

Reading Climate Change Partnership

Board Meeting Minutes, Tues 9th Feb 2021

TEAMs meeting online, 10:00-11.30 pm

Attendees: Tim Dixon (co-Chair, will Chair today)

Tracey RawlingChurch (co-chair),	Chris Beales,	Katie Brett (Support Officer),
Ben Burfoot,	Cllr Tony Page,	Peter Moore (guest),
Willem Londeman,	Tricia Marcouse,	Paul Ducker (observer),
Poppy Harris (PH),	Paul Harrison (PHa),	Natalie Ganpatsingh (observer)

Item	Action
Apologies – none	
<p><u>Minutes of last meeting – approval</u></p> <p>A reengagement plan is needed with the Nov '20 Launch event attendees to maximise their continued support of RCCP. Ongoing engagement is needed</p> <p>KB to ensure they are notified of the 2yr anniversary of the RBC declaration and invited to pledge their support. KB to revisit interested persons from the consultation</p>	<p>KB KB</p>
<p><u>Governance review – update</u></p> <p>TD shared the paper 'RCCP governance review – stage 1 recommendations Feb 2021'. This paper researched national and international examples of climate action networks and identified 3 structural options for the partnership: refinement of existing model, creation of a new stand alone CIC or charity organisation, or an alternative hosting arrangement and the advantages and disadvantages of each. Appraisal matrix was used based on the aims of our partnership. The paper recommends option 1 – refinement of the existing model.</p> <p>PM highlighted that RBC has been a good and willing host, and it wants to continue this close relationship going forward. There is much to gain. The paper leads us to look at ways of improving/refining the detail of the partnership. It is not a 'do nothing' option.</p> <p>TP thanked TD and PM for this excellent, well referenced report. He supports the recommendation following the clear advantages stated in the report. It is essential however that the partnership is not seen as a creature of the Council and the independence of the organisation needs to be highlighted. The revolving Chair-ship, and independence of resourcing is good and should be emphasised. It would be useful to capture the in-kind support that board members provide – as a leverage for resources, in regards match funding. It would be good to focus on making the financial arrangements of the partnership more robust. The Feed-in Tariff income is present but the future needs to be considered.</p>	

<p>CB felt it was a great report and thanked PM and TD. He agreed with the recommendations and wants to build on the positives of the current arrangement. Defining the dynamic between the RCCP and ReadingCAN is now needed. The language used around 'RBC hosting' the partnership has brought confusion from the public in the past – with some assuming that RBC should be the only delivery agent for this work. If this paper is being shared for wider endorsement it would be useful to share that the Partnership is entirely independent of RBC and all the partners come willing, and on an equal footing. RBCs support for holding the budget, and the Support Officers HR employment and welfare is very useful. Could we consider a 'double identity' to support fundraising, independent of RBC, to support project management of the work in future?</p> <p>TRC supports the process and the rigour of paper. However, if we are going to achieve delivery of the action plans and the level of ambition needed to get to net zero by 2030 then diversity of income is very important. The need for a plan to develop new income streams is critical.</p> <p>PM felt that there are limited funding sources that we are currently excluded from. We need to be mindful that we don't end up competing alongside with other local charities for funds.</p> <p>PM/TD to investigate the idea of a double identity for the partnership – to meet finance challenges. A project pot or alike – to raise funds away from RBC.</p> <p>NG, from her experience of the funding landscape, suggests that consortium bids are popular and applications don't need to be RBC lead. The challenge is researching the current funding opportunities. The funding application process is a game we have to play and Option A does not challenge this.</p> <p>CB highlighted that it's not just the funding issue that needs to be considered but the willingness of others to engage if the partnership is separate from the council.</p> <p>TD asked for a vote from all on the recommendations of the paper – and there was unanimous support for Option 1 -refinement of the existing option.</p> <p>TD/PM will be in touch with board in regards next steps</p>	<p>TD/PM</p> <p>TD/PM</p>
<p><u>Budget update</u></p> <p>BB shared his apologies as the budget process is currently being reviewed, and so detailed figures are currently not available. Item needs to be deferred.</p> <p>Currently we received circa £20k per annum from the Feed-in tariffs of the solar panels on community buildings throughout Reading. This started in 2012 and there are 11 years left. We have a £48K surplus that needs to be run down over time. This year's costs are staff costs, and the development cost for the strategy and website (£22k). £20k spent over and above income.</p> <p>BB to share updated budget figures with all</p>	<p>BB</p>

<p>The ability to claim expenses by volunteers still needs to be addressed. BB clarified that RBC operates a financial process where the suppliers need to be known first. It's cumbersome and not ideal for small scale expenses. KB is in the process of applying for a RCCP credit card, but as yet there is no solution for 'petty cash' in RBC options.</p> <p>We need to think about longer term funding ideas. There is 11 years left on Feed-in tariff, but what will happen after this time. The money will stop as we don't envisage asking for payments from hosts of our solar panels. Reading Hydro will provide some income in the future, once they are up and running.</p> <p>BB/KB/PM to look into volunteer expenses/petty cash options again. Could a current account be set up for these payments?</p> <p>TRC: We want the partnership to show independence from the council, yet our finances are controlled by their limitations. This seems in conflict and it would be symbolic if we could control our own finances.</p> <p>TM: Charities also have challenges paying back volunteers for expenses.</p>	<p>KB/PM/BB</p>
<p><u>Reporting on action plan</u> – agreed process</p> <p>There was a theme lead meeting last week that provided more time for an update from all Leads on their action plans. Here we only require a 1min update</p> <p>Ben – Energy – much activity around the Retro Fitting agenda: RBC secured grant funding and also the wider voucher scheme. Liaison with SSE aligning around Reading 2030 net zero vision, network investment would sure great corporate support. The RBC depot: 'ADEPT project' – electrification agenda, electric bin lorries – a best practice sample.</p> <p>TP - Transport – gave a brief update. TD to to discuss with PM/BB/TP/CM as to best way to report on transport in RCCP.</p> <p>Paul – Resources theme aims to move Reading towards becoming a zero waste circular town. The delivery partners are engaged and enthusiastic. RBC and Re3 – launched domestic food collection across Reading. Reading UK CIC - is extending the range of recycling across the 2 BID areas – so they can become 'the first Green BID'. Reading's Circular Economy Club - is establishing itself as the go-to hub for people interested in growing the circular economy in Reading. During lockdown it has been holding fortnightly 'circular coffee + conversation' meet-ups on zoom. Each has an invited speaker. This year's themes are food, fashion, nature and well-being, tech. Priorities for the resources theme going forward: To identify delivery roles on some of the actions, rejuvenate the Resources Theme Group for the delivery phase, and engage more widely to assemble a broader coalition.</p> <p>NG - Health – it's been really challenging to progress connections with health institutions given the current national COVID situation. Need some support in engaging health decision makers. Engagement will also be challenging due to restructuring of NHS.</p> <p>PHa and NG to discuss health action plan</p>	<p>TD</p> <p>NG/PHa</p>

Log-in details have now been sent to all theme leads interested in contributing directly to website, with a link to a training video on uploading information
 We have created a set of templates for those who don't want to upload their own content. All online in 'website toolkit' folder.

Still to do: improvements to events calendar, repurpose/update some migrated blog content and build out "good news stories" section which is currently hidden and needs minimum content to make it viable

Communications and engagement overview

First termly newsletter has gone out to all Reading schools which looks great. Thank you KB and Harriet Neville for compiling this. All theme leads to feed in content going forward

Social media profile is beginning to build – thanks to Faye Hargreaves. We are establishing KPIs for website and social media

- Twitter – 941 followers
- Facebook – 82 likes, 92 followers (!)
- Instagram – 336 followers (from November start)
- Mailchimp – 59 new subscribers through the website
- Website traffic – to be confirmed

We are also building out our systems and processes to feed ongoing programme development. Developing a campaign flow chart to help plan future work d KB to share the Campaign flow chart with all theme leads.

The Comms and engagement team meets on first Monday monthly to plan the detail of content for the two months ahead and prepare six months ahead. We plan our programme based on input from 4 sources:

- Events and deliverables arising from the action plan or comms plan
- Milestones arising from RBC or delivery partners – eg Food Waste launch
- National and International Campaigns and "Days" – eg Earth Hour
- Theme lead input required: So we can plan in any events, campaigns or content arising from your action plans and To explore opportunities to piggy-back on national or international campaigns

All board members and theme leads are asked to amplify our campaigns through their personal and professional social media networks

IT infrastructure for partnership:

It is recognised that we need a shared IT platform for all theme leads and partnership staff to access. Google workspace has been determined the most suitable. It was agreed that the partnership move away from individuals holding documents and information should be under partnership control, a collective ownership.

Theme lead emails are being restored
 These are now associated with Google Workspace which provides:

- Cloud-based storage on Google Drive
- Google Meet video conferencing for up to 100 people/24 hours
- Google Rooms collaboration space
- Shared calendars and team chat

2nd Anniversary of RBC climate emergency declaration on 26th Feb– should this be marked in some way? A call to action ahead of COP 26.

Theme Leads

All

KB

Theme Leads

All

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - urge RBC to Join Race to Zero by joining Climate Ambition Alliance. - Reading CAN to focus on strong calls to action for our 3 audiences: individuals (sign up to the website pledge), businesses (sign up to the website pledge) and schools (Lets go Zero-decarbonising school building) <p>TD agreed that he would make a proposal to the University of Reading that it should sign up to Race to Zero pledge on RCCP.</p>	
<p><u>Report on the 2013-2020 strategy</u></p> <p>The report of the 2013-2020 strategy was shared, and PM highlighted the key findings which were: that the team did what we said we would do and did achieve the carbon targets too (34% reduction in Reading's emissions during this timeframe). It's a good news story that could be publicised, although we recognise that the 34% by 2020, is very different to our current target of net zero by 2030.</p> <p>PM/TRC To link to the Feb 26th anniversary press launch.</p>	PM/TRC
<p><u>AOB</u></p> <p>NG highlighted her past challenges in working on google drive with RBC contacts. Their IT is often not compatible. TRC/KB to investigate this further</p> <p>Should we try and go to COP26? We have until March 5th to submit a proposal of attending as a civil society organisation. Free to attend - Costs for transport and accommodation. We are in Alok Sharma constituency. Food for thought</p> <p>TM raised the idea again of using some budget to fund a person to write grant submissions on behalf of the partnership, as funding is now a barrier to progression in some of her theme action areas. PM felt there was much funding expertise around the table which should be exhausted before we spend any money, he and others perhaps are happy to help. Investment in crowd funding schemes needs to be considered to maximise funding streams</p> <p>PM/TD to look at Crowd sourcing for schemes alongside the governance review.</p> <p>BB stated Oxford is leading on this agenda at the moment. He will talk more to Reading Community Energy Society about their interest in a widening their brief - beyond solar. Into perhaps Retrofit or other renewable energy opportunities. Links to Reading Hydro.</p> <p>Date for the next meeting: Tues 18th May 10-12noon</p>	<p>TRC/KB</p> <p>PM/TD</p> <p>BB</p>