Homes scheme provides more funding into Harborough Energy than it takes out and he will try to get some more figures regarding this in order for Directors to be able to understand this more clearly. **Action: GF**

It was therefore agreed by all present that subject to the concerns raised about a more formal reporting structure being addressed, then we would proceed with the Warm Homes scheme for Blaby District Council. **Action: DH**

5. Health and Safety Issues

The problems with NBJ were identified as a possible Health and Safety risk which will be looked at again later in the agenda.

6. Treasurer Role & Financial Report

Overview of operating cash flow / balances

GF advised that he will follow up by email with more detailed figures but all seems to be running OK. **Action: GF**

JT proposed that a total figure of £s lost due to the outage at NBJ is established. GF asked JT if he could work out the number of days the system was down for (based on an estimate of solar output for that period). JT kindly agreed to look into this and report back. **Action: JT**

Probate

GF advised that following the recent dealings with the widow of the sadly deceased Member, this lady has decided to have the shares transferred into her name rather than cash them in.

7. Operational Matters

NBJ and fire / failure report

PJ requested views on having an independent assessment on the situation at NBJ to ensure all is now in order. GF advised that NBJ did use an Independent Expert (a company called Howpow, as recommended by EE), but it was agreed that it would be appropriate to arrange a separate review on behalf of Harborough Energy.

PJ advised that an Independent Electrical Engineer would be needed, with no previous connection to the installation or any repairs, in order to offer reassurance that the job has been done properly, it has been signed off for insurance purposes and would meet all the necessary BS requirements for fitness for purpose. Approximate costings would be in the range of £4-600 for such a review. JT added that the report needs to address two areas; 1) an opinion as to why the situation occurred and 2) whether the system is now working correctly and is suitable for purpose.

GF felt that NB believes that the reason why it has happened is that the system was not fit for purpose before the solar was installed. JT said that having had people look at the photographs it could have been due to the wires being bent and tight which could have led to a short on the terminals.

JT raised that in his view morally Western Power should have inspected the whole system at the outset to see if it was suitable. Being such a big organisation with high levels of expertise, it is disappointing that they didn't look at this more carefully.

DH advised that having spoken with NB prior to the meeting and had asked to flag that he did not feel it right to apportion any blame as to who's fault this situation was on this occasion (for insurance purposes). With the benefit of hindsight, it may have changed NB's thought process on the installation of solar in the first place and NB was disappointed about what had happened, but no blame should be apportioned. JT added that the key thing was to understand why it happened and be absolutely clear that the present system is safe.

GF pointed out that there are 3 things to consider; 1) insurance 2) making sure the Directors are now comfortable with the installation 3) what was missed at Harborough Energy when first looking at setting up this system? The question was raised as to whether more should have been done at the outset to ensure that EE (or another party) had looked at both sides to make sure connections could be made in a safe way. DW agreed that this is a due diligence question that should be asked for any future work – ensuring that an inspection of the existing connections is a pre-requisite before any work commences. GF advised that with the benefit of hindsight it was naïve to assume that EE would have made those necessary checks to make sure the system was fit for purpose to connect to. There is probably an 'awkward' middle ground on this where no-one had an obvious role in this matter. DW advised that his view is that there needs to be a much more explicit item in the pre-commissioning in the future that have a full survey of the existing connections is carried out. PJ added that this also should be explicit in the risk assessment.

GF summarised that a lesson has been learnt and this needs to be embedded into future practice. All agreed that an Independent assessment be arranged which would hopefully give both NBJ and the Members some reassurance for the future. PJ offered to research via the IEE website to identify possible options, and DR also suggested looking at Community Energy England to see if they have any specialists. JT also suggested contacting the Fire Service. **Action: DR and PJ**

Some discussion was held regarding any possible insurance claim. It was advised that although NBJ may not feel it to be an insurance issue, some thought needs to go into whether Harborough Energy also wish to give this consideration in terms of loss of earnings or any contributions to repairs. PJ suggested that the first step is to quantify the loss of income and depending on what this is, and providing there is confirmation from NBJ, a view can be taken at that point, potentially taking it as a learning experience without an insurance claim at this time. Initial approximations were made of around £1200 for the loss of income and cost of a review from an Independent expert. GF summarised that initial thoughts seem to be to absorb the loss and draw a line under it, assuming that the costs are as predicted. GF summarised that depending on the outcome of the report, it will give the option to respond to Insurers to say the issue has been dealt with along with the site owner, and having carried out an independent report, no further action will be taken.

DR stressed that it is essential to ensure there are lessons learnt that can be shared with the HS1 AGM. It was also raised whether Archway and Woodnewton should also be considered to see if there are any potential issues with their sites.

DH asked whether the situation with NBJ should now resume as before, in terms of invoicing, or if this should be held off pending a full resolution of the situation. GF advised that the situation needs to be closed off with NB first of all to obtain a formal update on the position of NBJ and their thoughts on costs incurred, the insurance situation and also to advise them of the Independent report that will be commissioned. It was agreed that PJ will draft an email to NB setting out the position and will circulate this to other Directors for approval prior to sending . **Action: PJ**

Technical Update / analytical report on performance

All confirmed OK at Woodnewton and Archway at the moment. JT confirmed all is generating at the moment. Nothing to report on this occasion.

Risk Register

A further date will be needed to set a meeting to review the Risk Register. It was agreed that this would be best held after the issues at NBJ have been fully resolved, in case this brings things to light that need adding to the register.

A proposed date of 20th July be set subject to clarification on holidays etc. **Action: DH**

8. All other bids and Initiatives

Community Benefit Fund

This is on hold pending the depreciation / Neil Adams situation being resolved.

LearnAT and Grant Status

DH has sent a request to Wayne at LearnAT to see if they are now happy for information to be released in the public domain, so that the survey can start to be circulated. PJ will chase this if no reply within the next 7 days. **Action: PJ**

Scraptoft Parish Council

Scraptoft Parish Council had appreciated the visit and advice given by PJ. They have funding available so they will be getting on with this project themselves.

Tugby Parish Council

JT advised that they are going to find out from their Treasurer what their financial state was and would report back to JT to arrange a visit once this had been established.

Big Solar Co-Op

DR had previously circulated a link to a recent webinar held to keep the Board informed on the progress being made at Big Solar Co-op with scaling up. DW added that Low Carbon Oxford recently raised £3 million in a bond to go out and install solar and it was agreed by PJ that there seems to be an appetite for funding at present.

9. Any Other Business

Section 106 grants

Some discussion was held regarding Section 106 grants within Harborough District Council and whether there is an association between Harborough's low carbon objectives and the Section 106 allocations policy. It was agreed that DW would investigate this further. **Action: DW**

Annual Accounts

Annual accounts for Harborough Energy will be needed in good time prior to the Harborough Energy AGM. It was asked to minute that this be flagged with Master Accounting to ensure they are on course to produce these by end of June / early July. **Action GF**

10. Date and location of next meeting

There may be some shorter interim meetings needed due to the issue with NBJ and the LearnAT project but these will be convened as needed.

The next formal Harborough Energy Board meeting is to be confirmed for sometime in September 2021, prior to the AGM.

A possible date to consider is 14th September.

There being no further business, the meeting was duly closed at 19.51.

Signed

Peter Jones (Chair)

Action Points from Board Meeting 25.5.21

Action	Who	By When
Polite chaser message to be sent to Master Accounting re depreciation issue	PJ	ASAP
Work with GF and SHS to agree a more formal reporting structure for Warm Homes scheme	DH	ASAP
Co-ordinate signing MOU for Blaby Warm Homes once reporting set up to satisfaction of Directors	DH	ASAP
Provide an idea of figures relating to cost vs benefit of the Warm Homes scheme	GF	ASAP
Provide up to date financial position	GF	ASAP
Provide an approximate sum of £s lost due to outage at NBJ	JT / GF	ASAP
Identify an Independent Electrical Engineer to undertake work at NBJ	DR / PJ	ASAP
Draft email to NB / NBJ to put together to clarify position re outage and circulate to other Directors for approval	PJ	ASAP
Set date for review of Risk Register	DH	ASAP once NBJ situation clarified
Chase Wayne Burbidge at Wayne AT if no reply	PJ	After half term – w.c 7 th June 2021
Investigate Section 106 grants with Harborough District Council	DW	ASAP
Chase Master Accounting to ensure preparation of Annual Accounts for HE is in hand	GF	ASAP
Set date for AGM and next Board meeting	DH	ASAP