

**1. Name of the organisation** – Wessex Community Energy Network - acronym WCEN

**2. Purpose** To facilitate the development of the community energy sector in Somerset, Wiltshire, Dorset, Bristol, Bath and North-East Somerset and South Gloucestershire. Capacity building and sharing experience will be achieved through network meetings, both in-person and online, and through members' newsletters.

**3. Aims**

- Share experience between community energy projects (learning from each other)
- Influence local policy
- Facilitate collaborative projects
- Engage the local community in tackling climate change

As the WCEN develops the Steering Group with support from members may decide that WCEN or a subsidiary of WCEN should become an incorporated entity.

**4. Membership** Membership is open to all community energy groups, local authorities, supportive organisations and interested individuals within the geographical area covered by the Wessex Community Energy Network. Organisations and individuals wishing to join the network can do so from a link on the WCEN website and may cease membership by unsubscribing to emails. Membership may also include community energy organisations operating nationally with an interest in collaboration with WCEN. There will not be a membership fee, although this may be reviewed at a future date.

The WCEN Secretariat, which may be an external organisation or a WCEN member appointed by the Steering Group, will maintain a membership list.

**5. Equal opportunities** The Wessex Community Energy Network will not discriminate on the grounds of sex, race (including colour, ethnic or national origin), sexual orientation, neurodiversity, disability, gender reassignment, religious or political belief, pregnancy or maternity, marital status or age.

**6. Steering group and officers** The WCEN Steering Group shall be responsible for selecting topics for meetings, making decisions on the management of WCEN and individual members of the Steering Group may volunteer to organise premises and speakers for meetings. Specific responsibilities are documented in the Steering Group Terms of Reference (Annex 1).

The core officers appointed by the Steering Group are Secretary and Chair for Steering Group meetings. Financial management may be undertaken by an appointed external secretariat, or the WCEN Steering Group may decide to open a bank account and manage finances internally, in which case a treasurer will be appointed.

WCEN members are welcome to apply to join the Steering Group at any time during the year up to a maximum of 8 members of the Steering Group. All current members of the Steering Group are subject to re-election annually at a members' meeting.

Decisions at Steering Group meetings will be made by consensus if possible. If consensus is not possible decisions will be made by a two-thirds majority. The Chair will be allowed to vote, alongside all members of the Steering Group, but will not have a casting vote.

**7. Secretariat** - The appointed WCEN Secretariat, in addition to maintaining the membership list, shall be responsible for external communications, including preparing and circulating newsletters (approximately bi-monthly), promoting meetings and managing bookings for meetings.

**8. Financial management** It is intended to secure medium term (2 year) grant funding and sponsorship to cover the operational costs of the Wessex Community Energy Network, including venue hire, lunch and refreshments (as agreed for individual meetings), payment for the secretariat services and external financial management or internal treasurer. Members of the Steering Group will be volunteers.

**9. Amendments to the Constitution**

Changes may be made to the Constitution following a vote by Steering Group members either at a meeting where the changes are proposed or via email. A majority of two-thirds will be needed.

Draft: November 2023

Adopted: December 2023

## **Annex 1 - Steering Group Terms of Reference**

### **Role**

The role of the Steering Group is to:

- provide direction and leadership to ensure the network adheres to its aims and objectives (as stated in the constitution)
- contribute ideas to shape the network to meet the needs of its members
- provide input to annual planning for meeting dates, topics and other network activities
- share communications and information about the network with other potential stakeholders and users
- input into development of a long term strategy to ensure continuity of the network

### **Membership**

Any WCEN member who is an active member of an existing community energy group is eligible to sit on the Steering Group. They should aim to gain and retain knowledge about the renewable energy sector in general and community energy sector in particular for distribution to the network. This might be by attending workshops, seminars and subscribing to newsletters.

### **Responsibilities**

Steering Group members should be willing to commit to:

- Attend quarterly meetings to plan the activities of the network
- Actively seek inputs for the network newsletter
- Be prepared to help organise and manage events e.g. securing venues, organising speakers and co-ordinating presentations at the event
- Make decisions about the management of the network

### **Key Contacts**

The Steering Group will be co-ordinated by CSE Communications Team.

Contact: [wessexnetwork@cse.org.uk](mailto:wessexnetwork@cse.org.uk)