



2017

AGM Reports



Report from the Chair



We would like to report a long hot summer, a huge amount of green energy generated and wonderful returns for our investors and the community fund. Sadly, we can't do that this year. Instead we have had to deal with a succession of problems which have, in the short term, limited returns to investors.

We have received a lower income than we anticipated. The government reduced the Levy Exemption Certificates Scheme which effectively reduced our receipts by 0.5%. During the last 2 years sunshine has been 5% below average levels for the last 30 years. Oil prices have significantly lowered which has led to lower energy prices and lower export tariff revenues. As well as all this we had a significant capital overrun on Braydon Manor due partly to having to reroute grid connections to protect listed trees.

However, we have identified ways in which we hope to improve financial performance going forward. If we refinance our loans — perhaps managing a joint deal with other members of MCEM — we may be able to achieve a significantly lower interest rate on our bank loans. Similarly, as part of MCEM we may be able to negotiate scaled Operational and Management contracts, insurance and Power Purchase Agreements. You can find more information about MCEM and Mongoose on a separate information sheet, together with information about Neville Registry, who will be managing information and payments to shareholders in the future. We are also investigating the possibility of direct sales of energy from Chelworth to businesses on the Chelworth Industrial Estate and will look for opportunities to use batteries. We will shortly be installing a new Performance monitoring system which will give us half hourly reports on performance and immediate warnings of any problems on all our solar arrays. An added advantage of our new system will be a link to our website — you will all be able to monitor performance at any time of day.

Land Management Report

One of the core objectives within the goals of WWCE is to advance, promote and further the conservation, maintenance and long-term protection of wildlife and its habitat. The WWCE board has this year formed a sub-committee to oversee the ongoing land management activity at the Chelworth and Braydon Manor sites. The aim is to ensure that we deliver against our planning obligations and realise the potential of our current, and any future, sites to protect wildlife and its habitats. The group has representation from WWCE, the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (WWT) and our asset management provider Mongoose Energy.

We are now in the process of consolidating land management plans for both sites. We need to ensure we have an adequate budget going forward and then to monitor the on-going land management activity to ensure it is delivering in line with our plans. Ecological reports and observations suggest that biodiversity continues to increase on both sites. At Chelworth the pond is establishing well with wildlife moving in. Brown hares and roe deer have been spotted at Chelworth and at Braydon Manor. At Chelworth sheep grazing will continue again this year.

The land is being managed to ensure the development of a diverse species-rich grassland. In August this year we spread 'green hay' cut from the nearby WWT Avis Meadow grassland site to encourage wildflower development. We are pleased to report that our efforts on biodiversity extend beyond the boundaries of our own part of the Braydon Manor site; the owner of the other half of the solar farm has shown an interest in our work and we will be working with him to extend the wildflower seeding to this part of the wider site.

We have installed bird boxes (including a barn owl box) and bat boxes at appropriate sites in Braydon Manor, just as we have previously in Chelworth. We've also been sharing our efforts on biodiversity with others: in June board member Rob Gillies and Chair Lesley Bennett attended a seminar organised by Westmill Sustainable Energy Trust (WeSET) in Swindon on 'Solar power and Biodiversity: Maximising the benefits'. We enjoyed discussing our progress and future plans with representatives from other community benefit solar groups, ecology and biodiversity experts and academics.

We will work to improve and integrate land management plans and an on-going ecological monitoring regime timed to feed in to annual budget setting so that we can make sure we are keeping our conservation and biodiversity objectives uppermost in our financial planning. We will also be looking at sources of additional funding for further land management work so we would be very interested if members have any ideas or contacts on funding sources for biodiversity work.

Rob Gillies, Chair Land Management Group



*Braydon Manor after construction 2016
(credit: P Medlock)*



*Braydon Manor, summer 2017 (credit:
P Medlock)*

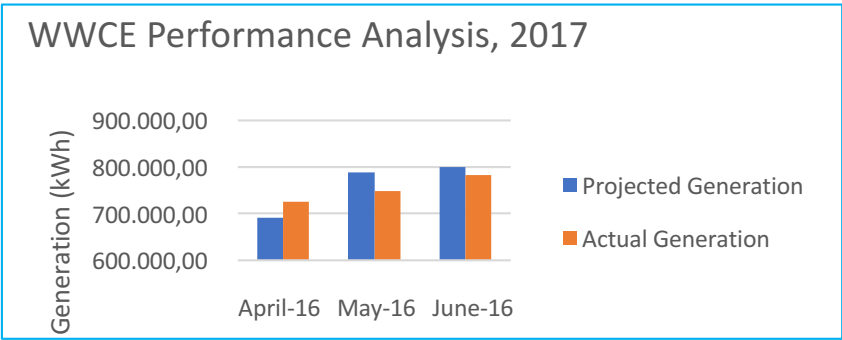
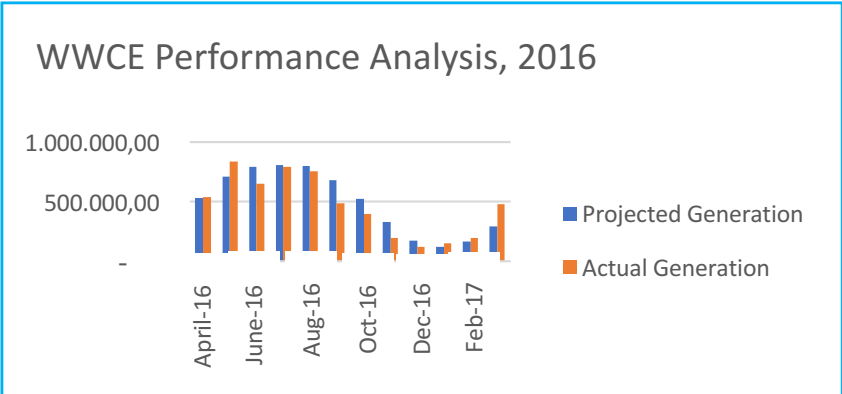


WWCE Performance, Financial Year to 2016 and afterward

Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy's Financial year for 2016 saw the performance of its two ground mount assets, Chelworth Solar Farm and Braydon Manor Community Solar Farm, perform slightly below target output for the year. Over the year, the 6MW of power that is installed across both sites generated a total of 94.4% of target output.

The driver of underperformance was largely lower than expected irradiation levels at the sites, something which was consistent across much of the South West region. Particularly damaging for the sites' output was an extremely poor June, where cumulatively the sites produced just 81% of expected output. With the summer months contributing such a large amount of each sites' yearly production, this had a significant impact on the sites' underperformance. By way of comparison, generation in June 2017 saw generation 19% higher than June 2016. In total, irradiation levels were 4.8% lower than forecast. In addition to lower than anticipated irradiation levels, there were 2 issues which impacted the performance at Braydon Manor during April 2016. These two incidents, both of which were caused by DNO works, caused a loss of around 2% of WWCE's annual production. While grid issues are largely unavoidable, the combination of these two issues were significant, and unlikely to reoccur to the same extent in future years.

Over the first few months of 2017, the WWCE portfolio has performed better in comparison to 2016, generating 99.07% of target generation. Over this time, irradiation has been on target. Performance at the two sites will continue to be monitored over the coming weeks and months to ensure that performance improves moving into the second half of 2017. The panels at Chelworth Solar Farm have also recently been cleaned, which it is hoped will improve performance at the site.



Community Fund Group

The Community Fund Group was established by WWCE following last year's AGM. It is a sub-committee of the Board and comprises two members nominated by the Board, two members elected at the Annual General Meeting and one nominee of the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust.

The objectives of the Community Fund are to encourage and support local communities and voluntary groups to take initiatives in wildlife conservation, climate change mitigation, reduction in carbon emissions (including local food, transport and waste projects), the alleviation of fuel poverty and the promotion of environmental sustainability. The Community Fund Group has met six times during the year and completed a considerable amount of work on policies and procedures including design of the application form, a guide for applicants, a grant offer document, an application check list, monitoring and evaluation and publicity material.

We are now launching the Community Fund at the 2017 Annual General Meeting. The principal decision made so far is that normally individual grants will not exceed £5,000 nor be less than £500.

This is a new fund and policies and procedures will need to be modified in the light of experience during the coming months. Currently the Community Fund has received £45,000. 20% of this goes directly to the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and the remaining £36,000 (together with a donation from one member who has very generously commuted her interest payment to the Fund) is available as grants. The Community Fund and grant applications are being administered by the Wildlife Trust who will receive a fee for the processing of applications.

Peter Newell, Chair Community Fund Group

WWCE is most grateful to all members of the Community Fund Group who together with staff of the Wildlife Trust have made much valued contributions during the year.

Photos: Braydon Manor 2017
Credits: Pete Medlock

