

Warwickshire Climate Change Strategy Partnership

Warwickshire Biomass Heating Support Group Minutes from Meeting on Tuesday 24th April 2007 Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh

1 Present/Introductions

1. Matthew Rhodes	Encraft
2. Andy Stevenson	Energy West Midlands
3. Russell McCarton	ESPO
4. Ewan Calcott	Forestry Commission
5. Andy Grundy	Heartwoods
6. Andy Brindley	Midland Bioenergy
7. Mike Webb	MWEN / Econergy
8. Joanna Righton	Rural Hub
9. Jacky Lawrence	Warwickshire County Council
10. Gillian Rutledge	Warwickshire County Council

2 Update on projects

2.1 WCC:

- a. Biomass project at Kingsbury Water Park now ready to go ahead, with Neil Payne project managing. Wood chip fuel will be provided through on-site management. Plans to purchase woodchipper from Green Mech.
- b. Beginning a tentative look at whether a condition of sale to include district heating could be applied to land earmarked for new housing development.
- c. Where WCC buildings are to be refurbished, looking at the possibility of including biomass heating.

2.2 MWEN:

- a. Warwick Crematorium 80MW plant due to go ahead, although some issues have had to be ironed out. Wood to be purchased from Midland Wood.
- b. Currently assessing tenders for the Alma Building 80kW biomass boiler
- c. No other projects imminent but Warwickshire Rural Housing looking at zero Carbon housing, including microgeneration.
- d. South Shropshire Housing is developing in-house expertise on biomass heating and has gone for wood chip installation for its affordable housing at Roxgreen, Ludlow. The highly insulated houses are prefabricated off-site.

2.3 Mercia Energy (by email):

30 KW wood fuel boiler installed.

2.4 Encraft

Have carried out three feasibility studies (two with Mercia) for sites in Nuneaton.

2.5 Bioenergy West Midlands

Conference on biomass expected later in the year.



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3. Update on Bioenergy West Midlands

Nick Maskery not present.

4. Developing Design Guidance/training/skills

First draft sent out by Mike Webb but needs to be refined. **Action:** All to send comments to MW. The guidelines will be used in conjunction with training up potential distributors; not feasible for Econergy to provide national coverage for small installations so hoping to train up distributors for these.

Econergy have identified 20 potential distributors at the moment, hope to have 30 by the end of the year. Econergy will provide various courses for different types of installation, including training on real installations. Looking for funding to run the courses.

5. Developing SPG/LAAs - Is a framework needed?

JL explained that there is a 'Climate Change & Environment' block in the Local Area Agreement, with the district/borough councils and the county council signing up to various targets agreed at chief executive/deputy or directors' level. MW queried how Private Finance Initiatives (PFIs) sit with the LAA but no-one very sure. It was agreed that it would be difficult to integrate low carbon initiatives when an organisation has already gone down the road of PFIs.

JL outlined that WCC is currently developing a Sustainable Construction Strategy to help push sustainability issues in this sector. The WCC Sustainable Development Fund combines council and Salix funding to the total of £2.1 million for 3 years, earmarked for renewables (wind, biomass and solar thermal) and energy efficiency (cavity wall insulation) projects for WCC properties.

6. Warwickshire local supply chain update

RASE has had 2-3 meetings with Warwickshire Rural Hub, Forestry Commission, Heartwoods, England Farming and Food Partnership and AWM, to identify farmers' views on wood fuel. A chair for the group has now been identified and this individual is happy to explore possibilities for his own estate, with the aim of feeding back to the rest of the group. However, farmers are not keen to establish the supply chain until there are more biomass installations in Warwickshire.

Andy Grundy suggested that W'shire needs a network to share information, potentially an umbrella co-operative or forum. Collaborative supply requires a timetable of demand – ie. when and where is the fuel needed? AWM will only fund collaborative supply chain development.



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JR outlined that 50 members of the Rural Hub filled in the wood fuel survey, with 20 of these actively involved. She feels that 5-10 will be keen to be directly involved in and attend meetings. Some of these will be agents for various estates.

EC explained that the three main potential wood fuel suppliers are Ragley Estate, Merevale Estate and the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (WWT). WWT has significant woodland, much of it close to Coventry. However, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, while having significant woodland holding within the county, works on a volunteer basis and does not currently produce commercial volumes of timber. Ragley and Merevale Estate would want to know how many tonnes of fuel to supply to the wood fuel market, as they will also supply to the fencing market outside the county. This also applies to the smaller landowners.

Midland Woodfuel have plans to move into the West Midlands, meaning that processing sites would need to be established/expanded. Ex airfields are a possibility.

MR outlined Encraft's involvement in the Sustainable Public Buildings' Project, explaining that they can organise events where a range of technical experts are invited to come along and work through the design of a particular public building such as a school or community centre. MR suggested running such an event for one of the ten feasibility studies carried out by MWEN. Encraft would first analyse the building to establish the size of equipment needed, biomass supply requirements, etc. They would then set up a meeting for 50-100 people, including suppliers, farmers, contractors, etc. This could be used as the first meeting of a new forum or co-operative. It would be possible to bring in other demonstration projects in the West Midlands for reference. **Action:** MR to draft proposal. Small steering group with terms of reference to be set up. AS to provide list of invitees and send out invite letter.

Steering group identified as: Encraft, RASE/Hub, WCC, Forestry Commission, Heartwoods, Econergy, Energy West Midlands, AWM? JL offered to advertise event to W'shire Climate Change Partners.

There was some discussion on the lack of contractor base. MW finding it difficult to identify local distributors. Perhaps LANTRA could be invited to the event to look at skills shortage?

EC pointed out that Warwickshire has limited woodland cover and is technically the furthest county from processing sites. Richard Slatem's business produces and sells timber processing machinery for the wood fuel market place. However, their on-site processing capacity is unknown and they do not have a saw mill. Ragley Estate has a sawmill and do process log timber. Bentley at Atherstone also has a



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redundant sawmill; the site is currently only used to manufacture and repair pallets – they do not process timber. **Action:** Quantify the amount of waste wood going to landfill. Quantify undermanaged woodland resource.

Judkins Quarry generates electricity from landfill, heat produced is vented to atmosphere. Would be available free to dry/process timber if technically viable. AG and EC feel that this should be possible and could provide a good way to dry off green chipped wood to ensure that it doesn't start composting.

Discussion brought up the following questions: Any ideas on how to pull together the different threads on this? Would it be possible to approach quarry operators as part of the restoration plan? There may be an opportunity to encourage operators to use after-life of the landfill, eg. short-term coppice can be grown on landfill sites.

7. Updates/Advice/Comments

- AB – Small-scale Wood pellet production from waste wood. Had hoped to run it at a larger scale but with market uncertainty and the large power supply needed, has decided to start smaller. Has machinery in place and looking to start production at end of summer. Will provide pellets bagged and in bulk for the domestic market. Discussion on prices – MW felt that £150/tonne for bulk and £150/bagged would be reasonable for good quality product (soft wood, minimal bark, doesn't fall to dust).
- JL/GR – JL has contact with a South Warwickshire company that plans a 2.5MW installation. The company has won a £1million contract from Germany to supply 25000 tonnes of pellets from pallets per year. GR due to give presentation to West Midlands Sustainable Development Officers' Network (WMSDON) and will mention biomass group. WCCP Events: Security of Supply seminar arranged for 26th April, biodiesel seminar on 21st May, biodiversity conference on 21st June.
- EC – some landowners are actively involved in the wood fuel market and would be interested in the Encraft event. Some agents have national portfolios.
- MW – Govt is placing pressure to produce a sustainable equipment catalogue – ESPO co-ordinating. MW successful as one of 3-4 biomass contractors to provide equipment. LAs will be able to specify sustainable equipment through the ESPO process. Kevin Wilsher involved in launch event. Renewable Energy Association has a useful website: <http://www.r-p-a.org.uk/home.fcm> Nemex event due to be held at NEC – biomass is moving into mainstream. Eenergy looking to recruit design engineer staff.
- RMCC – ESPO has no contracts for biomass at moment but has been canvassing member authorities to seek to establish the scope of (i) current installations and associated supply arrangements and



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(ii) proposed installations, to enable them to assess whether and at what stage there may be scope for establishing contracts as part of a wider exercise covering the five main local authority purchasing consortia (ie. nationally).

- AG – Heartwoods aim to have wood fuel supply chain expand appropriately. Looking for wood fuel projects for ancient woodland management, restoration of sites and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). Hopes to achieve some sort of collaborative and long-term stability for wood markets but funding an issue – funding for post runs out in a year.
- JR – RASE can help with future Biomass Support Group meetings by supplying venue twice a year.

8 Future Organisation of Group

It was agreed that the aim of the group is to bring together suppliers, contractors and customers. At the moment there are more contractors than suppliers but it is hoped that this will balance out more in future meetings.

AS outlined how the group currently operates: EWM provide lunch and chair the meetings; RASE provide the venue and WCC do the minuting. AS' secondment finishes in June and will then return to National Grid. DTI no longer funding EWM as of March 07. However AS has suggested that they continue to support the group. **Action:** AS to email group to put forward ideas for future chair and offers of venue and refreshments.

9 Any other business

None

10 Date of next meeting

Three months time tbc

