

Energy group notes 11th November 2015

Attendance

Allison Cawley	Lauren Tait
Andrew Padmore	Liz Shepherd
Angela Ireland	Luke Mitchell
Ben Craig	Matthew John
David Richards	Owen Jones
John Littlewood	Owen Veldhuizen
Jonathan Morris	Rachel Howard
Keeli Morgan	Rob Lucas
Shea Jones	Steve Curry
Wyn Rowlands	

Homes for Wales Campaign Update - 22 January, 2016

The National Assembly for Wales elections are just over a hundred days away and we've got some exciting updates to report on the Homes for Wales campaign. Have you signed up to support the campaign? We need you to get behind the campaign and share your housing stories! <http://homesfor.wales/support-the-campaign.html>

We're currently on the 'From the Ground Up' milestone which leads up to the rally on Friday 4th March, and there are two great ways in which you can get involved. Read on to find out more... Darllenwch y fersiwn Gymraeg [yma](#).

Fuel cells technology

CHC has been contacted about the potential for funding for fuel cell and fuel cell CHP technology. If you'd like to find out more information then please email shea-jones@chcymru.org.uk

Energy technology solutions

Welsh Government has been working with the Department for Energy and Climate Change to produce a UK National Comprehensive Assessment of potential for combined heat and power, district heating and cooling. This will enable them to compare a range of efficient heating and cooling supply options in order to identify the most resource and cost-efficient solutions to meeting heating and cooling needs. As part of Welsh Governments smart living programme, Demonstrators (the First Wave) are currently being carried out across Wales. They can be seen on Welsh Governments presentation which is available <http://chcymru.org.uk/en/policy/energy-and-sustainability/latest-news/> .

Action: CHC would like to understand further what new technologies and systems housing associations would like to test and any energy efficiency and generation technologies that they are currently looking at and testing. RSLs seem to be perfect for testing and rolling-out various measures/technologies.

Action: CHC has been contacted by a number of organisations who provide free biomass boilers in domestic properties that are off gas (they claim the renewable heat incentive, for example, to make number stack up). If you want to discuss further, then please email shea-jones@chcymru.org.uk

An Energiewende for Wales: A transformational and smarter energy future for Wales-in order to see the report for “An Energiewende for Wales”, please see below:

www.regenwales.org/resource_102_An-Energiewende-for-Wales--A-transformational-and-smarter-energy-future-for-Wales

Extension of the Warm Home Discount

During the winter, households in financial difficulty are entitled to a one off payment of £140 off their energy bills. The Warm Home Discount scheme will be extended to 2020-2021. The budget for the Warm Home Discount will rise from £6.2 billion in 2015-16 to £13.1 billion in 2020-21. Impact This is a welcome extension of a scheme that assists many housing association tenants. The rebate can significantly help people struggling to pay their fuel bills, but does not contribute to increasing household income, which is an essential part of tackling poverty. It is essential that the UK Government commits to continuing and expanding the Warm Home Discount Scheme so that low income families also receive automatic assistance from their energy supplier.

Replacing the Energy Company Obligation

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) will be replaced in April 2017 by a ‘new, cheaper energy supplied obligation to reduce carbon emissions’. The new scheme will run for five years, and aims to upgrade the energy efficiency of over 200,000 homes per year. Impact UK Government has stated that the new scheme will tackle the root cause of fuel poverty, and deliver its commitment to assist one million more homes in this Parliament. However, the change of schemes signifies a deep cut to the only UK-wide energy efficiency programme. While the energy efficiency policy is intended to be better targeted, the cut in funding means the new scheme is unlikely to be sufficient to meet current UK fuel poverty targets. The rising cost of energy is a concern for many Welsh households, and we know that one of the most direct

actions we can take to reduce people's energy bills is to improve the energy efficiency of their home. Energy efficiency investment can reduce energy bills and fuel poverty, improve people's health, create jobs and reduce carbon emissions. Recent figures from the Office of National Statistics showed that there were 43,900 excess winter deaths last year in England and Wales – an illustration of the need for further investment in tackling fuel poverty through energy efficiency.

1. Steve Curry, Valleys to Coast, an update on V2C's recent work in exploring the potential for local energy supply and generation.

Much of this work has stemmed from the potential development of a solar farm on land above one of their valleys estates and the desire of the developer to offer xxMW of energy rather than the usual annual community cash contribution. The buying and selling of this energy and the potential to develop solar farms on V2C's own land led V2C to meet Social Power Partnerships and they have developed their ideas to tackle fuel poverty whilst also generating renewable energy for profit, carbon reduction and reducing the cost of living for tenants.

They put in a joint application to a National Energy Action grant scheme and have been granted funding for a pilot. This project is to look at installing a number of heat pumps (air source) with a thermal store and potentially connecting them up for demand response trials.

Electricity supply – commercial basket-This is to investigate the potential of putting tenants into the same energy purchase agreement that the RSL buys its energy from for offices and sheltered schemes. Voids can be defaulted onto this tariff and then 'opt-out' applies but we think this could save some tenants a great deal – PPM's must be included to ensure this reaches the most financially vulnerable.

Gas supply – commercial basket-the same applies as above.

Various technologies available can complement each other in order to drive down customer's energy bills. By getting tenants to give back 50% of the benefit and by installing 3 technologies rather than one, an investment case can be made.

How can I charge my tenant? Through SAP improved rent adjustments (see the slides for examples)

See the slides for a range of funding options e.g. Pure Leapfrog has launched Leapfrog Finance – a bridging facility to allow community energy groups time to raise funds while the project is built. There was a lot of discussion throughout the meeting on future opportunities. For example:

- STORAGE - a game-changer, allowing homes to capture and consume what's generated. Recent research by the Australian government suggests that battery prices could halve in the next two years.
- DEMAND SIDE RESPONSE - Capacity Payment system under legal challenge - may have to offer better deals to DSR advocates. Supply-side

measures pay suppliers to £20k/MW insurance for availability. On a 2kWp DSR system = £40 income per year

- SMART METERING - ultimately half-hourly pricing & ability to buy and sell back to grid Companies who can avoid the three TRIAD periods of the year can save 15% off electricity bills
- SOLO GAS CHP will offer individual homes the ability to generate electricity and heat through their gas supply at 95% efficiency
- SMART GRID and VIRTUAL NETWORKS are the ultimate goal for HA'S and CEG's. Members sharing and consuming the electricity that they generate

V2C have been awarded the NEA's redressing the balance funding for the installation of heat pumps with thermal stores to 20-34 off-gas grid properties (see the slides for more details) Heat pumps & thermal stores outside - system works with existing Combi-boiler. Thermal stores allow 'demand-shifting' - occupier uses OP electricity to re-charge - energy released throughout the day. If the home has PV, system allows 2-cycle charging: once from PV & at night from the O/P tariff. System max's PV by converting excess feed into stored heat. Self-administering system - tenants can leave it run - 'Boost' button for extra heat (see the slides for more details)

Energy technologies institute

V2C are working with Bridgend county Council as part of the Energy technologies institute Smart Systems and Heat Programme, looking at heat networks in particular.

- ETI's Smart Systems and Heat Programme
- SSH programme aims to create future-proof & economic local heating solutions by connecting together understanding of consumer needs & behaviour with development & integration of technologies & new business models
- Phase One - three local authorities (Bridgend, Greater Manchester & Newcastle) deliver local area energy plans specific to their communities
- Phase Two - demonstrate local smart energy systems can work nationally
- Decarbonisation of heat is one of key technology challenges facing UK. To do it effectively & economically we need to develop solutions that work at individual & location level

Steve noted the cost of retail energy pre payment meters. Getting rid of the weekly standing charge is the key. Collective switching doesn't deal with pre payment meters?

Andrew Padmore noted that we are limited by legislation to create tariffs. We need volume to make it work

A RSCW Study Tour of Freiburg was noted. It was undertaken by Richard Essex, RSCW Co-ordinator and Alan Brown, Chartered Surveyor and CREW Board Member in June 2015. It comprised two days of site visits and a detailed discussion with Professor Wulf Daseking, the former Chief Planning Officer for the City of Freiburg. This case study highlights key observations made about the 'Freiburg experience', which is widely regarded as one of Europe's most sustainable cities. More information can be seen here:

http://www.regenwales.org/resource_96_Regeneration-Skills-Collective-Wales-Study-Tour-to-Freiburg

RSL's are a perfecting testing ground for energy solutions.

2. Andrew Padmore, Egnida, how to make low carbon/fuel poverty solutions commercially and practically viable.

Andrew talked about the potential for viable future low carbon and fuel poverty solutions for RSLs. Egnida seem to now have a number of viable options that can reduce costs for RSLs and/or their tenants. They are progressing these with a number of RSLs but are happy to engage the wider RSL community. Egnida have offered to run some workshops at CHC/RSL conferences and seminars.

Andrew outlined challenges in social housing e.g. poor VAT position for RSLs as well as:

- mortgage provider related issues for funded schemes
- difficulties "sharing" energy cost savings equitably
- ensuring solutions align with the requirements of WHQS, mortgage providers, financial limitations, tenant lifestyles, social and environmental ambitions
- Increasingly difficult to structure viable solutions
- Procurement, lack of scale. Supply chain issues

Egnida provides whole house, whole business, energy, renewables and transport solutions. They are an MCS and PAS accredited business offering solar PV, solar thermal, heat pumps, biomass, solid wall insulation and "green" fleet management. Andrew talked about Egnidas energy management approach and vehicle management approach (please see the slides)

Andrew run through some case studies (please see the slides). Egnida have an app for vans which is a cost effective app compared to telemetrics. It tracks the driver and not the vehicle. You just enter your registration number when entering the vehicle. It includes real time tracking, mileage & expenses management, car park location device etc.

Egnida is going to be a TESLA distributor although Andrew admitted it is not the best solution. What's the best solution??

TESLA=only product where capital cost is coming down quicker than PV. Tesla:

- store generated power for evening use
- energy cost reduction is the prime purpose
- could facilitate low carbon, fuel poverty solutions and help with grid issues
- potential to link with heat pumps
- **capital cost is HIGH!**

Is there a solution now? :

- WWU Powered by Sunshine
- battery storage cycles...

Third party control over battery storage- Integration with the new Smart meter technology allows excess generation to be stored with batteries or even redirected to power a water immersion heater (stored hot water) as well as remote access & third party access to energy data.

Egnida continue to offer whole house energy analysis for RSL's & provide costings & feasibility across all technologies. However, its likely that biomass, solar thermal & heat pumps will become more popular investments with RHI confirmed to remain until 2020 at least in line with the Governments desire to make renewable heat a growth area.

What does the future look like?:

- social housing providers as ESCOs/energy suppliers?
- what is a core activity and what should be outsourced or delivered in partnership to manage the risks?
- how can stakeholders be involved in the process to maximise benefits and share them equitably:
 - tenants
 - funders
 - energy market participants
- Is this all too difficult now and should social housing providers just concentrate on the day job

Andrew warned of the risks of venturing down setting up a new energy supply company route. Nottingham council for example are setting an energy company-just about big enough to pull it off? Dave Richards at SSE mentioned the threshold of 250,000 as a cut off for some "collective" energy suppliers in the RSL sector. Our Power aren't an established provider so would likely need to grow a base before tariff competitiveness could be assured. Egnida can facilitate "white label bespoke tariffs for RSL's with gradual migration of metered supplies as and when they come out of contracts without the need for a mass connection. **Action:** Presentation item for next energy forum?

Wales & West and NPT Homes are looking at storage within the Solcer project. They have early data on 2 of the projects. The Solcer project provides affordable, replicable very low energy buildings. It's about integrating technologies into the

building rather than 'bolt on'-there is no need for planning. The project is demonstrating reduced cost retrofit and it is demonstrating deep carbon savings. The project is about optimising a holistic energy system by combining:

- reduced energy demand;
- building integrated renewable energy supply;
- energy storage for both thermal and electrical energy.

There are families living within the homes. They don't have data on the gas / heating yet as they need to get through winter to see some early data. They have been monitoring the electricity consumption within the houses though.

Looking at energy storage-FiT's look set to continue with 20 year payback but caps will be set to control the amount of registrations. Deemed export and no deemed export?

Deemed export and smart metering-there is a consultation on it at the moment (Andrew can provide further details on this) Deemed export for 30kW Solar PV and below remains. Egnida advise to wait until April 2016 when the central DCC system is installed which will allow the latest smart meters to transfer tariff data when switching between suppliers. Deemed export and no deemed export? Sizing battery storage is the hard bit. Andrew noted that we don't know the best solution for storage yet and noted a good system should be available in March/April 2016 which can monitor better, etc. (Andrew can provide further details on this) Egnida are currently in the process of vetting a number of battery solutions providers and completing staff training. Further details will be available by March.

Action: another presentation topic at the next energy forum? RSLs need to ask battery storage sellers exactly what the numbers are. It is not tested and there is no MCS accreditation for storage at the moment

Assuming PV application, grid limiting is actually a built in feature on some inverters although stand alone devices are widely available. The key is to analyse generation/consumption data and possibly consider battery storage and different panel designs to find the correct solution.

Demand side management is a wide ranging topic with a host of technical and financial considerations with grid balancing renewable generation and grid operators providing financial incentives for switching away from peak time to off peak/seasonal shift. Demand side management is normally applicable to larger industrial & commercial organisations than organisations with large housing stocks, although the basic fundamentals around behavioural change, energy efficiency and modification of demand still apply. Egnida are happy to speak with any associates who have a specific interest.

Move PV to valuable trading area (Andrew can provide further details on this)

3. John Littlewood, 'Feedback from Occupants in 'as Designed' Low-carbon Apartments, a Case Study in Swansea, UK'

John represented both Cardiff Metropolitan University and Coastal Housing who John has been working with. John presented some of the results from an ERDF project with data from physical monitoring, occupant interviews and building design analysis of a low carbon apartment building case study in Swansea. Topics included overheating and potential impacts upon occupant health.

John highlighted health issues with mould etc. John noted that heating system controls can be complicated as they don't always relate to the building and controls in that building so it's hard for tenants to operate the controls. Occupants had been adapting to the environmental conditions in the building, windows were open in the summer and winter so tenants were comfortable, etc. The building was not designed for this and therefore wasn't meeting the code for sustainable homes requirements for carbon emissions reductions.

Air temperature, humidity, etc were monitored, as well as carbon dioxide levels in the hall etc. Humidity levels were also an issue particularly in the summer. If temperatures are above 24 degrees Celsius they can have significant impacts on occupant's health. The tenants might appear to be happy with the warmth levels but it can be bad for their health in the long term. A scheme John monitored had 29 degrees room temperature in March. It was a Code 4, timber frame building (timber was noted as potentially having an impact on overheating as timber releases heat quickly, so the building wouldn't cool as much as if you had concrete frame as concrete stores longer), although the communal heating system was causing the temperatures increase in this instance (not so much the fabric of the building)

There is also a published paper that can be circulated for members of the group. This is not on the CHC website as of yet but will be added to the website as soon as CHC receive it.

Having the right controls for the heating system is key. Procurement is key-design and build can be an issue (i.e. are contractors doing something to save money?)

John is presenting at CHC's fire safety group on fire safety issues and departmentation.

Observations: qualitative methods –air leakage

Two problems of air leakage:

1. Cold air entry visible underneath exterior door facing onto balcony and

2. Also underneath the skirting board, in the corner of the room.

What causes the issues: is it design, construction, or the technology—or all?

- How will the problems affect: thermal & acoustic performance & the transmission of fire?
- How resilient is this 'as designed resource efficient building'?

So, predicted performance not being realised

There is growing evidence of a potential large gap between the 'as designed' and the 'predicted' performance and 'actual' performances of buildings in use and operation in the UK, particularly dwellings (Zero Carbon Hub, 2010, Bell et al, 2010, Littlewood, 2013). This gap in performance can be caused by many issues (Nooraei et al, 2012 and 2013). So, comprehensive building performance evaluation and assessment of occupant behaviour and attitudes is an essential method to check whether the actual building performance meets the design expectations

Case study

Design Critique –design stage

Construction quality assessment & impact on thermal performance

POE –occupant impacts –overheating

See the slides for info and figures on Radiators not set according to summer conditions, temperatures, ventilation, etc.

Long term monitoring –internal comfort, climate & energy

- 18 month duration, three apartments (one ground floor (south), one second floor (west)
- and one last floor (north). Commenced December 2012

Climatic condition monitoring:

air temperature; barometric pressure; relative humidity; wind speed and direction; high and low temperature in each 24 hour period; precipitation, with seasonal total; solar radiation; resultant temperature –factoring in affect of wind and precipitation which lower or raise the temperature; date, time and carbon dioxide. Link to live weather data:

Long term monitoring –internal conditions & energy use

Internal conditions monitoring in each room: air temperature, relative humidity, exterior fenestration/door opening period; carbon dioxide in the hall.

Electrical circuits (energy use): lighting, sockets, cooker, & total Electricity use.

Heating (energy use): space and water heating energy Consumption.

See the slides for recommended temperatures & overheating. See the slides for more info on the qualitative and quantitative results.

Quantitative results from John's research

- Lack of knowledge about heating controls Importance of handover, hands-on training, and simplified User Guide
- Oversimplified controls;
- Location of controls; TRVs behind furniture and not accessible

To be or not to be, a simple method for building performance monitoring

- Does as built performance in use meet as designed and predicted performance? **NOT IN MOST CASES**
- Can we get away with a simplified method for monitoring? **Possibly if iCT is also used, but design, construction, commissioning and education of users needs to be improved**
- Can we choose one monitoring method over another? NO
- Can we wait until a building is finished to monitor performance? NO
- Can we rely on honesty from testers appointed by contractors? NO

The answer:

In-construction testing, spot checks, through commissioning and into occupancy; mixed methods approaches; appropriate contract.....

4. Dave Richards, SSE, market update and cavity wall extraction and advice on steps to take

The energy company obligation ends March 2017 and energy companies are currently over delivering on their targets (see Dave's slides for a table of energy performance against obligations) CSCO rural may have been gone now until 2017. ECO Changes have had a profound effect on delivery.

There's Falling domestic energy demand, increasing renewable and distributed generation

Infrared Thermography (IRT) was noted as an option for identifying failed cavity wall insulation. Surveying conditions needed for taking a thermal image of the property:

- Temperature differential of 10 deg C between inside and outside
- Dry, no water on the surface
- Wind speed less than 10m/s
- Evening/Night-time surveys only

It was noted that thermal images can be manipulated to hide the truth. They can also be used to sell products or services which may not be required.

What to check

- You use the correct camera for the job
- A fully qualified thermographer (ITC level 1) carries out the inspection
- They adhere to the strict conditions required
- The surveyor has no vested interest in the outcome

IRT surveys kindly put together a presentation for CHC (although this wasn't run thorough in the meeting) in relation to Infrared Thermography (IRT) for identifying failed cavity wall insulation. Please see this presentation on CHC website along with the other presentations from the day. Key points include:

Things to be aware of:

- Thermal images can be manipulated to hide the truth
- They can also be used to sell products or services which may not be required.

What to check:

- You use the correct camera for the job
- A fully qualified thermographer (ITC level 1) carries out the inspection
- They adhere to the strict conditions required
- The surveyor has no vested interest in the outcome

Surveying conditions:

- Temperature differential of 10degC
- Dry, no water on the surface
- Wind speed less than 10m/s
- Evening/Night-time surveys only

The slides show a thermal image with an example of missing insulation. A thermal image can show that a house cavity has been filled poorly by a contractor. The image is incredibly clear and provides all the information the client needed to pursue the contractor.

Cavity Wall Insulation

- As quickly as it went in some authorities are now taking it out
- Damp
- There is a market trying to drive this new industry

Why is this happening ?

- Maintenance programme for outside of properties carried out?
- Some installations poorly installed and failed
- Quality not maintained at the end of CESP/CERT
- Right measure for the property?

Some condensation could be due to moisture in the air e.g. drying clothes. Some are taking cavity out when it hasn't failed and CIGA only help in certain circumstances. Wetter summers is an issue-insulation is not drying out

Storing energy as heat trials? [Ask Dave for more info on this.](#)

[Smart metering-some people got apps already. Ask Dave for more info on this.](#)

Main priorities for new Government

- Security of supply
- Supporting policies that promote competition
- Reducing policy costs and removing costs from bills
- Demand side measures such as smart technology, storage and energy efficiency
- Pursuing a pro-economic growth approach to climate change

Current energy efficiency & fuel poor policies

- Warm Home Discount is in its final year and no provision is in place for any such programme from 1 April 2016 (OFGEM UPDATE THE OTHER DAY THOUGH!?)
- ECO2 will end on 31 March 2017, and as yet no successor scheme has been formally proposed
- DECC giving strong indications that subsidies for the able to pay market must end and that fuel poverty policy must be refocussed

2018/19-energy efficiency schemes going to be based on individual properties?

Action: Not enough funding going to social housing?-need to lobby for future programmes

Timelines

Fuel Poor Focussed Scheme 2018 (or 2019)

- Policy development: Summer 2016
- Consultation: Autumn/Winter 2016
- Government Response: Spring 2017
- Debates: Summer 2017
- Scheme begins: April 2018 (or 2019)

5. Ben Craig presentation

Ben is Director of CIGA and member of Installer Member of CIGA Council and also advisor to the BBA on cavity wall insulation extraction best practice

- Demise of some of the largest industry participants: Mark Group, D&G, Climate Energy
- Growing awareness of poor installs and the problems they can create: voids, exposure zones, unsuitable properties etc.
- Growing media attention on the worst cases of CWI gone wrong (and many have been in Wales)
- A rush to offer extraction services by some of the same firms that are responsible for the poor installation in the first place
- Inadequate levels of competence and technical monitoring

CIGA's Response

- Problems should always be reported to CIGA in the first instance
- CIGA accepts that its customer service was not strong enough and has taken steps to address that:
 - Appointment of Consumer Champion
 - Consultation on customer service
 - New Head of Customer Service appointed
- CIGA has the resources to handle legitimate claims relating to work undertaken by D&G, Mark Group etc.
- Working with the BBA and NIA to improve standards, expose malpractice and increase technical monitoring

Ben has been advising CIGA and the BBA on:

- ✓ Adopting an 'evidence based approach' to the performance of thermal insulation using thermal imaging technology
- ✓ Improving techniques and specialist equipment for cavity wall insulation extraction and rubble removal
- ✓ More careful and transparent vetting of installers based on performance. More stringent penalties for malpractice.
- ✓ The importance of robust pre and post checks, minimum standards of competence and accountability

Going forward ...

- ✓ Please feedback your experience as clients
- ✓ Please report rogue practice
- ✓ Always insist upon high standards
- ✓ Feel free to discuss any concerns or ask for advice

Ben's details ben@homeworksenergy.co.uk
(01926) 831851

Guarantees still stand even if companies disappear.

6. Owen Veldhuizen, Cartrefi Conwy, green flag status (presented via video conference in North Wales)

Cartrefi Conwy presented on them obtaining the Green Flag Award for one of their estates. They were assessed against the following criteria:

- A welcoming place
- Healthy, safe and secure
- Clean and well-maintained
- Sustainability
- Community involvement

Previously, there was no community centre, people didn't want to live on the estate, anti Social Behaviour was at high levels. Then, CCBC put in a successful bid for the People In Communities initiative. Cartrefi Conwy have engaged the community several times throughout this process in different capacities, via opportunities to approach one to one, they have spoke to kids and parents, and informal chats. The biggest event was on 23rd August where they asked the community to tell them how they feel about their greenspace and they offered entry into a prize draw in exchange for their views. A wide range of people came out to make their opinions known. The feedback was analyzed to make some sense of it all, and to try and establish the main issues affecting the community. It helped Cartrefi Conwy spend money wisely by prioritizing areas of concern and helps them meet the COMMUNITIES needs.

Please see the slides for the map.

Elements relate to the WHQS Environmental Standard. They opened up the estate as an extension of the classroom. Principles of putting the "Parc" into Peulwys...it's about more than aesthetics. It's about:

- Functionality
- Play provision
- Habitat creation
- New roads and paths
- Parking for grown ups
- Educational alignment
- Communal features and planting to create local identity

Local Labour- 4 people taken on from estate- 3 retained and 1 went on to start own landscaping business. 2 Environment focused Community Groups

Groundworks helped with dry stone walling and nature trail creation. There was Bulb planting, etc. The final design brief included over 40 individual projects to 53,000 sq metres of open green spaces including:

- Establishing local identity through large scale planting based on colour. Using seasonality to reinforce a sense of connection with the landscape
- Creating a park like atmosphere within a social housing environment
- Linking the landscape with learning by creating an extension of the classroom
- Integrating surrounding green infrastructure to link and foster biodiversity within the estate
- Traffic rationalisation and safer pedestrian access
- Building on the geography and rich maritime and industrial history of the area
- Enhancing play provision across the estate to provide natural migration opportunities to aid children's active and social development
- Ensuring long term sustainability by developing a tenant horticulture resulting in 2 active environmental community groups to maintain high value green space while addressing local socio-economic issues.
- volunteering and Community Events.

They had an in-house landscape designer etc.

Please see the presentation on CHC's website to view the management plan 2015-20 for the site that Cartrefi Conwy have sent through to CHC

Cartrefi Conwy has a methodology for determining where they do environmental improvements.

For further information, please contact Owen and Matt on the details below:

Owen Veldhuizen owen.veldhuizen@cartreficonwy.org

Tel: 01745 335530

Matt Stowe matthew.stowe@cartreficonwy.org

Tel: 01745 335539

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 19th April

Action: The next energy group meeting will include a focus on consumer matters- e.g. pre payment meters, the priority services register, energy company funding/social obligation programmes for vulnerable people etc.

Action: On the CHC's member's page on yammer, there is a dedicated energy group page which members are encouraged to use to post issues, share good

practice etc. If you are already signed up to CHCs yammer page then please search for the energy group and sign up to the group. If you aren't signed up to CHC's yammer page and require more information on getting engaged with yammer and this page, then please email shea-jones@chcymru.org.uk

Further suggestions:

- Meetings agenda driven by policy changes
- Guto Owen, Ynni Glan, fuel cell technology
- Energy technology solutions (as noted at the start of this document) Welsh Governments smart living programme, Demonstrators (the First Wave) are currently being carried out across Wales. They can be seen on Welsh Governments presentation which is available <http://chcymru.org.uk/en/policy/energy-and-sustainability/latest-news/>. CHC would like to understand further what new technologies and systems housing associations would like to test and any energy efficiency and generation technologies that they are currently looking at and testing. RSLs's seem to be perfect for testing and rolling-out various measures/technologies.
- Biomass boilers -CHC has been contacted by a number of organisations who provide free biomass boilers in domestic properties that are off gas (they claim the renewable heat incentive, for example, to make number stack up).
- RCT Homes Boiler optimisation pilot (additive to the water which improves heat transfer) is due to be finalised by end of Mar/early April. RCT to present findings at the next energy group meeting (15 minute presentation). Two solutions noted-Hydromx, which proposes to improve the efficiency of the whole heating system (claims to reduce energy costs by up to 35%, leading to reductions in c02 emissions and energy consumptions) and Endotherm (the gas consumption of the boiler in the heating system can be reduced by up to 15%)

Pre-payment meters

CHC recently sent this email out to members:

Awareness raising for pre payment meters and debt issues

CHC has recently sent an email out relating to a pre-payment meter query, outlining details of an investigation from a member that found that historic debt, or debt that has been put on to a pre-payment meter to be collected through a recovery rate placed on the meter, has been passed on to future tenants of a property without them knowing about it. Following further investigation, it seems that the incoming tenant will pick up any residual debt left by the previous tenant unless the landlord has carried out the relevant checks and has got a hold of gas/electric codes in order to clear the residual debt, regardless of the debt amount.

One energy company has noted they only send out an engineer to clear down a debt if it exceeds £250. If under this amount an electric/gas key code can be issued where it will clear the residual debt. This is one of the main features of their void management scheme. The debt amount can be accessed only when the electric/gas key is inserted - the total debt is on screen S, Weekly repayment amount on screen T. CHC can get a hold of useful booklets which details all of the meter screens which may be of use. If an RSL isn't using such schemes as this void management scheme or don't have similar systems in place, then if a debt is over £250 then a new tenant may be paying this or if they do not request the key to clear the debt they may well be picking up the remaining debt. Debt that can be seen on the screen might be able to be wiped off by a RSL or the tenant but if there is other debt attached to the meter then this needs an engineer to call to the meter to re-set it. You might not be aware that there is other debt on the meter. If tenants are placed in properties with debt on the meter, which they could be paying for an extended period of time, could in turn potentially lead to that tenant being put into fuel debt or even self-disconnecting.

Energy companies wouldn't always know if there is other debt on the meter so even some void management schemes might not deal with this issue. CHC would encourage RSL's to speak to their energy company about this to understand the energy companies process at each stage and make sure debt, including background debt on the meter, is cleared before a new tenant moves in. If there is no void scheme and there is not a registered change of personnel at a property, this could be another reason why tenants just continue to use the card/key passed on to them by the previous tenant. Furthermore, Ofgem would advise tenants to contact their supplier to re-set the meter. If this hasn't been done then they can follow the complaints procedure below.

"I am concerned to read of the problems you have experienced with your supplier. I would urge you to draw this matter to their attention and would expect the company to respond in accordance with the complaints handling standards. You may be aware that Ofgem does not have a direct role in investigating or resolving individual consumer complaints. Energy companies are subject to strict complaints handling standards which are backed up by an independent [Ombudsman](#) (Ombudsman Services – Energy). If your complaint is not resolved within eight weeks - or sooner if a supplier says it can do no more you can ask the Ombudsman to investigate your complaint. The Ombudsman has a range of remedies at its disposal including the award of compensation, its decisions are binding on the company but not on the customer. Should you require advice, you may wish to contact Citizens Advice consumer service. The Citizens Advice consumer service provides free, confidential and impartial advice on consumer issues. For further information please visit their website www.adviceguide.org.uk or call the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 03454 04 05 06. You can write to them at the following address: Citizens Advice

consumer service, Post Point 24, Town Hall, Walliscote Grove Road, Weston super Mare, North Somerset BS23 1UJ.”

RSL's might also find it useful to read OFGEM's [consumer vulnerability strategy](#) and also [tenant's rights factsheet](#) and there's more [info for tenants on switching](#) here. Feel free to contact myself with any further queries or if you'd like the booklets noted above for example.

Prepayment meters

There are two upcoming OFGEM consultations which CHC will be responding to- the first relates to proposals to improve outcomes for prepayment customers on proposals to remove barriers to prepayment meter customers accessing the best deals, either by switching to a credit meter or staying on PPM. The consultation focuses on two areas, the use of the warrant process to install a PPM, and charges for installation (non-warrant related) and removal of a PPM. The consultation runs until 25 February-CHC would encourage members to send through thoughts to shea-jones@chcymru.org.uk -details below:

https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/sites/default/files/docs/final_consultation_ppm.pdf