

**SECA Steering Group Meeting**  
**Thursday eve 19<sup>th</sup> March**  
BY ZOOM CALL

**NOTES AND ACTION POINTS**

**Present:**

Alison Marshall (chair), Helen Whittington, Karen Parker, Carrie Cort, Catherine Edminson, Viv Doussy, Tony Whitbread, Freddie Northcott, David Johnson, Jenny Edwards, Paul Hannam, Sally and Geoff Barnard, Liz Thorns, Julia Hilton

**Apologies:**

Jay Mercer, Pauline Cory, Anne Davies, Juliet Merrifield (Juliet sends her apologies and has had to step down from the Steering Group)

**1. SECA Reunion in January – reflections**

We agreed that the meeting went extremely well, that it involved a wide group of people from the SECA community and that the networking, support and enthusiasm generated by the meeting was great. There was very enthusiastic feedback from Julia who had not attended any SECA events before.

Next time we arrange a similar event we need to give ourselves more time to plan and organise as a group. A press release would be good next time .

**2. Feedback from the potential SECA groups which were set off from the reunion**

A potted summary follows of where the various groups have got to, though we all recognise that many of these plans will need to be put on hold as we go through this next period of time dealing with the corona virus. **However, happily, out of the discussion emerged an idea for a positive focus for SECA over the next months – see the Networking Group and item 4.**

**Energy** (message from Tom Broughton)

The energy group did start up but it hasn't continued, mainly because it would mean a lot of duplication with what Community Energy South is already doing.

**ACTION:** Tom is available to SECA to field energy related questions and as a link with CES. He will contact SECA if CES needs help with networking with community groups etc.

**Natural Capital** (Tony)

An actual group has not formed, but Henri Brocklebank from Sussex Wildlife Trust is carrying ideas forward. These centre on the carbon sequestration potential of various habitats that we have in the South East and how to make the most of these. This would involve promoting carbon sequestration and natural climate solutions with local authorities. The Sussex 'Local Nature Partnership' is already looking at this and creating a 'Natural Capital Investment Strategy'. Julia said that natural capital needs to be flagged up in Local Plans eg Hastings Country Park. David mentioned the idea of 'Pocket Parks'.

**ACTION: Tony** will continue to liaise with Henri and the Sussex LNP. He will think about a blog related to this to go in the SECA newsletter and website with tips etc for local groups. One of the first challenges is communicating this approach in simple language.

*For more info see Tony's note attached to this email.*

### **Lobbying MPs (Jenny)**

So far Jenny and Peter Desmond have liaised and collected a variety of resources with advice/support on lobbying MPs . These could form the basis for a blog/newsletter for SECA. However its clear that MPs will be very preoccupied by other matters at present.

Geoff reported that he and Sally met with Andrew Griffith (MP for Arundel and South Down) and he sounded supportive and agreed to meet a forum of local community groups working on climate in the Arundel South Downs constituency (Greening Steyning, Sustainable Henfield 2030, XR Adur & XR Arun Valley, HKD Transition).

(NB for info, Peter and others from mid Sussex groups have formed a Central Sussex Climate Network and plan to lobby their MP for Mid Sussex – Mims Davies)

**ACTION: Jenny** will consider a blog/newsletter about the resources for future use.  
**Geoff** will liaise with Jenny about the community group constituency forum idea.  
The resource list could also go on the website

*Lobbying resource list google doc :*

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rbyrnu0fzSuTeFsX78w85se-VVPI-UJ5F6-J6BtcnH4/edit>

### **Circular Economy (Karen)**

A group has formed on this which has had some meetings. They have discussed various ideas such as community fridges, reducing business food waste, a guide to plastic free shopping, pledges for the planet etc. and are building up a resource list.

Neil Pitcairn has been involved from the Circularity Foundation. They are looking at a business plan that involves 'bottom up' groups as a counterweight to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation which involves big business from 'top down'.

**ACTION: Karen** will continue to convene this group and report back.

### **Member group networking (Geoff and Liz)**

The networking group has met up and looked at ways of member group networking and sharing learning ( *see Geoff's summary attached to this email*).

However events have taken over and the discussion focussed on the role SECA can play in networking during these unprecedented times. People will not have energy for new initiatives. However we can focus on reflection, support and building a positive SECA

vision of what the new world could look like once we are through the worst of this crisis. This can be mediated by a 'Slack' group, which we will encourage all SECA members to join. **See item 4**

**Education group:** (Carrie)

The education group has had some meetings with 8-10 people, both real and virtual with Nicola in Ecuador. It has now boiled down to 3 people – Carrie, Catherine and Emily. Those in the group have pooled their favourite climate education ideas and resources to form the basis for a toolkit.

Carrie has sent this to Paul Allen from the Centre for Alternative Technology , and the plan is for CAT to use this to help progress a Community toolkit.

The group is also developing a workshop for schools to use.

*See Community climate champion toolkit attached to this email*

NB For info- Carrie reports that CAT is now doing an online Zero Carbon Britain course on 28/29 April

**3. Council working group**

It does seem that many councils have been making progress in getting their acts together. However progress may be slowed by the health crisis.

We have been pulling together a survey of what all the councils have been doing, who has action plans, who has allocated money etc. (see SECA website, [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1nctBlqjm2UnMfG2oB67UMwMLmFbRTcstcuAo2G40\\_4E/edit#gid=1414368810](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1nctBlqjm2UnMfG2oB67UMwMLmFbRTcstcuAo2G40_4E/edit#gid=1414368810) )

Now we plan to contact council officers across the SE and ask them to look at the SECA survey and give us updated information.

Then we want to focus on what innovative actions councils are taking eg Worthing and Adur have procured a local heat network , Lewes/Eastbourne/Adur are jointly procuring for retrofits for council housing stock etc . These actions could all go on a new spreadsheet.

Sally and Geoff attended the Sussex Greenhouse Gas Monitoring Group just before everything shut down. This is a meeting of all council climate change officers from Sussex. It is encouraging that they are sharing info and ideas. They welcomed SECA, shared their emails with us and want to liaise.

**4. Discussion on how to SECA should proceed over next few weeks/months in view of coronavirus**

Main points of discussion:

People are very preoccupied. This is not the time for major SECA external initiatives. But it can be a good time for internal SECA reflection and gathering resources. We need to build resilience and connectedness despite our physical isolation. A lot of community climate resilience has a crossover with community virus resilience – growing food, food banks, building neighbourly networks to support each other, working from home, using

skype and zoom instead of travelling, enjoying nature and exercise near to home etc etc

People are questioning our way of life and may be more ready to accept that we can't go straight back to our old ways. This is a huge crisis but also a huge opportunity. There will be huge pressure from large economic forces to go back to the old ways, but we can use this time to build a compelling vision of how the world could be.

Geoff suggested that we use 'Slack' networking platform for SECA members and member groups to communicate during this time. Friends of the Earth are kindly making it available for SECA to use.

We agreed that we would go ahead with this and launch Slack initially for this conversation among our member groups- What do we want the world to be like when we come out the other side of this? Building up of stories. This will also help provide support and togetherness in these odd times.

**ACTIONS: Geoff, Liz, Paul, Tony and Freddie** will form a team to lead on this. They will help to set off discussions on Slack and keep an eye on it.

**Geoff** will launch the Slack channel in the next newsletter, along with this topic and invite people to join the conversation on our future vision. Also put a blog on the website to introduce it.

**Liz** agreed to act as a 'community host' to the conversation, welcoming people in.

**Paul and Tony** will share some articles on Slack and help get discussions going.

**Freddie** is keen to try out Slack as a networking tool for younger age groups.

**Geoff** will ask Veronica to join the group and consider writing an article/ story about this.

## 5. **Electricity switching**

We agreed to go ahead with the electricity switching plan that Carrie suggested.

This will be run through 'Big Clean Switch'. People can be encouraged to switch to green energy through this website and have the added bonus of generating approx. £20 for SECA per switch. This money would be held by Sussex Green Living on behalf of SECA and ring fenced as a small fund for posters/leaflets etc.

It would need to be transparent to the public how much commission is generated for SECA by each switch and how the money will be used.

**ACTION: Carrie** will contact John at Big Clean Switch, work out the wording and practicalities and then we can put it as a suggested action in the April newsletter.

## 6. **Monthly actions** We have had some well worked up monthly actions from Nicola up until now, but it's not so clear what to suggest from now on.

The April action can be to suggest that groups get on to Slack and take up the conversation on the future vision.

Mays action could be energy switching

We can review after that.

**ACTION: Geoff** will put these in SECA newsletter.

**EVENTS:** Community Energy South conference 30<sup>th</sup> April – this is now planned to be an online conference. SECA has been invited to take part and publicise among our members, though details of what will be happening tbc.