



Chairman's Report to AGM 24th June 2024

SSCES continues to achieve its main aims providing savings to the schools and the community centre and also giving a good return to shareholders. It is proposed to pay the target 6%.

The funds we had transferred to Great Western Credit Union did not get a fair return, so we have recently decided to transfer them back to our other bank account to get a better rate of interest.

We recently decided to make a donation of £5,000 to Somerset Community Foundation in place of our forming our own self-administered fund. This will go to the SCF Environment Fund, which they administer.

We received our annual accounts at the end of May, the delay being due to a family bereavement.

Last year I informed you that John Clark had agreed to take on the role of Treasurer from Chris Adcock who had various other important commitments and so no longer had time to fulfil the role.

As you will see, Chris is again providing our Treasurers report. John Clark nominated Rob Cotterill who agreed to become Treasurer for one year at our Board Meeting on 30th May.

Rob will take on the role after the AGM.

Chris and Zoe will take questions on our finances.

1st Share Issue Refunds

We made refunds in March to those holding shares in our 1st share issue. Most requests were met, but a few were scaled back to ease the cashflow.

We will need to make refunds within the coming year to those members holding shares in our 2nd and 3rd share issues.

I would have preferred to make more changes to our share repayment system to help perpetuate the Community Benefit Society system, rather than continuing to follow the original PEC plan which limited the lifespan of SSCES to the 20 years of the FIT scheme.

Westfield Academy, Yeovil

As I reported last year, the H&S regulations were tightened which made access to roofs without scaffolding not cost effective to carry out routine checks and clean panels.

The leaking roof that I mentioned last year was a pitched roof with a 75-panel array on it. We were requested to remove 15 panels in the area of the leak. The school paid for the scaffolding for that area.

The 15 panels were removed along with their frames and the bird nest material below was blamed for the leaks, as the cleaned roof apparently no longer leaked. The school insisted that we install bird blocker round the 15 panels.

This would not have achieved anything as there was no scaffolding below the adjoining 60 panels so bird blocker could not be installed around the whole array. We decided to minimise our costs and did not have the 15 panels reinstated, but instead we have kept them as spares, as those panels are now obsolete.

There has been no change there on the installation of guardrails and fixed ladders.

Stanchester Academy, East Stoke

Stanchester Academy had become part of Bridgwater College Trust. They updated their IT security and then would no longer allow our remote monitoring of our inverters to operate on their system. Our inverters and panels there are all operating normally, but we cannot remotely monitor them. We have been informed that if we have a new modem installed there, that we will again be able to remotely monitor them. It is intended to have this done asap.

Holyrood Academy, Chard

I had a site meeting at Holyrood with the School Site Manager and our contractor's manager last autumn, regarding access to fix 2 faulty inverters and 2 smashed panels on the Main Block. The School Site Manager told us that they were going to need to install guardrails and fixed ladders on all of their flat roofs within 6 months, so we decided to postpone the necessary roofwork until that was done to save the cost of scaffolding. We are still waiting for that to be done, but I hope it is now imminent. I intend to give an update at the AGM.

The Holyrood Site Manager informed me this spring that their Sports Hall will have to be re-roofed and that this will be done during the schools coming summer holiday. Therefore, our array on the Sports Hall will have to be removed and then reinstated when the re-roofing is completed. This is another unforeseen cost to us, and the Schools Surveyor has just informed me that this will cost us between about £6,000 and £9,000 just for this work, according to tenders he has received.

New Projects

The 2 projects I mentioned last year which we were hoping would proceed both failed to materialise. St Peter's Community Centre in Yeovil, which John Clark had been leading on, told us after his plan had been negotiated and our contractor had done a detailed survey and quote, that they would finance it themselves.

Norton field project appeared to be going ahead with the agreement of the Community Land Trust who own the land, Rob put in a G99 application with National Grid, which cost £500 upfront. Very soon after that the CLT informed us that they had a legal problem with the contract for the land purchase and also a problem with the existing planning permission. We have not been informed that they resolved those issues, and the PP will now have lapsed. The CLT refunded half the cost of the G99 to us.

River Cale Café, Wincanton

John Clark has been leading on a small (25kW) project on a café roof at Wincanton and agreement for it to proceed is awaiting the decision of Wincanton Town Council who own the building. Their meeting coincides with our AGM, so we should know the outcome that evening or the following day. John Clark's report on this follows my report.

Community Energy England

We joined CEE this March which will help us to be better informed on CE issues and to obtain advice and adds a little to their lobbying force.

New Directors and the Future of SSCES

I am again asking that any member who can spare some time to consider joining the Board to please make contact via admin@sscom.energy. As we hold most of our Board and Directors meetings via Zoom, location is much less important than previously. Our current Board are overstretched, and we urgently need more Directors. Sue Shelbourn Barrow, former Chair of Wincanton Town Council, was recruited by John Clark and co-opted to the Board at our meeting on 30th May 2024. Sue was nominated as Chairman and was duly elected. Sue will take over after the AGM.

As previously said, having few local members is a legacy of our 3 share issues being through Ethex. If we fail to recruit more Directors to increase our scale, we may need to merge with another CE group in an adjoining area.

As in past years, to save time, I do not intend to read out my report at the AGM, but I will answer questions. Anyone who wishes to send in questions in advance email Alison at admin@sscom.energy.

John Christmas
6th June 2024

John Clark report on Cale Park Cafe

We are on the point of concluding our first new project since the end of the Feed In Tariffs - the River Cale Café that sits beside Wincanton's recreation field and cricket pitch.

In fact, the Wincanton Town Council is meeting right now with the final approval of the scheme on the agenda.

The project is a 25-kW installation with 60 solar panels on the pitched roof, supplying the Café with electricity via a 3-phase inverter. Any surplus generation goes to export via an approved grid connection.

The Cafe's freehold is with Wincanton Town Council with whom we will have a Roof Lease Agreement; while the Power Purchase Agreement will be with the tenants of the café, as they pay the energy bills.

A reputable local installer, AJM Renewables, is standing by to commence the installation once the two agreements are signed.

The project is funded by reserves so there has been no need for a share or bond issue.

The system is calculated to save 5 tonnes of CO2 every year for the 25-year term that has been agreed between the Parties.