**Transition Town Energy group**

**Thursday 28 Jan at 17a Silchester Road, TN38 0JB**

*Next meeting – 18 th Feb @ 7 - 8.30 pm Silchester Mews, St Leonards TN38 0JB.*

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| **Attended**  Richard Watson (RW)  John Lynes (JL)  Felicity Laurence (FL)  Nick Teirdre (NT)  Tim Fisher (TF)  Tim Godwin (TG)  Mike Ryan (MR)  Julia Hilton (JH)  Apologies :- Andrew Conway  Chair : Mike Ryan  Minutes : Richard Watson | Abbreviations  Transition Town Hastings TTH  Energise Sussex Coast ESC  East Sussex County Council ESCC  Hastings Borough Council HBC  Rother District Council RDC  Local Authorities LAs  Amber Rudd AR  Secretary of State SoS  Green Deal /Energy Company Obligation GD/ECO  Feed in Tariffs FiTs  Department for Energy and Climate Change DECC |

**Agenda -** Update to action points agreed at October meeting – special focus on identifying a popular local project that AR would support..

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| **October 2015 Minutes** | **Jan 28, 2016 Update** | |
| 1. Reaction to meetings with AR in Sept/Oct 2015 re Gov policy on feed in tariffs, end of tax relief schemes, Green Deal etc | TG – who worked for Solar Century has an ongoing correspondence with AR  ESC responded to FiT consultation, wrote a letter to AR saying the Community energy biz model was now broken (supporting energy saving schemes via profits from community renewable generation projects) and had a meeting with AR in Nov -15 ( details available) AR’s argument was that the Climate Change Levy was overspent, retaining high FiTs wouId put up residential bills, and If the returns on community solar projects were enough to fund fuel poverty reduction then they were too high. Recent DECC data obtained via FOI requests suggest that deployment of renewables has contributed to lower household energy bills (not the increase claimed by Gov) | |
| Chair (MR) said AR was impressive, whatever her politics, and an effective MP. We should try and keep climate change and fuel poverty apolitical and make full use of having an SoS as MP | RW confirmed that AR had offered her personal support to ESC for Hastings projects that reduced fuel poverty – and Hastings has ( at a rough estimate) 20,000 homes needing major energy efficiency improvements and 15- 20,000 vulnerable people in fuel poverty or precariously close (very rough estimates). Since the closure of the GD/ECO scheme there is no (Gov) agency actively improving UK homes to save energy. Communities need to act and put pressure on | |
| 1. Consensus was to present AR with a local project to support – not just ask for a meeting | TG shared the “politician as a balloon tied to a rock” metaphor. Move the balloon and it bounces back to where it was, move the rock and the balloon goes with it. Our “”rock” is the popular local energy project we need to find. | |
| 3a ***What is the local project (s) ?***  A: Divestment into a regional energy company | 1. JH suggested that divested council pension funds could support a regional energy company – see Green Party London Energy Company proposal and switched on London <http://switchedonlondon.org.uk/about-us/> - Agenda item for next meeting 2. Others confirmed that leader of HBC agreed at Divestment group meeting on 27.1.16 to lobby ESCC pension fund board following HBC council vote \*(in April) tbc 3. It was noted that other towns and cities ( Bristol, Plymouth, Peterborough, Nottingham) all had different variants of the Local Energy company model 4. **Action Point** RW to invite Alistair Mcpherson of Plymouth Energy Community to talk to council leaders and execs (at workshop arranged by TTH /ESC (April?) – Next meeting Agenda item - <http://www.plymouthenergycommunity.com/> 5. **TF** wondered if teachers, fire service, council employees could also lobby for divestment as their pensions are managed by ESCC. **Action Point** – link with Hastings Divestment group on this? MR/JH 6. **Chair MR** confirmed that divesting into something positive for the region ( like energy or home retrofits) was essential | |
| B A de-carbonisation route map for Hastings and Rother (cost £ 15k +) – see Bristol version enclosed – would be a good starting point ( called a Stern mini review of the economics of de-carbonising housing, transport etc , what are the long term benefits and costs) | B Prof Andy Gouldson (Cabot institute, Bristol and Leeds Uni) is lead author on Bristol report (enclosed as part of Bristol city review ) and has been linked to RW by Rachel Crossley. Budget for this low carbon route map included by HBC in EU grant application (decision Sept 2016) **Action Point.** RW to send proposal to RDC. Look for other funding ? (e.g Your Energy Sussex)  *This is a strategic level decision – so needs buy in from LA’s, therefore not a priority project for AR support now?* | |
| F ***schools education project*** – link with ECO schools | 1. MR/JL reminded us that Linda Jeal was now an ECO schools assessor and many Hastings Academy primary schools were ECO schools – but it was rather disjointed. **Action Point.** Group to catch up with Linda 2. TG is working with Sustrans and HUB with 5 local schools (bikes for pupils) and said school projects are expensive and need a maven/champion within the school. Any curriculum material would need to have funding and be professional 3. JL who has worked on popular teaching materials for Universities said that well produced material was always welcomed. 4. We agreed it would be fun to work on a “booklet” for schools but this needs much more discussion and a working group. 5. RW said schools with solar panels have display monitors but little explanation for pupils. British Airways offered to produce glossy information boards about solar energy (as BA supported the 600 solar PV panels on a Bexhill school) but would need the designs and texts. **Action Point** TG offered to check what school materials Solar Century had done in the past. Agenda item. What materials could we produce for schools? Who will volunteer to be on a working group? Is this a TTH sub group?   *This is early stage – so not a priority project for AR support* | |
| C A Hastings Warm Home campaign and petition | C. ESC /TTH campaign to reduce energy starts with Hastings Big Happy Energy Day on 17 Feb at Sussex Coast College, Station Plaza. *Please promote this through your networks!* Wellbeing and community energy champions to run energy desks to help residents stay safe, well, warm and save money. Signposting to grants, debt relief and other free help (including free Winter Home Check for elderly or those on benefits - funded by ESCC). Yoga and movement workshops and other wellbeing stands. Free energy bill training to be offered at Silchester Road from 10 Feb – contact RW if interested in training and help desk volunteering.  JH/FL had other suggestions for the event – workshop on low carbon living by BBM architects, Ian Mackay, @ Brighton Uni? **Action point** RW to contact  Children’s energy game pioneered at summer event? Ask Steve and Chris/Charles  TG linked RW to Active Hastings and Eugene Demelza (already contacted)  *AR invited but out of the country – Mayor and Peter Chowney, leader of HBC to introduce and open the event* | |
| D A District Heating opportunity at Hollington ( Four Courts) – 400 flats with 20 year old central gas boilers that need replacing. | D. District Heat scheme and feasibility study proposed to Amicus but they were not keen on outside intervention– **Action Point**. RW to contact Amicus again. This project supported by OST energy, Brighton. Needs volunteer with technical expertise! AR could provide strategic support for project. HBC can access DECC funds, ESC can apply for Urban Community Energy Fund –  *Great local project but a non-starter without Amicus buy in. Too soon for AR support* | |
| E A project with Conquest hospital – to replace their CHP system and save £ 600k a year | E. **Action Point**. RW to contact Board of Governors – help needed with NHS contacts! We need inside knowledge. Who is responsible for hospital energy? What happened to the Schneider PFI deal? This is an area where AR support could be helpful but a lot still needs to happen. Not a quick win | |
| F A local community supported Big Energy Switch campaign – part of a national scheme but with some money coming back to the local economy | There is a Big Switch going live on 22 Feb – open till midnight March 6 – with national marketing starting from Feb 8. We can sign residents up from then, at the 17 Feb event, up till March 6. Landing pages will be ready for us to use by Feb 8. Current comparison site ESC landing page is [http://community-energy-south.myutilitygenius.co.uk/energise-sussex-coast.html](http://community-energy-south.myutilitygenius.co.uk/energise-sussex-coast.html%20) - please try this out and give us feedback (but this is not the Big Switch campaign but a permanent switching link) The Big Switch will have a 100% green tariff and cheap tariff available on the new page Local group could earn up to £ 10 per switcher. **Action Point**. TG possibly interested in being part of a local marketing campaign. Details to be confirmed 8 Feb. If we can get 1000 residents to switch that would be £ 10 k for local projects  *This is a quick win that Amber Rudd would most likely support. If the 75% of Hastings homes that have not switched in 2 years were to switch that would release 7.4 mil back into the local economy annually!* | |
| G Eco show home event in Hastings and St Leonards ( similar to Brighton/Lewes/ Rye ) 10 homes open to the public for 1 weekend per year – see enclosure | All agreed – this needs to link with the Urban Design Group and Ken Davis.  All agreed - This is do-able in Hastings but needs a budget ( around £ 20 k)  RW - Grants were available from the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) in Bristol ( for £ 20 k) HBC is potentially able to co-fund this if successful with EU grant application ( Sept 2016) **Action Point** Ask UDG and wider group if a volunteer would be willing to help take this on/apply for CSE grant etc | |
| AOB – Community Garden scheme started in St Leonards, Warrior Square Station  Consensus for a quick win attainable project is a community tariff ( not just the switching campaign) | | Diocese of Chichester, Sara Stonor, HBC, Amicus Horizon very keen to support community growing projects in Hastings and St L. Grants available – sites suggested ( Hollington Raised Beds, Quantock Gds in Ore, New Horizons school). RW suggested that while TTH was building a track record of projects ESC could be the applicant for any neighbourhood grants for garden schemes, ECO open home schemes etc as long as they fitted with the ESC community benefit co-op aims ( these are pretty similar to TTH) |