



Promoting and facilitating environmental sustainability in Swansea

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Executive Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 18th November 2015 at 10am in the Environment Centre, Swansea

Members Present

Deb Hill (Nature Conservation, CCS – **chair**), Philip McDonnell (Swansea Built Heritage Group), Alyx Baharie (SCVS), Delyth Higgins (Sustainable Swansea), Hamish Osborn (NRW), Jill Williams (Housing, CCS), Ben George (Highways, CCS), Tanya Nash (Sustainable Development, CCS), Ant Flanagan (Gower Power Co-op), John Childs (Friends of the Earth), Chris Linley (AONB, CCS)

Pre-meeting Presentation: RWE Innogy UK (Mynydd y Gwair Wind Farm)

Rob Kerr-Bower gave a presentation, accompanied by Angharad Davies. He stated that the company is the largest investor in renewables in Wales and has 7 onshore and 3 offshore wind farms and hydro schemes. It also has 3 wind farms in development including Mynydd y Gwair which involves 16 turbines. The planning for the scheme is in place but are still seeking commons consent. Rob said that the company tries to procure as much as possible locally but the turbines are not made in Wales. The presenters asked for support from SEF and/or individual committee members and presence of a SEF representative at the enquiry, which is likely to be held in the Dylan Thomas Centre. They hope they will be able to benefit from information exchange with SEF and, if successful, will want to discuss the community benefit scheme with SEF. They agreed to forward the presentation for circulation to the committee.

ACTION: After the presenters left the meeting, it was agreed that SEF should send a letter of support for the project to the inspector and several members agreed to contribute to this.

1. Apologies for Absence

Chris Howell (Waste, CCS), Gail Evans (Housing, CCS), Rebecca Wright (NRW), Andrew Davies (ABMU), Rosy Steel (Gwalia)

2. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

PM reported that the WG Small Environment Grant application made by Jenny was unsuccessful but that we are still awaiting news on the Postcode Lottery application.

PM submitted a SEF response to the City Centre Framework consultation.

DH reported that a new Environment Centre manager had been appointed and will start on 7th December.

ACTION: It was agreed that PM should continue to work on some of the SEF administrative work previously undertaken by Jenny until the new Centre Manager settles into the post. It was suggested that the Centre contract remain at 1 day a week until January but that she take on staff and project management straight away.

HO reported that they had recently taken on an assistant and offered some of her time to help with SEF work. PM suggested that help with maintain websites and social media would be useful.

PM reported that a further meeting to develop the tertiary level of the driver diagram for Outcome F is still to be organised but that the diagram will be the focus of discussion at the next Coordinators' meeting – taking place in December. TN expressed uncertainty whether that meeting was going ahead. She also reported that she is working with Liz and Dave on a pathway to the new Wellbeing Plan and that consideration is to be made as to whether the current outcomes of the One Swansea Plan need to be revisited. TN also said that the new Wellbeing Act highlighted community engagement and that this might offer an opportunity for SEF. DH raised concern that SEF retains a place on the new PSB. There is clearly still uncertainty about the makeup of this, including possible links to NPT.

HO suggested that SEF should perhaps respond to the consultation on the national indicators for the Wellbeing Act and agreed to circulate the web link to this.

CL reported that decisions on representation for the Rural Development partnership had not yet been announced.

DH reported that she had not yet completed a paper on the pros and cons of Biosphere status and other schemes so would present this at the next Exec meeting.

JW reported that a new lead had been appointed for the More Homes Project – Carol Morgan. TN suggested that there was growing support for high environmental standards and future proofing in the new council housing being built and JW confirmed that the team are now looking at a range of alternatives, including passive housing.

3. Executive Committee Members and Roles

a) Confirming elected and co-opted members

PM reported that as part of the process of changing cheque signatories, the bank requires details of the current Exec. members. This highlighted the need to have greater clarity about who is on the Exec., who they represent and whether they are elected or co-opted, or just a second to another member. He said that a few people who had left the area or the organisation they had represented have now been removed from the list. It was agreed that the new Centre Manager would be invited to join. Paul Mellor will no longer be a formal member of the committee but will remain on the circulation list and attend when relevant. PM will now formally represent the Swansea Built Heritage Group rather than PMDevelopments and it was also suggested that CL and DH might seek to represent partnerships rather than be co-opted as CCS representatives in order to gain a better balance between elected and co-opted members and a better balance between representatives of public and voluntary sector bodies. PM will speak to a couple of other listed members to clarify their position and type of representation.

b) Electing chair, vice-chair, treasurer and secretary

DH called for volunteers to take up these positions. It was agreed that DH should continue as chair and HO agreed to take on the position of vice-chair. PM pointed out that Jenny had officially been treasurer and as part of the contract with the Centre had undertaken the functions of the secretary. He suggested that whilst these areas of work might be undertaken by the Centre it would be healthier for these roles to be held by different committee members. AB offered to be treasurer, as she was now becoming a signatory, as long as the amount of work involved was limited.

4. Updates on SEF Projects

a) Sustainable Swansea

DHig circulated a report on the work from September to November highlighting a local litter pick; recycling and energy efficiency drop-in days held at the Centre; and plans for a food workshop and clothes workshop;. She also updated on progress with the new green map for the city centre area and work undertaken with Gower College.

ACTION: It was agreed that a Sustainable Swansea Steering Group meeting be held soon after the new Centre Manager begins.

b) Renew Wales

DHig reported that the current phase was ending in December but that additional funding had been secured to continue until March 2018 and that SEF could apply to continue. It was agreed that we should continue supporting the project, which extends DHig's hours and provides a small amount of additional funding for SEF.

c) Community Green Spaces

Lea had provided a brief report for the meeting which was circulated.

d) Clear Streams

DHig reported that the latest Digital Streams exhibition was launched at the end of October and was on display in the Centre. It was suggested that this should go to other venues too. TN suggested that in future Digital Streams projects there might also be recording made to capture an oral record from those involved. PM reported that he and Jenny had been maintaining the Clear Streams Facebook page. HO reminded the committee that SEF has a commitment to maintain Clear Streams as part of the grant funding from NRW.

e) Low Carbon Swansea

PM reported that the next LCS network/training event would take place on 9th December at the new Bay Campus and would be on the theme of Smart Grid, energy storage and Smart living. PM pointed out that LCS training was now CPD-certified through support from Cynnal Cymru. TN said that LCS was on track for achieving its targets for the year. JC informed the group about a series of events in Swansea to mark the UN COP in Paris.

5 Finances and Funding

a) Report on 2015/16 accounts

PM explained that he was still working on getting to grips with the SEF budget and accounts. He raised the issue that the two Sustainable Swansea staff were now eligible for annual bonuses under the Environment Centre's terms and conditions. This would equate to £250 in December and should really be met by SEF. He also raised concern that SEF's reserves policy did not accommodate sufficient to cover the potential redundancy costs for these two officer which, from April 2016, would exceed £3,000.

ACTION: It was agreed that SEF cover the cost of this year's staff bonus for the Sustainable Swansea officers and that PM would prepare a strategy for building an reserve to cover redundancy payments.

b) Update on funding applications

PM reported that Jenny with support from a small group of representatives from SEF and the Centre had started work on a major Big Lottery grant application. PM had picked up work on this but it was agreed that we should now involve the new Centre Manger in its development. TN suggested that there may be opportunities for SEF to

explore ways to offer support the Council as part of its Environment and Sustainable Development Grant from Welsh Government.

6. Updates from Strategic Partnership Activities

a) LSB / Single Integrated Plan

There was some associated discussion during matters arising but no further report.

b) Swansea Healthy City

PM reported on an initial working group meeting that took place to discuss how SEF's might support the elements it had agreed to lead on. It was not yet clear what approach might be most appropriate. DH suggested that a further meeting should be held soon.

7. SEF Public Seminars

a) Feedback from AGM event

There was concern that this was poorly attended and comparison made to the previous seminar event on energy. There was some discussion about the themes chosen, the venue used and the marketing of SEF events.

b) Proposals for seminars in 2016

There was some discussion about possible themes and how to determine what people wanted. One suggestion was wind energy projects such as Mynydd y Gwair and Awel Aman Tawe but it was agreed not to hold a seminar in February, as previously suggested.

ACTION: It was agreed that future seminars will be put high on the agenda for the next meeting.

8. Any Other Business

Swansea Bay Water Quality – HO reported that good progress had been made with this SEF 'big issue' and that water quality in Swansea bay had now moved to 'good status'.

Green Economy Conference – JC asked about this recent event in Swansea. DH said she had only heard about it last minute.

Designated Landscapes Review – CL reported that the review had made 69 recommendations. It is proposed that AONB's will need to incorporate wellbeing, enjoyment and economic benefits. A national working group has been established to look at the implementation of the recommendations.

RSPB/Aldi Education Officer – DH reported that a new officer had been appointed and would be based in her office. She will work with all schools in Swansea and work on connecting people to wildlife and green spaces.

Dates of 2016 SEF Executive Committee Meetings:

Thursday 21st January 2016

Thursday 17th March

Thursday 19th May

Thursday 21st July

Thursday 15th September

Thursday 17th November

(All at 10am in the Environment Centre)