

**Northumberland Renewable Energy Group**  
**Minutes of meeting held at NaREC Offices, Blyth**  
**17 October 2005**

The meeting was preceded with a tour of NaREC. ARW thanked AW for the tour.

**Attendees**

Alan Wann (Northumberland County Council) – Chair (ARW)  
Will Adams (Government Office for the North East)  
Mervyn Anthony (REALL)  
Paul Bilsborrow (Newcastle University) (PB)  
Mark Burrows (Business Link)  
Stephen Calvert (EST)  
Terry Cowley (Northumberland College)  
Hugh Clear Hill (Northumberland County Council)  
Clive Fagg (Northumberland Energy Executive) (CF)  
Andrew Gooding (Lynemouth Community Trust)  
Susan Gorucu (NSP)  
Melanie Greenwood (REALL)  
Bill Lowther (North Energy) (BL)  
Colin MacDonald (TADEA)  
Willie MacFarlane (WMac)  
Chris Maxwell (EIF)  
Caroline Oldridge (ONE North East) (COL)  
Angus Robson (Groundwork Northumberland) (AR)  
Jonathon Scurlock (North East Community Forests) (JScu)  
Caroline Stewart (NSP) (CSt)  
Ben Tansey (Northwoods) (BT)  
Adrian Wilson (NaREC) (AW)  
Alan Younger (Newcastle University) (AY)

**1. Apologies**

Jill Antrobus (Blyth Valley Borough Council)  
Paula Little (Econnect)  
Helen Nisbett (TNEI Services)  
Peter Sansom (North Pennines AONB)  
Cameron Scott (Tynedale District Council)  
Neil Harrison (Northwoods)

**2. Minutes of Meeting held on 20/07/05 at County Hall, Morpeth**

The minutes were accepted as a true record.

**3. Matters arising**

South East Northumberland Woodfuel Study report has now been circulated. CF will be having a meeting with Northumberland County Council on how to take this forward. CF will update the group at the next meeting. **Action: CF**

**4. Commissioning Framework**

Four programmes [previously circulated to the group] have been submitted to the NSP Executive for Single Programme funding: Executive Post, Capital Programme, Cockle Park Farm and Learning and Skills agenda. The programmes will go to the NSP Board for approval on 20/10/05. The programmes have been complimented for their clear strategic view and partnership working.

In the next meeting it will have to be decided how to recommend some form of decision making progress on this.

## 5. Executive Update

The meeting in Brussels re potential European funding to match NREG funding has been put on hold as the flight was cancelled. Discussion with European offices on how to move forward in this area will take place at a later date. CF to update the group when progress is made. **Action: CF**

## 6. Presentation – Cockle Park Farm

PB from Newcastle University gave a presentation on the development of a Centre for Renewable Energy from Land Based Activity at Cockle Park Farm, Morpeth. This included a brief background to the project, plus site layout and potential facilities, equipment and processes that could be developed on the site.

The project will:

- Promote and advise on the development, generation and use of renewable energy to farms, rural communities and SMEs
- Create a renewable energy cluster engaging in academia and business to develop and exploit new technologies
- Produce and integrated and holistic approach to renewable energy from land.

The presentation was followed by a discussion:

- The Business Plan is likely to be ready at the end of October 2005. The final draft will be finished at the end of November 2005. COL felt that now was the right time to do a presentation to the directors at ONE North East.
- £130,000 from the University of Newcastle fund and £40,000 from the Northumberland Strategic Partnership to develop a business plan has been allocated to date.
- GM work will not be part of the project as it will be done in University facilities already working with GM.
- The project will need people with expertise to implement energy efficiency techniques. The redesign of the building will be energy efficient and it is an important part of the equation.
- Some environment / energy organisations are interested in taking up incubation space as it is complementary to establishing an energy cluster.
- Transport planning is being incorporated into the business plan.

Comments:

- JScu stated that the project was in danger of having too many things going on at once and it needed to be clearly highlighted which are commercial ventures and which are in the research domain. AY stated in response, that the project was only looking for funding for the viable projects.
- CF added that once the business plan was written, the project would then need to be economically audited to test its economic viability.
- AR commented that some thought would have to be put into how to make the project “real”, for example, a community project with clear links to schools and education.
- WMac also mentioned that MSC course students need placements – some for 1-2 weeks for small projects and others who need placements for six months while doing larger projects. Anyone who may have a placement to offer to contact Willie MacFarlane. **Action: All**

## 7. Strategy/ Action plan update

[See Appendix 1]

## **8. Regional Renewable Energy Sector update**

ONE has produced a broad strategy to create better linkages between academia and business. The Energy Leadership Council has not been set up as yet but when it is it will include business and strategy sectors. It is hoped that this will be active in the next couple of months.

The Energy Forum has speakers and workshop sessions at St James Park at 9.30am – 2.00pm, on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2005.

## **9. Northern Way**

Newcastle has been designated as Science City and some of that city region comes into Northumberland. There are two initiatives across the North/ North West and Humberside:

- Chemicals/ food and drink
- Energy and Environment

Andy Williamson from ONE is currently working on developing regional cluster work and is in discussions on what the focus will be and where the allocated funds will be spent. The proposal will then go to the executive next month. They are leaning towards nuclear and clean coal technology at the moment. The group would like to be part of this. COL to get more information on this and it's progression for the next meeting.

**Action: COL**

## **10. Any Other Business**

- AR updated the group on the work of Groundwork locally and nationally and how they fit into the programme. Groundwork Northumberland launch is on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2005 in Choppington, between 12.00pm and 3.00pm. Invites will go out shortly – contact AR for more information.
- Craggside – it was stated that the most should be made of the opportunity to link renewables with local art. Some thought needs to be given to this area. If interested contact CF who will talk through the potential.
- All invited to Community Wind Project Seminar on 4<sup>th</sup> November at County Council to investigate the potential for development trusts to develop their own community farms. Let CF know if you want to attend.
- JScu's booklet is ready for press. Would like to encourage funding from ONE if possible.
- North Energy – energy for enterprise finishes in December which will cause a gap in SME's getting access to feasibility studies and grants. BL will keep the group informed on this matter.

**Action: BL**

## **11. Next Meeting**

Week commencing 16<sup>th</sup> January 2005 – TBA

**Action: CF**

## Appendix 1– Partnership Update in Item 7

### Northumberland Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency Strategy

(Numbers and italics refer to Action Points in the NREEES Action Plan)

<b>1.</b>	<b>OVERVIEW</b>
1.1.2	<i>Keep <a href="http://www.northumberlandenergy.co.uk">www.northumberlandenergy.co.uk</a> website updated.....</i> It was not possible to put the revised web-site on CD in time for the meeting so it will be ready for the next meeting - CF
1.1.4	<i>Develop RE projects within Northumberland schools from pilots to wider programme.....</i> Consultants have been commissioned to develop the link between schools/business and career opportunities in renewable energy.
<b>2.</b>	<b>DOMESTIC</b>
2.2.5	<i>Target fuel poor to make homes more thermally efficient</i> Twenty plus projects region wide have gone forward into the business plan. The financial plan is being compiled at the moment and recruitment will begin in a couple of months. Rurally there are small pockets of fuel poverty which need to be targeted and it needs to be decided where projects can best be delivered. CF will be in touch on how NREG can be involved.
2.2.1	<i>Carry out training/awareness raising programme for LA officers &amp; members .....</i> It has been agreed that demonstration is the best way to raise awareness.
2.2.5	<i>Target fuel poor to make homes more thermally efficient through a countywide affordable warmth strategy using WarmZone as the delivery agent</i> The North East is one of only three regions chosen by the Energy Saving Trust to pilot a region-wide Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre offering householders across the North East free & independent advice on domestic energy saving measures, renewable energy & transport energy. CF has offered to sit on the steering group and will ensure linkages between NREG and North East Home Insulation Partnership
2.3.1	<i>Clearly communicate / promote funds &amp; support available, costs / payback period</i> CMac – the EST Advice Centre has been launched
<b>3.</b>	<b>INDUSTRY</b>
3.2.1	<i>Integrate up-to-date RE&amp;EE issues into business link advice and training provision...</i> Business Link is trying to convince advisors that speak to businesses that it is better to be pro-active to opportunities, rather than re-active to problems.
<b>4.</b>	<b>WIND</b>
4.2.1	<i>Identify potential public and private sector sites for small scale wind turbine development...</i> There has been an aeronautical study which has been published now which states that areas near to the airport are inappropriate for turbines.
4.1.2	<i>Promote and assist facilitation of regional training of LA members/ staff.....</i> DTI road show event is coming to the Centre for Life on 8 <sup>th</sup> November 2005. The right people need to be there i.e. Planning officers, committee members etc.
4.3.2	<i>Work with regional partners to develop a common methodology for cumulative visual</i>

	<p><i>impact assessment...</i> NREG is facilitating work between planning authorities and developers to provide guidance and advice to address this issues.</p>
4.3.1	<p><i>Develop a protocol to ensure that a proportion of any community benefits fund is recycled....</i> CSt from Northumberland Strategic Partnership is progressing with this.</p>
5.	<p><b><i>HYDRO – this is missing from some people’s copies of the action plan [CF – will circulate full action plan]</i></b></p>
	<p>Consideration is being given to the development of a new hydro resource at Cragside that will compliment the original technology. The National Trust, OneNE and Newcastle University, together with a couple of relevant members of NREG will be invited to form a task group to take this forward.</p>
6.	<p><b>BIOMASS</b></p>
6.1.1	<p><i>Support regional developments, and encourage demonstration projects in Northumberland.....</i> Initial discussions have been held between Briardale Community Centre, EiF, and Stanegate Stoves to look at the potential of installing a wood stove at the Centre.</p>
6.3.4	<p><i>Develop a network of local biomass fuel businesses throughout Northumberland and regionally....</i> BT – Northwoods has been successful in its DEFRA biofuel infrastructure grant scheme application. This will help in setting up a biomass supply scheme across the NE.</p>
7.	<p><b>ALTERNATIVE ENERGY</b></p>
7.1.4	<p><i>Develop biofuels business in the North East and County.....</i> Tynedale Council has signed up to use biomass fuel for its fleet. This has not been publicised yet. Northumberland County Council is still in discussion over the use of biomass fuel as are Castle Morpeth and Northumberland National Park. Blyth Valley Council’s Jill Antrobus needs to be followed up on this as she expressed an interest.</p>