

# EKREG Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2020

Present: Alasdair Bennett ('Chair'), Jerry Barnes, Rhona Elder and Rob Lee

Venue: Remote working: video conference via Zoom

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## 1. Apologies for Absence

- None applicable

## 2. Minutes and actions agreed/outstanding at previous meeting (Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> April)

- No actions remain outstanding

## 3. Treasurers' Report

- Expenditure against account was reported and the current balance approved

## 4. Correspondence with wind farm operators/developers

- Nothing to report

## 5. CSO

### - Model Rules - FCA Update and IP Discussion

'Rob's Rules' to underpin multi-community BenComm's for CSO had been modified and submitted for FCA approval (requiring the payment of the £950 sponsorship fee levied by the FCA). Input received from DTAS/CSS and their legal representatives focused on a set of 'more generic' rules for possible sponsorship by DTAS/CSS.

### - Funding Streams

No updates to report

### - FLS/MCS Update

Exploration of micro-hydro on FLS-land had raised ownership and infrastructure/lease issues that suggest without major changes to revenues from the hydro power (such as subsidy or VPW) such community systems will remain uneconomic. Informative discussions with Energy Local – a Welsh-based operator – suggest that opportunities to locally pursue a local hydro/private wire distribution network suffer from a number of hurdles. Further exploration of the opportunity will be pursued 'in the background' as feed-back on possible solutions & opportunities identified by Energy Local allow.

## 6. BaT3

### - LES/CARES Grant

The required month 1 report had been submitted in accordance with the demands of the grant. The key issue raised was the delay in feedback on tender documents submitted to LES, this is now promised within the fortnight and will enable the required tenders to be serviced for legal and financial support to further BaT3 discussions.

### - VAT Registration

Review of the received LES/CARES documentation had revealed the grant approved will service VAT payments for non-VAT-registered bodies. For this reason, it was unanimously agreed that VAT registration was unnecessary at this time, and the subject of VAT registration should be put 'on hold' until such time as review is prudent due to changed circumstances.

- **Tender Documents**

See above: Documentation underpinning the tender for advisors had been submitted to LES/CARES for approval, and was currently under scrutiny by recently engaged internal financial advisor with FCA expertise. Feedback expected prior to next EKREG meeting

- **CC Charitable Bodies**

No updates to report

- **C-19 concerns**

Concerns over SPR plans to recommence work on BaT3 in the immediate future using (a largely) imported Irish workforce had been conveyed to all impacted community councils. In parallel, understandable concerns had been raised by elements of the community on social media. It is understood that the re-instigation of works has been postponed by a week, at least, to allow SPR to review the situation in the light of the local concerns raised and to seek additional clarification on Scottish Government return-to-work guidelines.

7. **Clachaig Glen (RWE/Abundance)**

- AB had made contact with Abundance/EoN to explore C-19 impacts on timelines, but no response yet received

8. **Tangy IV**

- AB had made contact with SSE to explore C-19 impacts on timelines, but no response yet received.

9. **NDA Update**

No updates to report

10. **Communications & Marketing**

- **Marketing**

No updates to report

- **Engagement Strategy**

No updates to report

- **Briefings/CC MoUs**

Responses from S. Knapdale CC and Gigha CC were awaited. No further correspondence from T&SDT had been received.

- **Website**

The addition of project-specific pages to the EKREG part of EK website was discussed. It was agreed that a new project-specific information element should be added to present high-level news/progress updates on specific EKREG projects as they come on-stream

12. **AOB**

- The company's providers of Directors and Officers Liability/Professional Indemnity insurance had been updated on EKREG progress to date, and had reconfirmed the premium applicable for annual cover.

- Clarification of position on promised 'outstanding' funding for Cour CBF payments was still awaited from Octopus Investments
- Planning permission recorded by SPR for a meteorological mast to be sited on FLS land between Skipness and Tarbert, had been quickly followed by the anticipated permission for a scoping study to underpin a windfarm development designated as Earraghail. An objection over the visual impact of such a development at Earraghail had been filed by EKCC for the meteorological mast PP.
- Concerns had been conveyed to the Chair of EKREG by impacted CCs over developers potentially using the Scottish Governments' C-19 Emergency Measures as a means to circumnavigate the need for public meetings and hearings as part of the planning process. It was unanimously agreed that this practice was unacceptable and that normal planning procedures should be, and will need to be, strictly adhered to by all developers regardless of the SG Emergency Measures in place at the moment. It was agreed that the CCs, supported by EKREG, should endeavor to monitor the situation.

No other matters were tabled at this meeting

#### 14. **DONM**

Wednesday May 20<sup>th</sup>, 10.00 via Zoom [JB to host]