Bookkeeper / Finance Assistant – Job Description

- Job Title: Bookkeeper / Finance Assistant
- Organisation: South Somerset Community Energy Society Limited (SSCE)
- Location: within reach of South Somerset, although most meetings will be online.
- Job Type: Part-Time
- Hours: to be confirmed but typically 15-20 hours per month, as required by the tasking.
- Remuneration: competitive hourly rate
- Reports to: the Board of Directors via the Treasurer [and/or Company Secretary].

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1. About Us

South Somerset Community Energy Society Limited (SSCE) is a not-for-profit Community Benefit Society formed in 2015 to reduce carbon emissions on schools and community buildings, and to contribute to a community fund for environmental projects and the relief of fuel poverty. It is registered with the FCA, number 7075.

Its Rules may be found on its website www.sscom.energy. It is run by volunteer directors, and raises money from investors, who are the Members to whom the Board of Directors is responsible.

In 2015 and 2016, SSCE raised nearly £500k share capital over 3 (diminishing) share offers, and invested in rooftop solar systems on three secondary schools and a community centre in South Somerset. These were helped financially by the Feed-In Tariffs which have now been discontinued. In 2024, SSCE fitted the River Cale Café on Wincanton's recreation area with rooftop solar.

These projects have been maintained over the years since installation: some problems have been encountered and either been overcome or are in the process of being overcome.

The last 9 months have been spent in feasibility and development work on new projects on three more secondary schools in South Somerset (who belong to the Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership (MNSP) multi-academy trust. Four local companies were invited to participate in a formal procurement process, and after the technical spec was refined and as a common line to bid against, preferred bidders were appointed. Unfortunately MNSP started too have doubts about whether the gains were worth the staff overhead, and then the Department for Education (DfE) announced they were suspending all such installations until a common format was agreed nationally. This is expected to be clearer soon, but progress on the project is currently stalled.

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2. Role Overview

We are seeking a detail-oriented and reliable part-time freelance Bookkeeper / Finance Assistant to manage the day-to-day financial operations of our green energy society; managing transactions related to energy generation, feed-in tariffs, and member shares; and maintaining cashflow forecasting tools for existing and potential projects.

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3. Key Responsibilities

3.1. Day-to-Day Financial Management

- Maintain a general ledger by accurately recording daily financial transactions.
- Manage accounts receivable, including chasing outstanding balances (see 3.2).
- Process supplier invoices, verify approvals, and schedule payments.
- Process expenses claims from board members.
- Prepare journals as appropriate to ensure costs and income are recognised in the appropriate accounting period.
- Maintain the Access database of shareholders, including dealing with deceased members and their estates.
- Maintain the financial business plan.
- Ensure all documents are uploaded to the Box cloud filing system.
- Deal with any changes to the bank mandate.
- Manage, with the help of the Admin Assistant and the Treasurer, the payment of interest and capital to shareholders.
- Perform monthly bank, , and balance sheet reconciliations.
- Manage local tax compliance, including VAT returns, and statutory filings.

3.2. Financial management of generated electricity

- Receive readings of generated units (kwh), and of exported electricity units (to the grid) at all our sites; invoice the sites (with the difference between units generated and exported) at the correct rate defined in their Power Purchase Agreements; and submit claims for Feed-In Tariffs and export payments, chasing those responsible when necessary.

3.3. Reporting & Compliance

- Keep a timesheet of hours worked and submit claims monthly for payment by the Board.
- Board meetings are approximately every 6 weeks and there is an Annual General Meeting, usually on Zoom, with face to face meetings once or twice a year. Job holder is required to present monthly board meetings with a summary finance report, and attend for agenda items if not the whole meeting, as requested.

- Assist the Treasurer by maintaining a forward view of cashflow by month for the following 24 months, with the best available information and estimates, and allowing for inflation on the appropriate transactions: alert the board to significant forward financial risks.
- Maintain forward projections by year of accumulated cashflow to the end of the existing projects, with the facility to vary key estimates like the rate of inflation, and grid prices.
- Assist the Treasurer as required with similar forward projections for potential projects to establish viability and profitability: including lessons learnt from the existing projects, and sensitivity studies.
- Prepare draft documentation for year-end independent examination (31st December), and liaise with the examiner to ensure accounts are prepared in good time for the AGM.
- File finalised accounts with the Mutuals Public Register of the FCA.

Requirements & Qualifications##

3.4. Experience & Skills

- Proven work experience as a Bookkeeper, Accounts Assistant, or in a similar financial role.
- Strong hands-on proficiency with Microsoft Word and Excel essential, modern cloud accounting software (e.g. Xero, QuickBooks Online) highly desirable. Familiarity with SAGE accounting.
- Excellent data entry accuracy and a high level of attention to detail.
- Solid understanding of basic bookkeeping principles and statutory tax obligations.

3.5. Attributes & Preferences

- An affinity for or background interest in renewable energy, sustainability, or community co-operative models.
- Ability to reasonably flex other workload at times of urgency.
- Ability to work independently and manage time effectively in a hybrid or remote setting.
- Professional bookkeeping certification (e.g., AAT, ICB, or equivalent) is highly desirable but not absolutely essential.