



## **Election to the Board of Directors for Bath & West Community Energy**

### **2015 Candidates Statements For:**

Ms Nicolette Boater

Mr Alan Joslin

Ms Jane Laurie

Ms Pam Penkman

Mr Rob Wills

We are keen to ensure we have a board that is diverse and able to draw on a cross section of skills and experience. Non Executive Directors will play an important role in holding the executive to account and representing member interests. We would hope that new non executive directors might bring some of the following skills or experience to the board to enhance the board's ability to assess risks and make rational decisions; business management, organisational development/operations, financial or legal skills, strong links with the community and/or experience of community action, but most importantly a sense of enthusiasm and commitment to what BWCE is trying to achieve.

We asked the candidates to:

*Please tell us why you would make a good Director. **Please do not write more than 750 words in total.** Bath & West Community Energy reserves the right to edit statements over 750 words. You should include a brief description of why you want to be a trustee and what specific skills you will bring to the Board. This information will be distributed to members with election ballot papers and will help people decide who to vote for in the election at the AGM on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2015.*

**Candidate: Nicolette Boater  
Bath**

### **My interest, motivation and commitment**

As a business professional, I am excited by the growth potential inherent in BWCE's combination of community ownership, ethical investment, renewable energy generation and wider promotion of sustainable living, and whilst aware that in an ever changing and challenging political and economic landscape, continuing success cannot be taken for granted, I would love to work with the BWCE board to deliver this.

At a personal level, I welcome the opportunity to make a high value added contribution in and for my local community, and am well positioned to put in the time and effort this requires.

### **The proven expertise I would bring**

- Rigorous and effective strategic oversight and operational scrutiny of a business  
Ensuring the effective and efficient delivery of outcomes in accordance with an organisation's purpose and vision, and monitoring and responding to the effects of change on its business environment so as to identify opportunities, mitigate risks and avert errors;
- Economics, public policy and finance  
My dominant mindset is that of an economist seeking to make the most of scarce resources (whether those private to a business or individual, or public ones such as our physical environment and social wellbeing) and to this end have associated skills in business strategy, financial and market analysis, public policy, multiple stakeholder and project management;
- Working for sustained community advantage  
Developing local solutions with and for local people, representing their interests to relevant decision-makers and understanding the unique and critical success factors for a community enterprise.

### **The networks and experience I would draw on**

- As a manager and adviser  
I have 20+ years of experience of working at Board, Director and primary decision-maker level on diverse strategic, business management, and regulatory issues and especially in periods of major change. Latterly this has been as an independent adviser and previously for global professional services firms, strategic consultancies and in investment banking;
- Of regulated utilities and associated markets  
Although my experience spans several industries, much is in investment intensive and politically sensitive infrastructure ones. Recently I have been reviewing the market structure and evolving competition and regulatory framework of the major UK utilities, in the light of the customer, environmental and economic challenges these industries face over the next quarter century. The knowledge and insights gained from this will be particularly relevant to the BWCE Board in evaluating the potential, risks and feasibility of entering the retail energy supply market in the near future;
- In local, regional and national government  
I have undertaken many assignments for and held positions in various governmental bodies, and am a frequent participant in associated policy forums. Of particular relevance is my experience as an Overview & Scrutiny Officer for the 2007-11 administration of Bath & North East Somerset Council, where amongst other things I played a leading role in catalysing action on the environmental sustainability of buildings agenda in this locality. I have also served as a Director of Strategy for the East of England Development Agency

and as a Charges Control economist at OFWAT;

- As a community-minded member of three generations of a family living in and around Bath  
Throughout my life, and especially in the years when tied to the needs of young children, I have contributed to various amenity groups, community initiatives and school activities. Not least of these is BWCE, of which I have been an active and informed member since 2011 (making astute contributions at the March 2015 strategy meeting, all AGMs, and in various BWCE blogs as well as assisting stakeholders secure a win-win resolution of the September 2014 attempted call in of the Wilmington Farm solar array loan).

**Candidate: Alan Joslin**  
**Marlborough, Wilts**

It is a sobering thought that over 95% of all fossil fuel burnt by mankind since the dawn of existence has taken place since the beginning of the twentieth century. As well as emissions of billions of tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, the energy from the sun stored in gas, oil, and coal over millions of years has been released into this planet's fragile environment in what is, relative to the time there has been life on earth, little more a mere instant in time. Such rapid depletion of natural resources is not sustainable for more than a few centuries, and the vast majority of scientists agree that the evidence of climate change is now irrefutable. Renewable energy, coupled with improved energy efficiency at the user end, must be the essential aim in order to protect future generations. We need BWCE and similar organisations to encourage and, where applicable, to develop and grow the cost-effective conversion of energy supplied by the sun in current timescales as replacements for fossil fuel. Surplus funds generated can then be applied to energy efficiency projects, leading to wins at both ends of the energy supply chain.

I am a chartered engineer who comes from the "dark side" of the energy industry. My career began with my engineering degree at Cambridge, and spanned over 40 years working in the electricity industry. Half that time was spent in large coal-fired power stations, and the rest was at corporate level with one of the big-six electricity suppliers, where I was the corporate engineer for performance. But I was one of the good guys. I focussed on improving the performance of electricity generation, particularly the energy efficiency of the process – squeezing out as much as possible usable power from the energy in the fuel – be it fossil fuel or biomass - and thus minimising the emissions of waste energy and greenhouse gases.

I contributed to projects to convert large coal-fired boilers to use renewable fuels. My input was not so much to the physical engineering changes, but to the understanding of how reliability and efficiency would be impacted, and to set up the necessary monitoring and reporting processes. I was also responsible for accurate reporting of greenhouse gas emissions for my company. I have an in-depth understanding of energy markets and how the electricity system is operated to balance supply and demand. Unexpected plant failure and over-run of major projects were major concerns of the electricity industry, and to address these I introduced novel risk management processes that would be applicable to renewable energy projects.

I am a member of BWCE and one other similar cooperative, and, through family members, am associated with two others. I see 100% renewable energy as a laudable aspiration, but one that is not attainable for the foreseeable future. Meeting the UK peak electricity demand on a cold, still January evening with no solar PV generation, little from wind, very limited hydro, and new storage technologies in their infancy - without a contribution from fossil fuels - may not be possible for a very long time, but without the parts played by BWCE and similar organisations that day will be much longer off. I trust that the experience I would bring to the Board of BWCE as a non-executive director would help BWCE to meet its goals.

**Candidate: Jane Laurie**  
**Bradford on Avon, Wilts**

BWCE has played a pioneering role in developing a new community based way of generating, using and thinking about energy, and its vision for the future is just as exciting. I would welcome the chance to contribute my own skills, experience and enthusiasm to help take this forward.

I have a social science background, with an MA in Rural Social Development. Following 15 years working in Africa and Central America (eg as VSO Field Director), I returned home to Bradford on Avon in 1995. Building on my long-term interest in behaviour change, community development and environmental issues, I then spent 10+ years working for the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, employed first as the county Local Agenda 21 Co-ordinator and then as the Trust's Head of Sustainable Communities. During this time, I developed and managed a wide-ranging programme of work, including energy (eg EST advice service for Wiltshire, community outreach, health and affordable warmth projects), waste minimization, local food, and community wildlife, with 20+ staff and an annual budget of c£1million. I subsequently worked with other Wildlife Trusts throughout the South West, and nationally, to support development of climate change policies and programmes. In 2011, I completed an MSc in Energy and Environmental Studies at the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT). More recently (2012-2014), I worked for Wiltshire Council to deliver the communities aspect of an EU energy project, in partnership with French and other South West local authorities.

In 2006, I was a founder member of the Climate Friendly Bradford on Avon community group, and then one of the first directors when a Community Interest Company was established (2009-2011). During this time, I played a lead role in fundraising and management of CFB's energy initiatives, with £200k+ invested in the community, to achieve practical results (eg 50% reduction in gas consumption by the local primary school). I currently chair the newly established Wiltshire and Swindon Climate Action Network. I also help run our family organic vineyard and smallholding, just outside Bradford on Avon.

Working towards a sustainable and low carbon society has been central to my personal and professional life over the past 20 years. At the heart of this is the belief that practical initiatives at community level can help spur on action by national decision-makers.

I can offer skills and experience in the following areas:

- Low carbon community action, including the role of communities in behaviour change
- Energy
- Management (staff & volunteers), fundraising, monitoring & evaluation etc
- Partnership development, with extensive local contacts within Wiltshire and more widely.

My experience lies mostly in the "people and community" aspect of energy, and so I'm particularly excited by BWCE's 2015 priorities around demand management, local supply, energy efficiency and working with local communities. I think there is the potential for developing further ground-breaking work in the move towards the Big 60,000 rather than the Big Six, and I'm sure that BWCE will continue to be at the forefront of this nationally. I'd enjoy being a non-executive director, I'd bring plenty of energy and enthusiasm to the role, and I'd learn a lot, too.

**Candidate: Pam Penkman  
Bath**

In putting myself forward as a non-executive director of BWCE, I have reflected on what I can bring to the board under two headings: motivation; and skills & experience.

### Motivation

I have been interested in the topics of energy saving and renewable energy for many years, possibly sparked off by seeing the Burgar Hill test wind turbine on Orkney back in the 1980s. I believe the reduction of carbon emissions is essential in order to mitigate human induced climate change, although I like to stress to climate change sceptics that regardless of one's convictions on that score it makes no sense to waste finite resources when other, sustainable, means of energy generation exist and when there is scope to reduce energy consumption in all contexts world-wide.

I have demonstrated my motivation and convictions by investing in energy generation schemes, BWCE being my major investment and interest in this field. I would now like to increase my contribution to BWCE and its objectives and see the role of non-executive director (NED) as being the most appropriate vehicle for me to achieve this aim.

The logical step from the local generation of energy is the local sale/supply of energy, and I support the current BWCE board's intention to investigate the establishment of a community owned supply company, as outlined in the 2012-2015 Business Plan. I also applaud BWCE's support for other local enterprises, such as the Frome Renewable Energy Co-op, and its support for a variety of local social energy initiatives through the community fund.

### Skills & Experience

Apart from my interest in BWCE, through my shareholding and shared principles, I am also qualified technically and through experience to take up a directorship. I am a professionally qualified company secretary so know the ins and outs of company and commercial law, can read a set of accounts and understand the parameters of business finance. I have recently retired from the position of partner and company secretary in BuroHappold Engineering, a locally-based but international firm of consulting engineers. For over 18 years I was a key member of the team navigating the firm through a period of rapid growth and global expansion, including the establishment of a dozen or more companies outside the UK through which to operate. This usually meant doing something for the first time in a new place and in a strange environment, in terms of language, legalities and business practice. It's worth noting that the ability to take on this kind of challenge is essential when developing a new business, as BWCE has done, and in recognising the limitations of one business model and being prepared to move to another when necessary.

In BuroHappold, my particular responsibility was the development and maintenance of a robust form of corporate governance and corporate structure appropriate to a global firm. I have therefore spent many hours in board meetings, not as a director but as the company secretary tasked with ensuring that processes are followed, decisions are made on the basis of the best information available, and actions are communicated and carried out as intended by the board. I have contributed to policy and strategy development and implementation, budgeting, resource management and finance. Additionally, aside from my company

secretarial role, I managed BuroHappold's in-house team of commercial lawyers, reported to the board on health and safety issues across the entire firm, and oversaw the procurement of a complex portfolio of insurance covers. I have also briefed new NEDs joining the board and have observed them in action at board meetings.

Taken as a whole my work experience has been excellent preparation for undertaking a directorship role, and developing a keen appreciation of what is, and is not, required of a NED. Specifically, the purpose of the NED element of a board is to complement the skills and experience of the executive directors and, most significantly, to act as a sounding board for their plans and proposals and if necessary challenge those proposals. In doing this, a NED is carrying out his or her duty to protect the investment of members as a whole and to ensure that BWCE retains the ethos which attracted the members to invest in the first place.

So, to conclude, my enthusiasm for and commitment to community energy initiatives are matched by a solid grounding in business, management and board-level experience, which I am confident will complement and strengthen the BWCE board.

**Candidate: Rob Wills  
Bath**

I am aged 62 and semi retired.

My current "jobs" are:

1. Researching social and economic issues for national news media.
2. As an independent consultant and as part of Bath Carers Centre I present to and interview undergraduates at the University of Bath Faculty of Social Work and Applied Social Studies with specific reference to Carers and Alzheimer's Dementia.
3. I am part of the B&NES Clinical Commissioning Group.

**From 1969 – 2000:**

My experience was in company management, mainly engineering, as company accountant / financial director.

I have owned and ridden racehorses, also working on course as a bookmaker.

**Leisure:**

I play bridge, backgammon and poker professionally, live and online winning tournaments against some world class opponents.

I play other online games just for fun.

**What Could I Contribute to BWCE?**

As an experienced business manager I understand not just the "financial mechanics" but the position of whatever industry I am involved in has in the wider world. In my researcher role I often come across issues which could directly affect BWCE and have already communicated same to the board.

Solar energy, tidal and wind power are the fuel generating methods that must replace the dwindling supplies of fossil fuels. Cleaner energy is desperately needed to halt climate change and arrest the increasing pollution that is choking much of the developed world.

The challenge, for non executive directors, is to ensure that the genius of the BWCE board directors and technical engineers stays focused on continuing the successes already achieved and to objectively question new ideas for growth to ensure viability and protect the core purpose.