

Meadows Ozone Energy Services Ltd (Mozes) Annual Report 2013-14

This is the fifth full year where Mozes has been running as a constituted body. It was set up in October 2009 with the following remit.

To carry on, whether alone or in combination with others, in the United Kingdom and elsewhere the businesses of design, build, construction, operation, supply and procurement of sustainable energy, waste and other utilities services and facilities, the provision of information and educational resources, the provision of training and skills development, the provision of volunteering and employment opportunities and the provision of advice, grants and loans in relation to any of the foregoing and shall include, in particular but without limitation, the following:

- reducing the carbon footprint of the Meadows;
- enabling the Meadows to become a place of experimentation and innovation in the development and deployment of sustainable energy-related technologies;
- enabling the Meadows to become self-sufficient in its energy use and then to become an energy generating community;
- enabling the residents of the Meadows and then other areas to access affordable energy; and
- contributing to the community and economic development of the Meadows.

During the year the board has consisted of the following people:

Phil Angus: Local Resident and CEO of Nottingham Energy Partnership

Graham Beaumont: Local Resident

Cllr Alan Clark: Nottingham City Council (City)

Professor Mark Gillott: University of Nottingham (Associate)

Nigel Lloyd: Local Resident

Professor Julian Marsh: Local Resident (Chair)

Alan Simpson: Friends of the Earth (Associate)

Emily Braham: NCH Member

Mobina Latif: Local Resident

Graham Beaumont (private renting) and Julian Marsh (general) are standing down this year and in addition to the 2 board places up for re-election, there are several vacant places on the Board. These are for 2 social housing and 1 owner-occupier members.

Ordinary – Normal full member meeting the qualifying criteria, full voting rights etc...

Associate – Don't meet criteria e.g. live outside of the Meadows or are under 18.

In accordance with the constitution the following members were elected and they drew lots to establish their term of office. Those who drew a term of 2 years are up for re-election this year*.

Working closely with MPT

Mozes continues to be closely supported during the year by the Meadows Partnership Trust and a number of our projects and bids have been undertaken in collaboration with MPT. Because of our limited funds, however, meetings have been in Board Members homes and administrative support from MPT kept to a minimum.

This Years Activities:

Existing PV Project and DECC Negotiations

You will remember that I mentioned in last year's Annual Report the fact that we had been working with Carbon Leapfrog to get the Government to change their approach to the State Aid Regulations. They had been using these to deny communities such as ours access to the Feed in Tariffs we had been promised for the energy generated. I also reported that these discussions had been going nowhere. As a result we decided to change tack and inform the Department of Energy and Climate Change that instead of giving us a community asset, they had in fact given us a community liability with no means to support it. We calculated that over the lifetime of the panels it would cost in the region of £250,000 to maintain and insure the systems as they grew older, replacing inverters and other parts that were out of warranty within 5 years. We also threatened to go to the newspapers with this fact. As a result of this threat, Alan Simpson was able to arrange a meeting with Greg Barker, the Energy Minister, and Alan and I met with him in London in May. At the meeting he accepted that we had been saddled with a liability, but disputed that it would be as much as £250,000. He suggested that they send an expert to visit the Meadows and assess the costs on site. The expert they appointed was Ray Noble, the Director of Solar BIPV, and he came to visit us in August. His take was that the Government should give responsibility for maintenance and insurance to a third party such as British Gas. We objected strongly to this for reasons that will become apparent further on in my report. He has gone back to DECC with his recommendations, but in the meantime Greg Barker has left as Energy Minister and we are not getting much of a response. Alan is now looking at going to the press with the issue sometime before the election.

New PV project

You will also remember from last year's report that we undertook a further PV installation project with borrowed funds also aimed at raising money from the FITS Tariff to carry out work in the Meadows. 9 PV installations were carried out by British Gas in a rush to complete the installations before the date in Dec 2011 when the Feed in Tariffs were dramatically reduced. The work was completed within the deadline and we were told by British Gas that the panels were registered for FITS. We paid a deposit of £15,105.71 + 5% VAT prior to the works, but refused to pay the balance until two unsatisfactory installations were put right and a satisfactory outcome was agreed to an installation where panels were put on an east facing roof without our approval. Despite lots of chasing the panels were not finally put right to our satisfaction until April last year. British Gas then demanded payment and we asked for resolution of the east facing panel issue as this was going to result in reduced income along with confirmation that the FITS had been registered and would be paid. British Gas refused to do either of these things and threatened us with their debt collectors. Our solicitors and Carbon Leapfrog made counterclaims on our behalf and eventually in the spring of this year a meeting was held with British Gas which Alan Simpson attended along with representatives of Carbon Leapfrog. The upshot of this was that British Gas agreed to halve the amount we owed them in compensation for the inconvenience we had been put to, and the poor performance of one of the panel sets. Carbon Leapfrog gave us a loan, payable over 7 years, to cover the difference and this has now enabled the Feed in Tariffs on the 9 panel sets to be paid and gives us an income to cover the loan and panel insurance for the whole of the Meadows.

Remaining Debts

In order to fund the deposit for the 9 panels, and being assured by Solicitors that we were going to be paid the Feed in Tariffs for the DECC scheme, we borrowed £30,000 from MPT on a short term basis. This loan was replaced with one from the Meadows Advice Group who had spare capital and were looking for a better rate of return than that given by the banks. A proportion of this loan has been paid off, but £23,000 was still outstanding by this summer and MAG required repayment to fund their office move. Nottingham Energy Partnership has very generously stepped in to help with a zero interest loan for a period of two years to cover that debt.

Working with the Universities: European Funding Bids

Mozes has, from its inception, had strong links with Nottingham University and supported a number of bids for research projects. Some, like the monitoring of Green Street have been successful, others not. This year we became partners in a substantial bid to the European Union to carry out a project that will have major benefits for Meadows Residents that have PV panels on their roofs and pave the way for a greater expansion of cheap electricity across the Meadows. I'm pleased to say that this bid has been successful and we will be receiving in the region of 300,000 euros to purchase equipment and support local people getting involved in the project. The outcome for those taking part will be the ability to store and share/sell the energy that they generate and don't use as they generate it. This will give a further marked decrease in their electricity bills. The project will run over 3 years and will enable MOZES to employ a staff member with skills that are useful to the Community outside of this project. These could include developing education projects and giving energy advice once again.

Nottingham Trent University has also been successful in obtaining a large EU Research grant and although we are not partners in it we have given our written support in the bidding process.

Goldsmiths

As outlined in last year's report, Goldsmith's College Product Research Department asked people in the Meadows to be guinea pigs for a product they were trialling. A product that they hoped would increase people's awareness of climate change issues. 4 of these 'machines' were lent to us and located in public places and people's homes. Beautiful though they were, they only seemed to work intermittently and when they did, became rather irritating. Another case of back to the drawing board I think.



Meadows Totem Poles

Pat Thomas has been soldiering on with her project to reuse the trees cut down along Queens Walk as the basis for a series of carvings commemorating the past and present activities of the Meadows. These are now starting to become visible and are excellent. They even include one celebrating the activities of Mozes.

The Nottingham Tariff

Nottingham City Council has been developing the idea of its own low cost energy tariff for the citizens of Nottingham. They need people to help them form focus groups to identify how people will view pricing and service options and they would like to have some people try out the tariff before it is released to the whole of Nottingham. This will be starting in the Spring next year and we have been asked to help do this within the Meadows.

The Wind Turbine

Attempts to extrapolate the University Wind Survey Data have not worked out and lack of funds has meant further work on this has been shelved. It is still the intention to organise a trip to look at the community wind turbine at Swaffham in Norfolk during the coming year, now that our finances are starting become more stable.

The Green Deal and Education Programme

The Green Deal and the Eco have been the subject of many announcements and funding changes this year leading to the programme becoming moribund. As a result no coherent project has been able to emerge around it.

The Exemplar Terrace

No progress has been made on this project as suitable funding opportunities have not been available.

Anaerobic Digester

The proposed experiments with bio-digesters have not been successful. The small scale digesters do not generate enough gas to be useful within our kind of Community and the fertiliser that has come from the trial at Sat Bains restaurant is not working well in trials at Sutton Bonnington so this project will not be taken any further.

Future Project Directions

Develop the EU Battery Storage Project with Nottingham University
Trial the Nottingham Tariff with Nottingham City Council
Set up a newsletter when funds are available

Professor Julian Marsh
Chair: Mozes