

Community Climate Action Email November 11

Welcome to the latest edition of Community Climate Action, with all the latest news, events and resources in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. A special hello to new subscribers – including those who signed up whilst attending the recent Low Carbon Planning Events.

Did you know that around 300 people subscribe to this e-newsletter? If you know someone who would appreciate receiving it why not forward this edition to them and ask them to email ccan@mea.org.uk to subscribe to future editions (they should use the title 'subscribe' and include their name, email address and the name of any climate change community group they belong to). It helps us if each reader subscribes individually as we then know how many people are reading the newsletter.

From the Editor....

*Inspired by some of the initiatives I've come across whilst working with community groups taking action on climate change in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, I recently decided to help set up a bulk purchase solar panel scheme in my town. The scheme was due to launch in mid-November; so you can imagine that I wasn't very happy when I heard about the government's shock announcement on a proposed drop in feed-in-tariff rates from 12th December (**See Section C** for our FITS SPECIAL)! The good news is we managed to salvage the scheme to some extent – more details in the article in Section C.*

If you would like some inspiration from the work of other groups why not take a look at the Communities section of our website: www.everybodys-talking.org/communities-area/community-projects-case-studies or take a look at these great case studies of work going on in Leicestershire www.ruralcc.org.uk/ccs-case-studies.html. We're always looking for more case studies from Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire for the Everybody's Talking website. If you'd to inspire people by telling them about the work your group has done, just fill out the attached form and return it to ccan@mea.org.uk.

*Just a couple of days after the government's announcement I was cheered up when I attended a fantastic benefit comedy gig for a charity I support in my spare time (not an environmental one). If you need cheering up, or even if you don't, take a look at the item in **Section D** on Friends of the Earth's forthcoming comedy gig.*

Contents:

A. Local Events

Eco Houses Under Construction - Event Five
Workshop: Introduction to Renewable Energy for Your Home
Study Tour: Creative Home Energy Project
Derbyshire Eco Centre Courses
Climate Justice Event

B. Local News

Vote for Community-Owned Renewable Energy Projects in Nottinghamshire
Totally Locally Scheme on East Midland's Today

Study: Does Age Affect Attitude Towards Climate Change?
Inspiring Case Studies from Leicestershire
Free Business Energy Monitoring Kits in Derbyshire

C. National News and Events

China to Phase Out Incandescent Lightbulbs
FITS SPECIAL: Government Proposes Drastic and Sudden Drop in Feed-in-Tariff Rate

D. And Finally....

Laugh... Or the Polar Bear Gets It

A. Local Events

Eco Houses Under Construction - Event Five

Saturday 12th November, 2pm-5pm

Email info@wbecohouses.co.uk to book a free place and receive further details.

Organised by Transition West Bridgford

A rare opportunity to visit what is believed to be the UK's first Zero Carbon barn conversion in East Leake. The developer and owner of this home previously developed the UK's first Code 6 new build Zero Carbon homes in Upton, Northampton. The house is about to have further renewable technologies installed. The project has been complete for three years now, meaning that visitors can see three years worth of energy data for the home and the difference the renewables will make to this data.

Workshop: Introduction to Renewable Energy for Your Home

The Carriage Shop, Derby College

Thurs 2nd February, 6pm-9pm

Free to anyone living in Nottinghamshire or Derbyshire.

Book by emailing: caroline.harmon@mea.org.uk

Organised by Marches Energy Agency. Funded by the Local Authorities Energy Partnership.

A chance to find out about more about:

- The different renewable technologies available for domestic buildings.
- How they work and which buildings they are suitable for.
- The costs and benefits (both environmental and financial) involved.
- The different funding options available.

Study Tour: Creative Energy Homes Project

University Of Nottingham

Wed 7th March 2012, 2pm-approx.3:30pm

Free to anyone living in Nottinghamshire or Derbyshire.

Book by emailing: caroline.harmon@mea.org.uk

Organised by Marches Energy Agency. Funded by the Local Authorities Energy Partnership.

A chance to visit four innovative energy efficient homes built for research purposes at the University of Nottingham. The project aims to stimulate sustainable design ideas and

promote new ways of providing affordable, environmentally sustainable housing that are innovative in their design.

One home is a replica 1930's house, subsequently updated to show how retrofit measures can improve a home's energy efficiency. Another aims to be as eco friendly as possible, but also affordable. A third reflects an aim to build an energy efficient masonry home that can be mass produced. We will be able to go inside some of the houses and observe others from the outside.

Derbyshire Eco Centre Courses

Various dates

The Derbyshire Eco Centre – one of the county council's adult education centres - is holding a number of eco-themed courses this autumn, including topics as diverse as building a house from wood and making jewellery from recycled materials.

www.derbyshire.gov.uk/ecocentre

Climate Justice Event

Quaker Meeting House, Sheffield

15th November, 6:30pm for food, 7:30pm for speakers

Free. Bring food to share.

A fundraising event for anyone with an interested in climate justice, which aims to support ordinary South Africans to mobilise to voice their opinions about climate change. Speakers include Rehad Desai, and visiting South African film maker and community organiser, and Suzanne Jeffrey, a Trade Unionist involved in developing the One Million Climate Jobs Campaign.

B. Local News

Vote for Community-Owned Renewable Energy Projects in Nottinghamshire

EnergyShare, a new scheme set up by British Gas to distribute millions of pounds of funding to community-owned renewable energy projects, is looking for your votes for projects – including some in Nottinghamshire.

After thousands of groups around the country registered on the site earlier this year, just 100 were chosen to go through to the next round of votes. Five of these: Meadows Ozone Energy Services Limited, The Greener Youth Club, Edwalton Primary School, Newstead Wind and Willow Wind, are in Nottinghamshire. Now, those groups need your vote to be chosen to receive a share of £500,000 worth of funding towards their community-owned renewable project. Vote here:

www.energyshare.com/groups/fund100/.

Don't worry if you didn't register with the scheme – this is the first of several promised rounds which, in total, will distribute £3 million to community-owned renewable energy projects around the UK over the next three years.

Totally Locally Scheme on East Midland's Today

A scheme to encourage people in West Bridgford to support their local economy has been featured on East Midlands Today. The scheme's organisers estimate that if everyone living in West Bridgford spent £5 a week in local shop, instead of spending it at the supermarket, that the local economy would benefit to the tune of £9.3 million a year. <http://totally-locally.co.uk/westbridgford/>

Study: Does Age Affect Attitudes Towards Climate Change?

One of MEA's (the charity which produces this newsletter) volunteers is currently carrying out a survey looking at influence of age on people's knowledge, attitudes and behaviour towards climate change as part of her dissertation. If you'd like to help, please take ten minutes to fill out this survey: www.surveymonkey.com/s/GFJX7YX.

Inspiring Case Studies from Leicestershire

Looking for inspiration for environmental projects for your area? This website has lots of case studies of exciting projects in Leicestershire including a village which took thermal image pictures of almost everyone home in its village and the installation of solar panels on a Sikh temple: www.ruralcc.org.uk/ccs-case-studies.html.

C. National News

China to Phase Out Incandescent Lightbulbs

The Chinese government has pledged to ensure the one billion incandescent lightbulbs used in China each year are replaced with energy saving bulbs over the next five years. Although it hasn't ruled out manufacturing bulbs for export, the government will phase out the importing of incandescent bulbs and will gradually remove them from shops shelves. By contrast, the US government recently passed legislation which stops the government funding the enforcement of phasing out low energy lightbulbs.

www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/nov/04/china-phase-out-incandescent-lightbulbs.

The £3000 Eco Friendly House

If you'd like to live in an eco friendly home but can't afford ordinary property prices, this could be the answer. Simon Dale has built a home from locally sourced materials and 'rubbish'. It draws water from a nearby spring, using solar panels to provide electricity and has a composting loo. All for £3000!

www.simondale.net/house/index.htm

FITS SPECIAL: Government Proposes Drastic and Sudden Drop in Feed-in-Tariff Rate

The government has announced proposals which will more than halve the payments people receive from their energy company for generating energy from solar photovoltaic (pv) panels from 12th December 2012. The cuts, from 43.3p per kWh generated to 21.0p would almost double the payback period for householders purchasing solar panels, could create redundancies in the fledgling solar industry, and have already affected dozens of community scale projects.

Quick Guide

- Feed-in-Tariffs for a range of electricity producing technologies, including solar photovoltaic panels which produce electricity, have been available since April 2010. For every unit of energy a system generates it's owner receives a payment, guaranteed, in the case of solar, for 25 years. The original rate of payment was intended to be in place for projects installed up to 31st March 2012, a deadline which many community projects, householders and installers were working to.
- However, **three times as much solar has been installed as the government projected – more than 100,000 installations by the end of October 2011** which means that the budget for FITs is running out.
- In addition, **the average cost of installing a solar panel has fallen by around 30%** since the scheme was introduced, leading the government to argue that the current level of subsidy is no longer needed.
- As well as reducing the rate of FIT payments the government is also consulting on proposals to introduce a requirement that homes meet a certain standard of energy efficiency before installing solar panels to be eligible for FIT payments and to introduce a further reduced rate of payment for individuals or organisations receiving payments for more than one solar panel installation. These two proposals wouldn't be implemented until April 2012.

Consultation Period

The government is consulting on its proposals until 23rd December and anyone can respond online: <https://econsultation.decc.gov.uk/office-for-renewable-energy-deployment-ored/comprehensive-review-part-1>.

If the proposals go ahead they will affect all installations completed after 12th December, almost two weeks after the cut-off date, leaving householders and community groups with no choice but to install by that date if they want to guarantee they will get the higher rate. Community projects are unlikely to be able to meet this deadline and many installers of domestic systems have reported becoming fully booked until 12th December within days of the announcement being made.

Friends of the Earth have responded to this timescale by threatening legal action if the government doesn't change the proposed new date for the reduced tariff. It believes that ending the consultation after the proposed cut-off point is illegal: www.foe.co.uk/news/final_demand_33279.html.

Community Projects Affected

The Low Carbon Community Network has identified dozens of community-scale projects, such as systems on the roofs of village halls, sports clubs and schools, will be affected by these announcements. The organisation ran a survey last week specifically to gather information from such projects and received responses from more than 170 groups. Volunteers who have already spent hours of their time on these projects may now have to cancel them, as installations of this size have less chance of completing before the deadline.

Similarly, many councils had made plans to install panels on social housing – with tenants receiving the free electricity and the local authority taking the feed-in-tariff. In some cases the free electricity is enough to get households out of fuel poverty. Councillors at Haringey

Council in London, for instance, say the proposals would scupper their plans to double London's solar generation through a scheme of this type.

On the plus side, panels have already been installed on many social housing properties in Aspley and Broxtowe in Nottinghamshire ahead of the new deadline and were featured in the Guardian last week: www.guardian.co.uk/environment/picture/2011/nov/08/solar-panel-nottingham-big-picture?INTCMP=SRCH.

The Low Carbon Community Network is calling for a 'Community Tariff' for these schemes which would allow them to continue to be paid a higher rate than the new proposed rate: <http://lowcarboncommunities.net/2011/10/25/the-fits-review-and-community-energy-for-your-urgent-action/>. At the same time, Caroline Lucas, Green MP, has called for a 'stay of execution' for community projects which already have planning permission but are still fundraising: www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/nov/04/solar-successful-tariffs-cut.

Leicestershire Project Beats The Deadline

Meanwhile, a Leicestershire-based bulk purchase scheme has managed to beat the deadline – at least for some of its homes. Transition Loughborough was part-way through setting up a scheme based on a bulk purchase offer in Staffordshire (www.wfeg.org.uk) which has installed on 50 homes to date, when the government's announcements were made. The group originally intended to launch its scheme to the whole town and surrounding area in mid-November, but already had 16 households interested and were already in touch with nine possible installers.

Following the announcement Transition Loughborough were able to speed up getting quotes from installers who were still able to deliver within the new timescales and have appointed a company that can install on up to 16 houses before the deadline of 12th December. Some of the companies originally intending to quote had to drop out as they couldn't complete both their existing orders and potential new ones from this scheme before the deadline.

D. And Finally...

Laugh... Or the Polar Bear Gets It

Friends of the Earth are organising a benefit comedy gig on 18th November in London, aptly titled 'Laugh or the Polar Bear Gets It'.

www.foe.co.uk/living/polar_bear_30816.html?ref=home-tab-4

Thanks to everyone who provided items for this newsletter. If you have any events or news you would like to be included in future newsletters please send the details to: ccan@mea.org.uk. You can send comments about the e-newsletter to the same email address.

To read this e-newsletter as a pdf visit: www.everybodys-talking.org/communities-area/community-bulletins.

If you are receiving these emails via someone else, and are not subscribed to this e-newsletter but would like to be, please send an email with the title '**Subscribe**' to ccan@mea.org.uk. Include **the name of any community climate action group you belong to** (e.g.: a Transition group or Sustainable group) and **the area you live in** (E.g.: Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Nottingham or Derby).

If you no longer wish to receive these emails please send an email with '**Unsubscribe**' in the title to ccan@mea.org.uk.

The Everybody's Talking Website is the climate change portal for Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire: www.everybodys-talking.org.