Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 27th Sept 2023 2pm



Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy LESS CARBON, MORE WILDLIFE

Chair's welcome Julian Barlow

Good afternoon and welcome to Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy's 2023 AGM.

I'm delighted so many of you were able to join us today, as we consider how far we've come since we met in 2022 and set out our aims and objectives for the year ahead.

As ever, all our efforts have and will continue to be shaped by our desire to reduce carbon and encourage the proliferation of wildlife across Wiltshire.

It's been an exciting period which has seen us act as a catalyst for change by supporting local projects with grants from our Community Fund, and also on our own terms as we introduced WWCE's energy advice service, 'Keeping Warm This Winter'.

Both of our new solar projects have made considerable progress, with 2024 promising to be another prosperous year for the organisation.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support.





Agenda Julian Barlow

- 1. Revisit our aims and objectives Julian Barlow, Chair
- 2. Minutes of last year's meeting and quorum Julian Barlow, Chair
- 3. Technical performance of solar farms Tom Cosgrove, CfR
- 4. Land management Rob Gillies, Director
- 5. Community fund Jon Bateman, CF panel chair and Lucy Normington, Director
- 6. Communications Russell Abbott, Director
- 7. Presentation of the audited annual accounts to end March 2023 Angela Wright, Account and Company Secretary
- 8. Financial performance of the group, member interest and capital repayment Angela Wright, Account and Company Secretary
- 9. Future strategy Julian Barlow, Chair
- 10. Proposals and resolutions Julian Barlow, Chair
 - a) approval of proposed member's interest payment
 - b) approval of proposed Community Fund Payment
 - c) election and re-election of directors

The minutes of the 2021/22 AGM are available to download in the documents section on the Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy website: <u>https://www.wwce.org/documents</u>



Our aims and objectives Julian Barlow

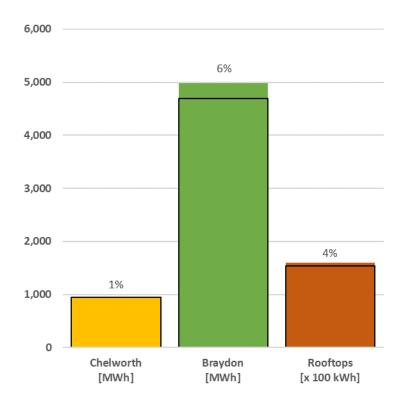
- > Deliver less carbon, more Wildlife in Wiltshire.
- Identify new sites for solar as well as diversifying into other forms of energy production.
- Work more closely with the WWT to complement their strategic aims stated as "...We will support community based renewable energy generation and will work with others in encouraging people to take action." This means working more closely together.
- Generate a greater number of applications for grants via the Community Fund which means greater effort to communicate with those living in the county.
- Retain a reasonable return on investment for those who placed their faith and funds in the organisation at its outset.
- Examine how we can align energy production with enhancing biodiversity to increase wildlife, insects, flora and fauna in and around our sites, and develop a way to audit this enhancement.
- Increase our share of voice in relation to climate-based issues in the county.



Technical performance Tom Cosgrove, CfR CIC, Asset Manager

Technical performance

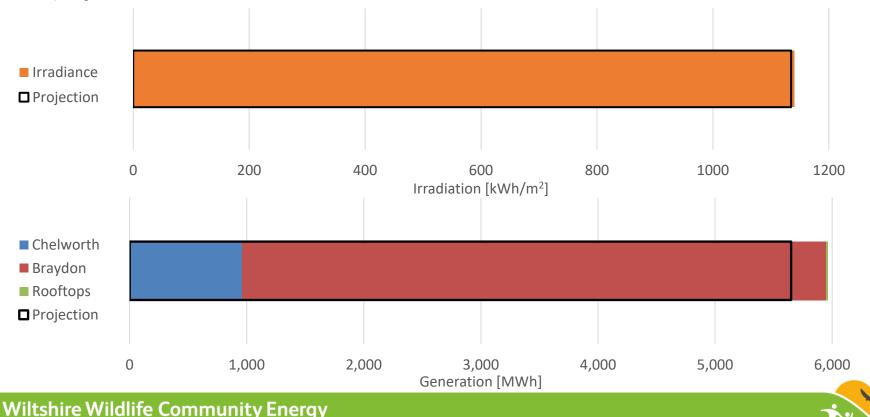
- This year, total generation was 5.57% ahead of projections
- Chelworth performed as expected, exceeding its generation projection for the year by **1%**.
- Braydon continues to do well, surpassing its generation projection by **6%**.
- The WWCE rooftop sites were **4%** above their original projection.





Technical performance

- Average irradiance this year totalled at **1161 kWh/m²**, in line with the site's projected figure of **1135 kWh/m²**.
- This year, the WWCE portfolio generated **5965 MWh**, enough energy to power **1656** average UK homes for a year*.
- The target for the portfolio was **5650 MWh**, meaning we were, in overall, **5.57% ahead of projections.**



LESS CARBON, MORE WILDLIFE

Pro-active management

Chelworth



- Following further inverter failures, a 3rd inverter repowering was completed. Inverter failures across the site have slowed with the new units and majority of old units currently under warranty.
- A thorough module clean was completed on site in October 2022 to remove any soiling, in particular lichen, from the panels to good effect.

Braydon

- Drone thermography survey completed on the solar farm in early July 2023. Minor recommendation for vegetation cutting, which has been completed, and investigations of a small number of panel diodes which is being discussed with BSR currently.
- A new O&M agreement was signed with BSR in early 2023 for a further 3 years with an extended planned maintenance works scope.



Rooftops



- CfR conducted an annual visual inspection of all arrays in late 2022. The Langford Lakes and Clattinger arrays were in good working order. Shading from nearby trees is impacting the Fisheries Cottage array, possible mitigation measures are being discussed with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust currently.
- All three rooftop arrays continue to be monitored using remote metering equipment installed in late 2021. This allows us to check for faults and track the arrays' performance. And obtain Feedin-Tariff meter reads and administer payments quickly and efficiently.



'Less carbon, more wildlife'

Land Management Rob Gillies, Director

Update

- Land management activity continues at both Braydon and Chelworth solar parks, focusing on trees, hedgerows, grassland and reptile, insect and bird habitats.
- Re-introduced bee colonies to our hives at Chelworth.
- Ecologists from the WWT have conducted an assessment of biodiversity improvements at Chelworth and baseline habitat surveys at both sites.
- The Chelworth study confirmed that our land management is providing beneficial habitat for a range of wildlife including a range of protected and endangered bird species and a positive impact on endangered brown hairstreak butterfly populations.
- WWCE has taken part as panelist at two local community events on the role of solar panels in increasing biodiversity to promote our work and network with other local community energy companies.









Future improvements



- Ecology baseline surveys used to ensure ongoing land management regimes and ecological surveys continue to improve biodiversity, including:
- New land management plan for Chelworth (grassland, wildlife area)
- Consider future options with Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) regime e.g. sale of BNG credits
- Include wildlife and biodiversity aims in future renewable energy projects

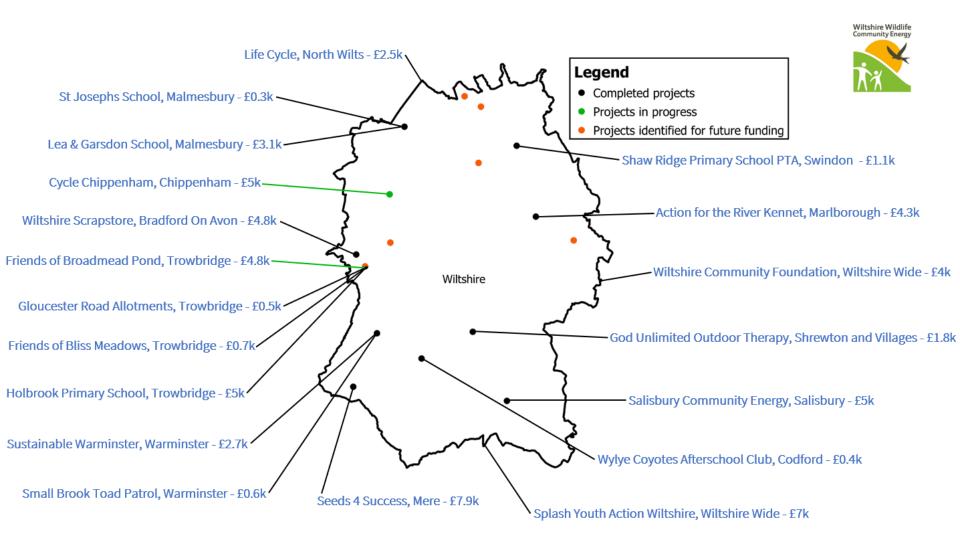


Community Fund Jon Bateman, CF Panel Chair Lucy Normington, WWCE member delegate

Community Fund Overview

- As set out in the original share offers, WWCE donates part of it surplus (historically £10k/yr) to local groups for funding projects as well as to WWT to support conservation work. Members can also donate their interest to support the fund. To date WWCE has supported some 20 projects (£60k)
- The Fund is democratically managed by a Panel comprising delegates from WWCE & WWT and is administered by WWT. As well as reviewing applications and awarding grants, panel members supervise and liaise with projects.
- In 2022 Ged Brockett joined the panel as WWT delegate but recruiting a WWCE member is still ongoing. Please get in touch if this is you.
- The 2022 AGM donated £10k to the Fund which with money carried over allowed a £15k budget for 2022-23. We were able to support several applications totalling £15k although one project had unforeseen issues resulting in a year-end balance £4.3k.
- Projects supported since inception are shown in the map which follows:







Looking Forward

- Wider publicity and greater awareness of WWCE has increased the number applications beyond our current resources and successful applications have been queued for funding as money becomes available. This is discussed in the Financial section of the AGM.
- Since the Community Fund's inception, 8 years ago, circumstances and priorities have changed . In particular:
 - Growing and indisputable evidence of the need for Carbon reduction
 - Wiltshire's declaration of a Climate Emergency
 - WWCE's improved cash flows following refinancing and higher electricity prices
 - WWCE's renewed focus on "More Wildlife and Less Carbon in Wiltshire".
- WWCE Directors have considered the role and objectives of the Community Fund and concluded that the outcomes of its Community investment can be better served by embodying WWCE's mission of "More Wildlife, Less Carbon" into the Community Fund's selection criteria. We believe members will support this move.
- An increased budget together with redefined objectives will permit the WWCE to broaden its Community Fund scope and support a wider range of local projects.



Community Fund in 2022-23

Applications were approved from voluntary organisations involved in wildlife, conservation, climate change, carbon reduction, education and fuel poverty.

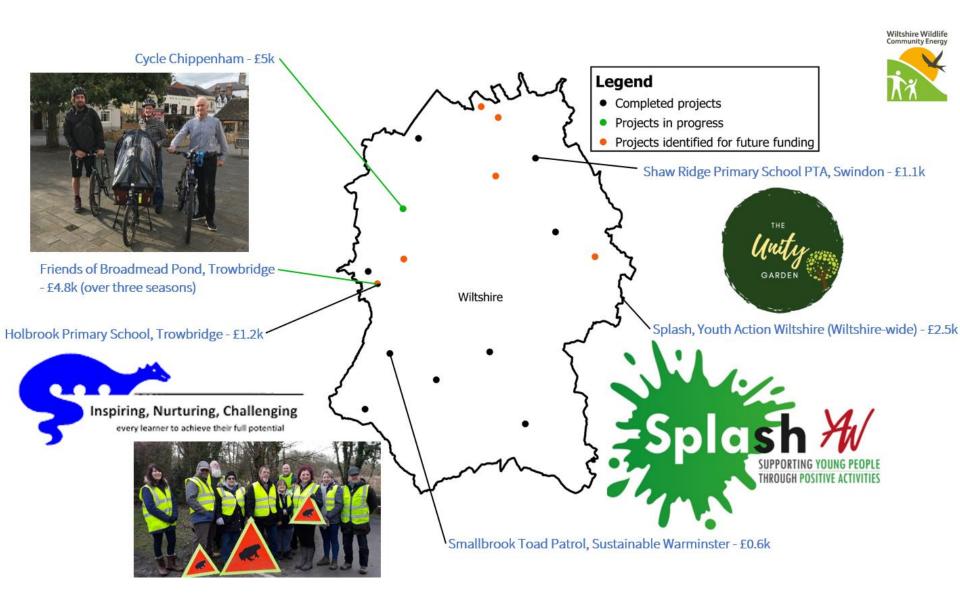
We supported the following projects worth over £15k.

- Splash, Youth Action Wiltshire (Wiltshire-wide) -£2.5k
- Smallbrook Toad Patrol, Sustainable Warminster -£0.6k
- Cycle Chippenham £5.0k
- Shaw Ridge Primary School PTA, Swindon £1.1k
- Holbrook Primary School, Trowbridge £1.2k
- Friends of Broadmead Pond, Trowbridge £4.8k

Also in 2023 we received 7 new applications totalling £27.6k. After existing commitments this leaves a yearend shortfall of £23.8k and projects have been prioritised and queued for funding as money becomes available. This is considered in the financial section.









Some of Our Projects in 2022-23

• Splash, Youth Action Wiltshire (Wiltshire-wide) - £2.5k

"Out There Project" providing activity and respite days for around 80 young carers during school holidays with engagement in and around nature across the county.

• Smallbrook Toad Patrol, Sustainable Warminster - £0.6k

We funded preservation of the substantial population of amphibians in Smallbrook Meadows Nature Reserve by recording and rescuing amphibians, raising awareness of their deaths on roads and the importance of conserving them and their habitat.

• Shaw Ridge Primary School PTA, Swindon - £1.1k We funded wildlife cameras, hedgehog houses, a bat detector and a display board made from recycled wood to increase biodiversity awareness in the school's Eco Garden.

• Holbrook Primary School, Trowbridge - £1.2k

We funded the school's wildlife garden with an outdoor learning hut, enhancing the pond, creating a bog garden habitat for reptiles and a pebble pool with solar powered water feature.

• Friends of Broadmead Pond, Trowbridge - £4.8k (over 3 years) We funded pond de-silting for 3 successive years to reduce water losses thereby improving water quality and creating a sustainable habitat for amphibians.



.... and finally; some delightful feedback from recent awards

Royal Wootton Bassett Cycle Path Project

• "That is great news! Thanks for letting us know!"

ARK Rain Garden at Great Bedwyn Project

• "Thank you so much, this is excellent news... I know the village hall committee and the Great Bedwyn Rain Gardens project group will be delighted that you are able to support us, so thank you!"

Meadowbrook Sensory Garden (Melksham) Project

• "This is the best news!!! All the team are so grateful"



Contact Us

We would be pleased to hear any comments, suggestions and applications to join the Community Fund Panel.

Please contact the **Community Fund Officer**:

Email: www.email: www.emailtons.com wiltons.com wiltons.com wiltons.com wiltons.com wiltons.com www.emailtons.com wiltons.com"/>wiltons.com wiltons.com"/>wiltons.com wiltons.com wiltons.com"/>wiltons.com wiltons.com wiltons.com"/>wiltons.com wiltons.com"/>wiltons.com wiltons.com"/>wiltons.com wiltons.com"/>wiltons.com wiltons.com wiltons.com wiltons.com <a hre

Phone: 01380 736096 or 07568 231015



Communications Russell Abbott, Director

Press outreach – Community Fund

Since last year's AGM, WWCE's external public relations consultant has continued to work with us to publicise the brilliant activity being undertaken by our Community Fund, showcasing projects benefitting from grants in the local media.

As a result of increased awareness, applications to the Fund have risen consistently, necessitating additional financing from the board.

After receipt of record numbers of applications publicity was paused and will resume again later this month, with the announcement of two new schemes which will soon be getting underway.



Press outreach – Keeping Warm This Winter

To support the launch of our first energy advice service, our public relations consultant worked with Jessica Thimbleby to promote planned sessions in Melksham, Purton and surrounding areas over the winter months.

The sessions were attended by over 350 residents, with considerable coverage achieved in publications covering the local areas. Further coverage was gained across social media and online following the visit from MP for Chippenham, Michelle Donelan.





VALLEY MENNE

ec of State and Chippenham MP celebrates Wiltshi

Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy

Press outreach – Letters from our Chair

Last year, our PR consultant began adapting news-led articles to make them suitable for submission to the letters pages of regional publications.

In the intervening period, she has produced and secured publication for several of these pieces in the Swindon Advertiser, Gazette & Herald, and Wiltshire Times.

Going forward, we are keen to build on our relationships with these editorial teams and explore opportunities for formal op-ed features in the local press.

Lectres to the Editor

ing can and do work hand in glove.

Letters to the Editor Support for solar at Tory leadership hopeful I

I note that Tory leadership hopeful Liz Truss paid a visit to Devizes in attempt to woo local Tory members ahead of the final leadership vote. Whilst many have cast their votes I can't imagine she'll enjoy tremendous success. Amid a raging energy crisis and with the worsening climate emergency. Truss' comments about prioritising farming over solar, and 'exploiting all the gas in the North Sea' will fall somewhat wide

of the mark with the major party members who have s provision of solar. Over 80% county is rural and agricultu core essential industry but an urbanite fails to understar the renewables and farmin and do work hand in glove. A YouGov survey showed three quarters of Tory me were pro-solar, including su ing ground mounted solar and 71% supported new of and offshore wind energy As of Wiltshire Wildlife Comr Energy, I know first-hand the of Wiltshire are largely in fav well-planned, considerate able developments and they be impressed by Truss' over remarks about their impact of production. If she had done her res

she'd know that solar farm

rarely situated on prime

land and are often co-locate

livestock grazing. They also

just a fraction of the space

up by golf courses, but the

been little mention of 'cha

the rules' to curb their im

note. At a time when rene

and other clean energy init

promise to drastically redu

country's reliance on fossil Truss would prefer to invest

projects which will leave the of Wiltshire facing eye water

ergy bills and leave us all exp volatile gas prices for years.

strategy a serious rethink, ar



Swindon Advertiser

LETTERS

Solar farms can work with agriculture

When former Prime Minister Liz Truss proposed the reclassification of farmland that would ban the development of solar across nearly 60 per cent of agricultural land in England, I was disappointed but not entirely surprised.

Her position on renewables, and solar in particular, was abundantly clear but profoundly misguided.

The argument that increasing solar developments poses a threat to the UK's food security is alien to me, having heard first-hand that this kind of diversification is often the only thing allowing farmers to continue operating at all.

As a rural county, Witshire currently has a large farming community, but I fear that pursuing this plan to limit solar will not only damage our ability to reach our net zero targets but will also result in many farmers going under altogether – and what will that do for food security?

Allowing farmers to diversify their landholdings enables them to thrive as a farming business, with most solar co-existing with grazing or other agricultural use.

About 40 per cent of farmers in the UK generate some form of renewable or lowcarbon energy via solar, wind and farm by-products and crops, according to the National Farmers' Union.

The industry body publicly defended the development of renewable projects across the UK's agricultural landscape, considering them a core part of its own net zero plan and a good diversification option for farmers struggling to balance the books in the face of rising costs of fertiliser, feed, and energy.

In a 2019 report, the same group found that farmers own or host about 1,200 solar farms which contribute to 70 per cent of the UK's solar panels.

The energy they generate meets about 10 per cent of the UK's needs, so the potential for farmers to improve energy security is huge.

Banning them from using their own land to support themselves and the planet seems absurd.

Around the world, there's an 'agrivoltaic' revolution taking place – with solar colocated alongside everything from fruit trees and veggies to cattle, bees, and vines. Let's hope Thereae Coffey sees the light and chooses to support, not stifle Witshire's farmers as they strive to achieve the same success.

If she wants to win the hea minds of her own party me

I'd suggest she give this dan Chairman

Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy

Councillor Compton Bassett Parish Council, Chair of Wiltshire Wildlife Energy Company

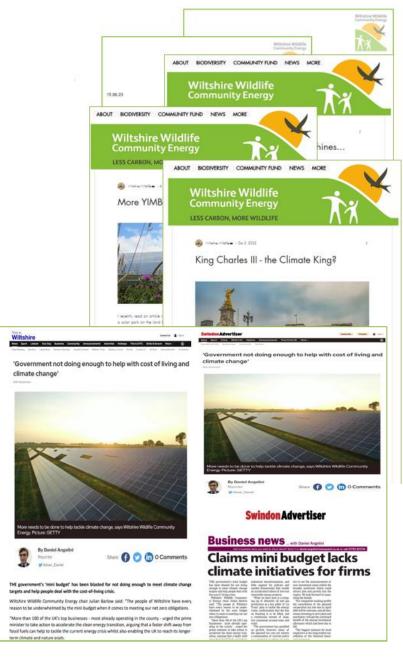
Julian I



Further content creation

In addition to press releases relating to the Community Fund and Keeping Warm This Winter programme, further material has been produced and disseminated in response to government Budgets, as well as in reply to commentary from local MPs.

Our external consultant also creates regular blog posts on behalf of our chair, uploads news releases to the website following their distribution, produces our quarterly newsletters, and republishes longer form social media posts featured on LinkedIn.



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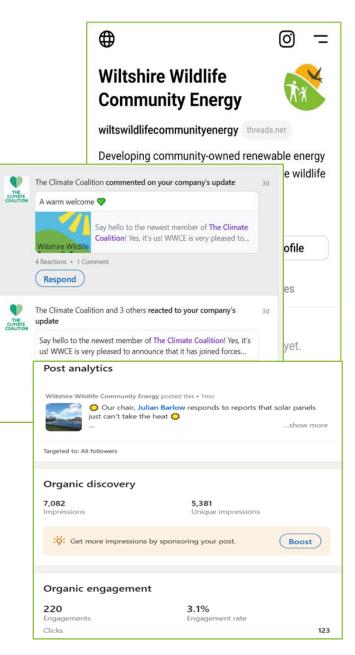
Social media & partnerships

At the last AGM, we told you that we had set up new accounts for WWCE on LinkedIn and Facebook. Since then, we have created a regular flow of content centred around relevant awareness days, tracking the news agenda, and sharing stories from partners and industry organisations.

Following the launch of new channel, Threads WWCE's PR consultant has created a placeholder account for future use if desired.

If you have a social media account and don't already, give us a follow!

To extend our network and our reach, WWCE has recently joined The Climate Coalition as a charity member. We will be looking for ways to work together and support relevant campaigns going forward.





Website revamp

Last year, WWCE invested in a rebranding of the organisation, creating a new logo and developing a fresher, cleaner look all round.

Going into next year, we intend to review the existing WWCE website and undertake an overhaul of all content. In addition, we hope to be able to redesign the site, bringing it more up-to-date and improving its accessibility.

Similarly, we hope to review the way we issue our newsletter in order to allow us to utilise a more flexible, modern template going forward.



About Us

Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy develops community-owned renewable energy projects that reduce carbon emissions and create more wildlife in Wiltshire. At the same time we generate local benefits through our community grant fund and returns to our community shareholders.

Wildshire Wildlife Community Energy was created in 2013. We own 3 rooftop solar arrays on Wildshire Wildlife Trust buildings and two community solar farms: Chelworth and Braydon Manor.

We are a not for profit community benefit society owned by our '1 member 1 vote' shareholders, governed by local volunteer directors and run for the benefit of Wiltshire communities. Surplus funds generated by our solar arrays go into a community grant fund to support community-led initiatives that help reduce carbon emissions and create more wildlife in Wiltshire.



Accounts and finances Angela Wright, Accountant and Company Secretary

Financial performance 12 months to March 2023



Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy LESS CARBON, MORE WILDLIFE

WWCE Financial results to 31 March 2023

£k	Last Year 31 March 22	Current Year 31 March 23	Comments (current vs last)	Next Year 31 March 24 (estimate)
Revenue	808	869	7.6% increase	1,143
COS & Admin	519	566	8.9% increase (inflation in contracts) and climate change officer	648
Operating Profit	289	303	4.9% increase on last year	535
Financing costs	281	311	Triodos cost reducing, but higher member interest paid	361
Profit before Tax	8	(7)* loss	Small loss due to member interest paid	134
Members Interest	4.5%	5.5%	Interest recognised in year it has been paid	7%* proposed



Future Financial Estimates

Our future financial projections show;

- Around a 30% increase in revenues expected over the project lifetime(s) due to short term increases in FIT and PPA prices
- Around a 24% increase in our cost base due to inflation
- This gives rise to an expected cash surplus which is more than double what our previous models and estimates have shown
- We still project full repayment of the Triodos loans (within loan terms) and member capital by 2042



Options available for projected increase in cash

- 1. Per our resolutions this year; we hope to pay member interest payments of 7% this year which is the maximum allowed by the FCA
- 2. Another resolution proposed is to increase our contribution to the community fund from £10k to £40k this year, and we hope to continue to donate in excess of this in future years
- 3. Continue to fund our efforts to promote home energy efficiency and carbon reduction through our *Keeping Warm this Winter* project and other initiatives
- 4. Explore possible investment in major projects to further our overall objective of *Less carbon, more wildlife* in Wiltshire



What we have achieved and future projects Julian Barlow

The WWCE group has achieved a lot in the last 12 months and has identified some exciting opportunities to continue to deliver on our objectives into the future, including;



Future projects: **Carbon Reduction Champion** Jessica Thimbleby

- New role jointly shared with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust since March 2022 to help both organisations achieve mutual aims of reducing carbon and boost nature's recovery by promoting more wildlife.
- At WWCE:
- Reduce carbon by developing a new initiative focused on energy efficiency and low income households
- o Promote and raise awareness of WWCE and the Community Fund



Future projects: **Carbon Reduction Champion** Jessica Thimbleby

Keeping Warm This Winter – November 2022 to April 2023

Objectives

- Help low income, vulnerable households
- Facilitate access to energy efficiency advice for householders
- Integrate energy efficiency solutions, signposting individuals to available grants for installation of energy efficiency measures
- Work with community groups, parish councils, businesses, organisations and individuals

Pop-up 'Energy Advice Cafes' to talk about and demonstrate simple, low-cost but effective ways to be warmer at home while reducing energy use.

Two geographic locations in Wiltshire, selected based on need including measures such as health deprivation, disability and the off-gas map.

Hosted by community organisations and groups working with the people likely to be most concerned about rising energy bills



Carbon Reduction Champion Jessica Thimbleby

In and around Melksham and Purton, hosted 16 events with community groups including lunch clubs, libraries, lip-reading club, community fridge, Foodbank and Children's Centre.

Spoke to 360 residents about a range of topics, such as draughtproofing, reducing damp and mould, and insulating homes.

"The Energy Cafe was very helpful to people in our group. People have been talking about what they can do to reduce energy bills which is good." Kay, Foodbank Manager





"Very useful... Carers often unable to work, have limited funds, so any energy / money saving advice is welcomed. I think the session got everyone thinking about ways to improve their own situation and gave them all some ideas." Ashley, Carer's Café

Attracted praise of Chippenham MP Michelle Donelan, who joined the WWCE team at Melksham Library

WWCE was grateful to partner with the Rural Communities Energy Support Network, run by the Centre for Sustainable Energy



Carbon Reduction Champion Jessica Thimbleby

Promoting WWCE and the Community Fund



ener

ENERGY SAVING TIPS
GRANTS AVAILABLE

LOW CARBON

ALTERNATIVES

Where Devizes Corn Exchange, The Market Place, SN10 1HS When Saturday 28th January, 2023 10am. – 2pm.



Community Energy presentation at Wiltshire Climate Alliance February 2023 workshop



Don't forget to follow/like WWCE's Facebook Page!



Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy

Devizes

SUPPORTED BY:

FREF

LESS CARBON, MORE WILDLIFE

Update from the Chair Julian Barlow

- > Braydon and Chelworth provide havens for wildlife.
- Strengthening the bond between WWCE and WWT.
- ➢ Record applications received by the Community Fund.
- Keeping Warm This Winter delivers energy advice to 360 Wiltshire residents and attracts the praise of Michelle Donelan MP.
- WWCE seeks to engage with local MPs to raise awareness of community energy and climate goals.
- > Petersfinger now under consultation, and Silverwood set to be online by April 2024.
- > Operating profit increases by 4.9% for the 22/23 year.
- ➢ Interest payments rose to 5.5%, with further increase to 7% expected for 2023.



Future prospects: **Petersfinger Farm** CfR

- Good progress has been made in developing the community solar project at Petersfinger Farm, Salisbury. The project secured its right to connect to the electricity network and a 30-year project option and lease is due to be signed which will enable the land to pass into the hands of the WWT should the project receive planning permission.
- But there do remain some hurdles to cross before we can bring the project to life. WWCE are undertaking a contractor tender to complete our understanding of the costs associated with the project's connection to the Wessex Water treatment plant, and the project's economics. The planning application for the project went live on Wiltshire Councils planning portal at the start of September.
- We remain optimistic that the stars will align for this project and hope to offer members the opportunity to invest in another wildlife enhancing community energy project in late 2024.



Future prospects: **Silverwood School** CfR

- Following the school receiving planning permission approval in late 2021 work started on a new classroom block, specialist teaching spaces and play areas. WWCE is partnering with the school to fund the construction of a 500kW rooftop solar array on the new buildings and to sell the generated green power to the school.
- Construction work continued throughout 2022 with adverse weather in early 2023 resulting in a significant delay to the work programme due to flooding on site. As such, the new commissioning date for the rooftop solar array on the new school building roof is April 2024.
- A community fund raise for the solar array is planned for early next year.







Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy LESS CARBON, MORE WILDLIFE

Proposals and resolutions Julian Barlow

- Proposal to pay 7% interest to members for the year to 31st March 2023, to be paid by end of November 2023.
- 2. Proposal to make a contribution of £40k to the community fund.
- 3. Election and re-election of directors:
 - 1. Rob Gillies is standing for re-election by the members
 - 2. Russell Abbott is standing for re-election by the members
 - 3. Lucy Normington is standing for re-election by the members
- 4. Sylvia Wyatt introduction



Any questions?



Thank you for attending

For further information on any of the topics discussed, please contact: info@wwce.org 01209 705 423

