

Renewable Energy Benalla (REB) Action Group

Minutes

Monday 18th October 2021, 5pm at Uniting Church Meeting Room

1. Welcome

2. Present: John Lloyd, Bev Lee, Frank Dunin, Larissa Montgomery, Kevin Smith, Peter Maddock, Heather Thomas, Karen Nankervis, Trish Brooke, David Blore.

3. Apologies: None received.

4. Review of minutes of 18th October, 2021 meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting were distributed via email prior to the meeting.

Motion: That the minutes of the previous meeting on 18th October 2021 be accepted.

Moved: Peter Maddock 2nd: Kevin Smith All in favour. Motion carried.

5. Business Arising

5.1 Website

Weebly account will be renewed for another year. REB website will be combined into BSGF website. Consider moving to new word press platform at a later date.

Potential for student to do a work experience placement to develop a website on word press. Karen would be happy to mentor. Would need to pay an hourly rate. Karen will look into it.

Really need a stream of information coming in to keep the website relevant and interesting. Need to encourage other BSGF sub-groups to be more active.

ACTION: Karen to investigate potential for a work experience student to develop website.

5.2 Storage of materials

Peter M will check with Peter H. if there is a central place to store all materials. Peter is seeing Adrian tomorrow to get materials.

Also need to collate all electronic information in the one place. Purchase a hard file to put all of the documents on to start with. Also consider getting an account with Drop box or Google docs, will depend on how much space is required.

ACTION: Peter M to work with John to get a copy of all materials onto a USB or hard drive.

6. Action Groups - report on action plan to implement key strategies

6.1 Community energy project

Next project Bernard Briggs kindergarten – 6.6kw system, quote for \$6950 received from Solar Gain. Install will be in January during school holidays. Install slightly more complicated than last time with steeper tiled roof. Quote includes some in kind contribution from Solar Gain. John has copies of electricity accounts and has worked out estimated quarterly savings - repayments will be around \$400 a quarter. Applying for \$5000 grant from FRV to assist with the installation. Community Energy Fund has over \$2,500 in it now. If grant application unsuccessful BSGF has sufficient funds to cover cost of installation. Proposal has gone to Bernard Briggs who will seek a loan of \$6300 as they can reclaim GST.

N.B. Revised calculations for repayments -now \$350 per quarter.

6.2 Solar Garden investigation

No update since the last meeting.

7. Future of REB

- Report prepared after last meeting and follow up Zoom meeting last month. John distributed the report he presented to BSGF prior to this meeting.

- Peter discussed his email to the Council regarding emissions, tool that reports on community emissions. REB is part of a plan to reduce emissions, however there are other emissions within the community, for example agriculture and transport. BSFG perhaps needs to consider broader emissions reductions group.
- Need for more than just REB group, but REB has an important part to play.
- Suggested name change to Community Energy Benalla – community energy more reflects the social and community focus of the group and the transition strategy. It has been suggested that Renewable Energy Benalla perhaps sounds too much like a commercial operation. REB name is well known across the region so would need to keep this in mind.
- Original vision was to be 100% renewable stationary energy by 2028, with transition strategy and 1/3 reduce, 1/3 replace, 1/3 switch.
- Before decide on a name change, BSFG may need to consider a restructure to include the different aspects of net zero targets.
- Energy efficiency series was well received by Trish. Disappointed that we didn't get more people along.
- Could BZE come back to review the Transition Strategy to see whether it is still relevant? Is 2028 target something we still want to aim towards?
- Snapshot Climate Tool – developed by Ironbark Sustainability and BZE, measurement of community emissions based on modelling.
- The group discussed the relationship between REB and CEP, all in favour of REB and CEP being one action group of BSFG.
- Same model used for community buildings could be used for low socio-economic households. Could also work with landlords etc. Heather has an example of making a rental house all electric, no energy bills, slight increase in rent – could use as a case study (paper, videos). Subsidies available – eg. Solar Vic 2 per landlord per year. Education program – happy comfortable tenants that don't want to move.
- The issue of who will be the convenor of the group can probably be considered following the BSFG review and the focus of the group confirmed.

MOTION: That REB recommend to the BSFG Committee that a facilitated process is undertaken early next year to review BSFG and that BSFG consider the focus, objectives and structure of action groups given recent developments around climate action and net zero targets both locally and nationally.

Moved: David Blore 2nd: Kevin Smith. All in favour.

ACTION: John to advise BSFG Committee of the motion arising (as above) for their consideration and ideally this would occur before John moves away from the area.

8. Hume Community Power Hub

Community Power Hub has quite a bit of money to work with. Benalla won't be in the first round of projects but have expressed interest for future projects.

9. North East Community Energy Network (NECEN)

NECEN getting very involved in community batteries at the moment. Community Battery Project - guidelines that have been released means that Swanpool won't qualify.

New government program for EV chargers, but Council would need to support with paying for power (sub-station would be required for a fast charger).

Sustainable Upper Ovens – Renewable Energy Innovation Webinar on 22 November – John will distribute to the CEP members.

10. General Business

None arising.

11. Next Meeting - TBC

John to take the above motion to the BSFG Committee for consideration and action. John to schedule a meeting for late January after we receive feedback from BSFG.