



goring and streatley **community energy**

The Parish Clerk  
Goring Parish Council  
Old Jubilee Fire Station  
Red Cross Road  
Goring, RG8 9HG

Our Ref: PL/026  
9<sup>th</sup> October 2016

## **GORING AND STREATLEY HYDRO PROJECT**

Dear Sir

With reference to your letter of 16<sup>th</sup> June, received by myself as an email on 3rd August. As we previously advised you we would not be able to respond until we had held a meeting in mid-September, and I am pleased to say we can now reply to your letter.

We have been advised that in the light of the ongoing judicial review process, we should not engage in direct discussion with the parish council (as the Claimant) regarding the hydro scheme until this matter has been settled by the Courts. All information relevant to the planning application is available in the relevant planning documents which you already have access to.

However, as a number of your questions do not have any relevance to either the planning process or the judicial review, we feel that being open about our organisation and plans is in the spirit of our society's principles, and we feel that we should respond to these.

Firstly you state that "there has been some confusion as to the structure of your organisation." It is a matter of public knowledge, and described on our website, that we are registered as a Community Benefit Society (Registered No. 7016 under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014). This type of organisation is commonly used for the purpose of community energy schemes like ours.

With regard to the financial viability of the scheme, at the time of receiving planning we had a financial model that demonstrated that the scheme could operate at a profit, whilst also providing a return on investment to shareholders and paying an annual sum into a community fund for the benefit of Goring and Streatley. As I am sure you will understand, financial matters can change rapidly, but we do not intend to revisit the financial modelling until after the judicial review has been concluded.

With regard to demonstrating levels of local support, the purpose of our recent survey was not to ascertain overall support for the scheme, but to reconcile our mailing lists and to recruit further active members on to both the hydro scheme and the wider sustainability group. As we have previously reported in the Goring Gap News, at our last public meeting at the Goring Village Hall we had well over 100 people attend with pretty much unanimous support (i.e. more people than objected to the planning proposals). We remain confident that the scheme retains high levels of local support.



Lastly, with regard to potential conflicts of interest. Our Directors have an obligation to manage any such potential conflicts of interest in a transparent and proper manner just like any other organisation. Good governance and a democratic ownership structure underpin the Community Benefit Society model and as an FCA registered organisation, we take such matters very seriously.

For reference, Lisa works for an award winning, not-for-profit organisation that supports and raises finance for community groups and charities. As a volunteer led organisation, we feel proud that we have managed to attract such high calibre locals from Goring and Streatley to work tirelessly on this project and support it over the last ten years. A point I'm sure the Goring Parish Council can appreciate in your own work.

I hope that this response goes some way to answer your queries.

For and on behalf of Goring and Streatley Community Energy Ltd

Dr Tim Chatterton

Director.