



Annual Network Meeting

Monday 19th June 2017 7.45pm Malvern Cube, Malvern

1. Present

Dinah Sage
Simon Vaughan-Spencer
Tessa Maskell
Derek Wolfendale
Pam McCarthy
Susan Amos
Brian Harper
Jane Green
William Tooby
Jonathan Penley
Ginny Lee
Ian Caldwell
Robin Coates

+ two more

Jon Halle giving talk.

Two others came to the talk but did not stay for the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

None received.

3. Sustaining the energy - Jon Halle

Jon Halle from Sharenergy gave an interesting talk on Sustaining the Energy - how to keep building community renewable energy in turbulent times.

Sharenergy has helped 35 community energy projects to raise £17 million, the investors typically gaining 4% annualised.

Government policy has contributed to making most community energy projects financially unviable. Feed-in tariffs have been cut to a level too low to sustain projects, the Renewable Obligations Scheme stopped, and onshore wind and solar are no longer eligible for Contracts for Difference, which stabilise revenue.

In England, even minimal opposition to onshore wind turbines or solar panels means planning permission is refused, though this is not the case in Scotland and Wales.

Offshore wind fares better.

By a quirk in the law, state schools which install solar panels are subject to business rates, whereas private schools, being charities, are exempt.

For the first time recently over half the electricity used in a day in Britain came from renewable sources.

What can be done?

Cut overheads by amalgamating to form larger co-ops.

Operate more rigorous price control.

Pick winners eg Oldham Community Power is working with the council to install solar panels on council owned rooves. (This includes schools, as a community benefit society is not charged business rates!)

Go for projects where most of the energy can be used by the project.

And in other countries...

Spain has a project going even though it pays no interest and receives no subsidies, the only monetary advantage is a marginally lower rate for electricity.

The Danish government pays for the infrastructure needed for off-shore wind farms.

The cost of battery storage is coming down slowly, but is likely to be economic for vehicles before homes.

4. Zero Carbon Britain - Making it Happen - Robin Coates

The latest version of these thorough, evidence-based studies from the Centre for Alternative Technology concentrates on how to overcome barriers to making it happen - eg we seem locked in to petrol because it is available anywhere, in contrast to charging points for electric vehicles.

The complete report or a summary can be downloaded for free from

<http://www.zerocarbonbritain.org/en/>

5. Gas lamps and thermal energy surveys - Brian Harper

With the help of Transition Malvern Hills, Brian rescued Malvern gas lamps, achieving a 70% reduction in gas consumption and an 80% cut in maintenance costs. Gas lamps are more friendly to wildlife than the blue rich LEDs. Bats hunt alongside them, but not by sodium lamps.

Brian has invented electric lamps which are indistinguishable from gas lamps, and are being used in Nottingham and on Malvern's Route to the Hills.

The project for thermal imaging of houses on the inside, to find out how best to minimise heat loss, ran out of funding in Malvern, but has been taken up by Bristol, the council contributing £20,000 a year.

This culminated in an accredited course for people working for a community interest group in Bristol. The kit costs £300, a miniature thermal imaging camera fits onto an iPhone, and the blower door has been redesigned so the whole pack will fit onto a bicycle (removes parking problems!). Three houses a day can be assessed, at a cost of £70 - £80 - more for large houses, free for fuel poverty.

There is interest from Oxford, Vancouver and Plymouth, and the project has been featured on BBC Future.

Hopefully the scheme will be able to return to Malvern.

6. Chair's report

Transition Malvern Hills has been going for ten years. Global warming is now mentioned daily, though the government is stalling on action.

Thank you to the active core of 4-5 members, who are concentrating on keeping the message alive locally.

Thank you, Jon for the interesting talk. And thanks to Robin and Brian for their talks.

The full report is on the website.

7. Car Club

There are currently 14 cars and 93 households. The cars have been upgraded, and are much nicer. They run at an average of 43mpg.

An electric car and electric bikes are also available.

8. Gardenshare

Posters have been put up.

There have been a couple of offers of gardens, but no gardeners have come forward.

9. Inner Transition

Raphael is stepping down.

Inner Transition (originally Heart and Soul) has been going since TMH began. Twelve to twenty participants come to each event. Last year's sessions were on the theme of getting back in touch with ourselves and nature.

Next Monday's Bring and Share (7.30pm, Cube), will be the last unless there are suggestions - and volunteers - on how to continue.

Celebrations of the Celtic Festivals, led by Emma Gathergood, are likely to continue.

10. Repair Café

The Repair Café is flourishing. The BBC video received 1 million hits.

11. Approval of minutes of 28th September 2016

The minutes of the 28th September 2016 were accepted as an accurate record. Proposer Ian Caldwell, seconder Pam McCarthy.

12. Matters arising from the minutes

Covered elsewhere.

13. Receive the independently examined accounts

The accounts were accepted. Proposer Ginny Lee, seconder Robin Coates.

The workshops made about £50.

The balance is about £1000.

Support can be offered to environmental projects, eg a home-made wind turbine at the Fold.

14. Receive and vote on any proposals to change the Constitution

None.

15. Elect officers of the Association

Chairperson: Ginny Lee intends to stand down. As no volunteers were forthcoming, she suggested a rotating chair. As TMH is not a charity, it does not have to abide by the Charity Commission’s rules, which insist on a Chairperson. The Co-ordinating Group will meet soon to clarify this.

Treasurer: Ian Caldwell was unanimously approved.

Secretary: Dinah Sage was unanimously approved.

16. AOB

None

17. Date of next meeting

Co-ordinating Group to meet soon to clarify whether a chairperson is needed, and find one if necessary.

Annual Network Meeting will be held about this time next year

Signed.....

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