

# **SELCE AGM (Annual General Meeting) minutes – 21.09.2023**

## **Presentation**

### **Camilla opening speech**

Camilla – Introduced the session. Welcomed all. Noted that some payment has gone into fitting solar arrays in fit condition after miscommunication from installers. This has taken money, energy and effort from SELCE's work and affected dividends that have gone to members. We are now at the end of the recuperation process. Repair programme is now in its final stages. We can now look to spend surplus in the future on making an impact to the local community.

Camilla – We have also secured a government grant, led by the SELCE working group. A total of 36 organisations were selected in government-funded competition, including local authorities. SELCE won one of the bids, and was also one of the third largest awards recipients with over £1.2 million in funds. Success mirrors our trajectory in the future, based on successful community collaboration. Through LEAD, we will be working with six other groups to optimise skills and resources to reach other groups. Funding will allow us to pool our resources into one initiative focussed on long-term solutions for hard-to-reach groups. The team will double in size and we will be extending our office space. We will be sharing details on our share offer. Labour's new local power plan will involve new investment in community energy, 'turbocharging Labour's mission for clean power by 2030'. Community Energy England believe this commitment will make the sector a powerhouse for energy production across the country. Our hope for the next ten years is to thrive.

## **Formal AGM**

Camilla - All were asked to confirm their registration in-person and online. It was confirmed that the AGM was quorate and that members had received minutes from the 2022 AGM. Directors were introduced.

## **Review of the year**

Giovanna – Spoke about personal experience and motivation for forming SELCE – the need for climate justice. Shared information on SELCE's staff team. SELCE has diversified our offering to meet the challenges of the day – meeting energy demand and fulfilling energy justice.

## **Our fuel poverty alleviation work**

Katherin – Shared recap on recent increase in energy prices. Almost doubling over last three years. Prices offset by Government Energy Bills Support Scheme helped alleviate immediate pressure, however, this is not coming back in 2023. Last year's work focussed on collaboration with different partners across London. We've been able to help almost 1500 clients. 1020 had income of less than £21,749. We've run home visits, energy workshops and measure drops. Our team is very diverse which allows us to deliver energy advice in lots of different languages.

Flavia – 67 workshops last year, now set to deliver twice that number over the next year. The ‘Safe to Change’ campaign will be starting next week, challenging people to reduce their energy consumption at home. We also now have 28 households through the government energy support scheme to bring new support measures in to vulnerable households.

Katherin – We have managed to save £343,000 for SELCE’s clients, an estimated 3726.42 tonnes of Co2 cut over a year. Last Winter, we also worked with Lewisham Council to deliver the Household support fund. 539 residents, 28 community groups to act as ‘referral partners’. New items delivered that can help.

Naveel – Shared a case study from an energy advice café. A visitor was stressed from having an expensive debt with an energy provider. SELCE called the supplier and were able to reduce the debt significantly. Also applied for 50% discount on the customer’s water bill and shared information on the warm home discount and priority service register.

Katherin – Thanked the energy advisors.

### **Our Solar PV work**

Giovanna – Axel responsible for monitoring solar arrays, calculating consumption. Broke down benefits from Share Offers 1 and 2. Solar arrays are overperforming in summer and underperforming in winter. The one exception is Deansfield School, who insisted SELCE turn the solar off from a structural problem on one of the buildings which was wrongly attributed to our solar assets. SELCE carried out significant amount of remedial work, positive effects can be seen across our sites.

Giovanna – Generation across Share Offer 3 sites show very similar patterns to share offers 1 and 2 (overperforming in summer but underperforming in winter). All are performing well. Effort from this year was fixing assets. Repairs were carried out on Ashmead and the Intercontinental in order to remediate several issues. £34,000 of remedial works were required for Ashmead. Some of the issues were created by remedial works on the rooftop, others were from poor-quality installation. A lot of our current work focusses on identifying new sites. Ongoing work with Greenwich University involving Architecture undergraduate students helping to co:design new assets. Surveys to be carried out on Avery Hill Campus student residences.

### **Our LED Lighting Work**

Nadia – Work over last year has focussed on ‘LED-ing the way’, helping to install more energy efficient lighting in schools. We have completed more installs at Greenwich West Community Centre and Forest Hill and Sydenham Libraries. Continuing to work with partner group SE24, also providing training for other community energy groups setting up LED lighting businesses. Some consultancy work carrying out survey works for those organisations. Received a number of funding bids from pre-feasibility, feasibility and capital projects. Now awaiting Lewisham Community Energy Fund to open in October. Some of our biggest sites dropped out because they received funding from the public sector decarbonisation scheme. We are learning to focus support on buildings that really need it.

Nadia – Shared Greenwich West Community Centre case study. It provides recreational and charity space for members. All old lights were overhauled. A grant from the London Community Energy Fund to cover this work, as well as a £7,000 community share investment. £6,000 savings for the building and 10 tonnes of carbon savings. Thanked Lawrence for his work.

## **Domestic retrofit**

Nadia – Domestic retrofit covers Future Fit Homes and Future Fit Streets programmes. Future Fit Homes is for the 'able-to-pay' market/willing to invest. SELCE is continuing to provide support for households on a one-to-one basis and we have launched solar PV reports. There has also been a lot of outreach through the programme

Giovanna – Future Fit Streets focusses on challenge of addressing inefficiency of South-East London's building stock. Every house needs to be thought of as an individual system. We understand how decisions about retrofitting homes are not made on a logical basis – they can be more emotional. Reinforcing community need for retrofitting has been focus for Gordonbrock Road in Lewisham. Parties were hosted with relevant specialists, followed by whole-house plans, tailored solar surveys, etc. By April, 15% of residences were pledging to put in place multiple measures, although this changed in May 2023 when mortgage rates went up. Actual retrofit work was modest – but 17 other properties are now looking to install solar.

Giovanna – Local Energy Advice Demonstrator (LEAD) – Now working with Repowering London to enable retrofit across four neighbourhoods (Greenwich, Lewisham, Lambeth and Newham) from DESNZ funding (£1,187,222.16). Now pushing forward on more solar sites – installations on Invicta Deptford and Invicta Blackheath.

## **Financial Statements**

Andrew – Agreed not to go through SELCE's financial statements in too much detail, but could speak through them directly on request. We have changed accountants since the last 2022 AGM. The business has complicated accounts which they have come to terms with well. Thanked Joseph (our voluntary bookkeeper) for his ongoing work.

Andrew – Growth is reflected in our accounts. There has been a revenue increase from £407,000 to £670,000, which has come from increases in grants and funding to deliver more fuel poverty work. There has been an increase in revenue from our solar sites, largely because this is tied to inflation through feed-in tariffs. Most of this revenue comes through as administrative expenses in accounts. This covers salary costs for energy advisors. There has also been a huge increase in the amount spent on repairs and maintenance over the last year (mostly Ashmead School). In the accounts, one of the lines ('beneficiary expenses') went from £8,000 to £72,000 – which represents work done for Lewisham Council ('Heat the human, heat the home') – covering items and vouchers for credit meters.

Question from member – Third Sector Accountancy are amazing. Raised questions a few years ago on auditors' advice to apply dividends, because Community Energy organisations cannot do this. Instead we pay interest payments which are an expenses. There being no reference to dividends in the accounts are welcome. Can we recapitalise on the remedial works?

Giovanna – There could be some capitalisation on the remedial works, but the aspiration is that they will increase yield and therefore provide a return on investment. Ashmead did have professional indemnity insurance – making a claim has been complicated. This next year, we paid in excess of £100,000 in remedial works, but we hope to recoup that by getting insurance monied. Insurers are often reluctant to share information on whether we are covered, negotiations are delicate and ongoing and may result in SELCE seeking legal help. Andrew – Most of the remediation work was designed to bring installations up to the level they should have been to start with. Because they have been depreciated from the day-one cost, capitalising repair work would mean we should take a carrying value of the original assets to offset the value of the repair works. There is an argument to capitalise the repair work, but if we did, it would result in an offsetting. We have also generated a small profit that we will not be paying corporation tax on. All of our surplus will be used for the benefit of the community. If we capitalised that cost rather than run it through P&L we would have had to have paid corporation tax on that profit.

### **Formal voting**

Gi – Share capital withdrawal is being limited to those in financial difficulties. This is because of SELCE's consideration as a co-operative to delivery charity and social business work. If we were entirely grant funded, we would have gone bust due to payment in arrears. SELCE have reserve funds which account for shortfall from arrears. We need two months' worth of payroll. We need to keep these reserve funds against grant-funded work.

Andrew – Reserves allow SELCE to have the cash flow to grow at its current rate. Once the grant funding comes in, we can return this to invest accounts to enable repayment of share capital withdrawal.

The vote was carried out:

- Unanimous adoption of the accounts
- Unanimous appointment of accountants.
- Unanimous support for proposal 3.
- Unanimous support for proposal 4.
- Unanimous support for proposal 5.
- All current and newly standing board members elected – over 90% in favour.

Camilla closed presentation – thanking all attendees and members.