

WREN



NEWS

Newsletter of the Wadebridge Renewable Energy Network

NOVEMBER 2011

FITS AND STARTS

As you will have heard, the Government has just announced a change to the Feed in Tariff for solar PV.

They have halved the returns, so that paybacks on 4kW domestic systems have been extended from the current six years to eleven years.

This in itself only seems bad because the original FIT was very generous. Just two years ago we would have been delighted with a payback as short as 11 years.

The real problem with the FIT announcement is the cut off date for the existing level of return of 12th December 2011. This will be very disappointing for those who were about to order a system under the existing rules, as there is now no time to have it installed and connected. We are lobbying hard for a rethink, especially for special treatment for community owned schemes, and will keep you posted on developments.



WREN LAUNCHES COMMUNITY FUND WITH £5000 AWARD

One aim of WREN is to bring economic benefits to the Wadebridge area by leading the way in renewable energy. Now that 50 solar installations are nearing completion, our community fund is healthy enough to begin supporting local projects.

WREN is therefore inviting applications from local organizations and clubs who could benefit from the £5,000 available from the WREN Community Fund – youth groups, sporting or cultural activities, or projects to help vulnerable people.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Help us celebrate our being on target to generate 30% of Wadebridge's energy from renewable sources by 2015. Raise a glass to our bright future and join us in the Glasshouse on Saturday 3rd December at 7pm for 7.30pm for an evening of festive celebration.

After enjoying a meal and wine, we will be entertained by the wonderful Paris Swing Quintet and The Fandangos, who will have us up on our feet dancing in no time.

There are eighty places available for this evening. Tickets are £20 per person, which includes dinner, a glass of wine and all entertainment. If you're not a member, join at the same time – it's only £1 for a lifetime membership.

- To book a place, call in at Elixir Health Foods in Molesworth Street.

SOLAR INSTALLATIONS PASS 340KW

Working with Penzance-based Plug Into the Sun, WREN has been involved in the installation of solar panels which can generate a combined peak output of 340kW, generating electricity for local residents and businesses, and money for the

Wadebridge Mayor, Stephen Knightley, said: "There are lots of good local causes that need funds, so it is exciting that we now have a new source of support. This award shows how renewable energy can not only save us money, but also help us invest in the things that are important to people. I look forward with great interest to seeing the range of projects that come forward."

There will be two stages to the selection process. Interested organizations should set out a brief account of their project before the closing date of December 9th 2011. These will be shortlisted by a committee that will include members of WREN, as well as representatives of important local bodies will also be invited to assist, including sports clubs, the Youth Council, churches, the Chamber of Commerce, parish councils, the Town Council and the Town Forum.

Shortlisted applicants will then be asked to put in more detailed proposals, and the successful project or projects will be selected democratically by a vote of WREN members. WREN Company Secretary, Tony Faragher, said "We are delighted that WREN is already in a position to support local projects from the community fund. The response to our solar club has been very encouraging, and it is very pleasing that those who want solar panels installed support the principle that there should also be a general benefit for the area. As WREN's activities strengthen, and other technologies come on-stream, the sums available for local causes will increase. Our target is to bring in an income of £300,000 per year to be available for reinvestment in this way. This grant offer is the first step in that direction."

Applications can be made via the WREN website – www.wren.uk.com - or email energy@wren.uk.com for more details.

BIGGER WIND: YOUR CHANCE TO COMMENT

Plans are afoot to repower the St Breock Wind farm, replacing the current eleven turbines with six larger turbines that will produce about three times as much power.

REG Windpower, who own and operate the wind farm along with nine others around the UK, is holding an open exhibition at Wadebridge Town Hall on Monday 7th and Tuesday 8th November between noon and 8pm, so you can see its proposal and make up your own mind.

WREN's position on this is that we approve the greater use of renewable energy in general, but in any particular case we only express the views of our members.

WREN will also have a stand so you can tell us what you think, and catch up on other issues if you want. It is very important that we know your views, so please make a special effort to drop in.

Community Fund.

Being a member of WREN doesn't automatically mean that someone will turn up and survey your roof, so if you would like a site visit for solar, or are still awaiting an appointment, please contact the Technical Director Jerry Clark via email at jerry.clark@wren.uk.com.

The solar PV world has been unsettled by the reduced returns (see box) but WREN has a broad-based programme with many options. So, rather than put all our eggs into one basket, we're also looking into the feasibility of generating power through marine, tidal, wind and anaerobic digestion. As specific proposals for such projects develop they will be put before the membership, and the wider community, to decide whether to take them further.

GOVERNMENT IS WATCHING US!

WREN is being taken seriously as a model for what community energy schemes look like. Our views are sought by senior people in the Department for Energy and Climate Change. We have been visited by David Cameron's energy adviser, Ben Moxham. And we are working closely with Cornwall Council's Green Team. WREN is also active in the lobby to preserve proper levels of return on the Feed in Tariff for community schemes like ours. We've been the subject of good thesis work by Exeter University and Cornwall College students, and look forward to a stimulating collaboration with our University partners.

TAKING STOCK: FIRST SIX MONTHS; NEXT NINE YEARS

It's six months since WREN was formally inaugurated as a registered not-for-profit company and the board of directors elected at a general meeting in Wadebridge Town Hall. A lot has happened since, and this seems like a good opportunity to take stock.

WREN now has 337 members – but we need more. The more we have the better we can reflect what people in Wadebridge and the surrounding parishes think and want. This is particularly important at this exciting time, as we've just launched our first grant, of £5,000, and the recipient will be decided via democratic vote by members. So please spread the word amongst friends, family and neighbours to join WREN!

The board meets once a month (all WREN members welcome!), and board minutes are uploaded to our website for members to read. We've also worked up a WREN business plan which should shortly be on the website.

All this work is being done by members of the board and a few key WREN members working on a voluntary basis, if you would like to get more involved, please contact us via energy@wren.uk.com.

Looking even further into the future, next month we embark on an ambitious nine-year-plan for what WREN should be trying to achieve by 2020 – and we need members' input. What do you think WREN should be doing? Please write to Lizzy-Jane Frankel at events@wren.uk.com.

YOU GOT WARMER

Welcome to the forty-three new WREN members who joined up at "Warmer Wadebridge", WREN's demand reduction event on September 10th at the Town Hall.

The event was attended by over 200 people, who took part in the top energy tip competition, signed up for free or discounted insulation with CEP, a free energy monitor with WREN, a site

FUNDING WREN

WREN is constantly working on funding applications to support our efforts.

We came second in the Design Council's "Design of the Times" Challenge, and are currently shortlisted for awards from Energysure and REGEN South West.

We are also submitting a bid to the East Cornwall Local Action Group.

GET SMART AND SAVE FOR FREE!

Take control of your electricity bills this winter!

Join the growing community of people who are going to reduce their bills this winter.

WREN has launched the **Demand Reduction Programme** with the primary aim of reducing wasted energy in the home. This includes the installation of a FREE smart meter into your home gives you the information you need to take charge of your energy use. Whether your motivation is saving money to put towards something worthwhile for you and your family, or reducing your carbon footprint, the smart meter, along with our support, can help you reduce your energy use by up to 15%.

Wadebridge looks set to become a beacon for renewable energy and sustainability, so what better time to consider practical ways of reducing energy use and bills?

Contact Jack Brinn at jack.brinn@wren.uk.com to request an information form, or go to the WREN website and follow the link for the Demand Reduction Program.

visit for solar panels at the Plug Into the Sun stand, and learned about energy saving on the farm through Duchy College.

Visitors to Warmer Wadebridge were amongst the first to try the Eden Project's amazing online "Show me the Carbon", and home-grown help and advice on what energy saving products are available locally was provided by Fiona Clark's Local Shops' Showcase.

Our competition, generously sponsored by Glanvilles of Wadebridge Lighting, was won by Maxine Collins whose tip was to use thick, lined curtains in winter to keep the heat in.

Finally, a big thanks to our tea and cake team, who not only provided us with mouth-watering refreshments but whose efforts raised enough to pay for the hire of the hall for the afternoon.

- For those who couldn't make the event, but would like to get their homes insulated, call CEP on 0800 954 1956.

WREN STARTS ENERGY SHOP

Later in November WREN will launch its energy shop.

We're taking over the old "Boys and Girls" shop in the Platt, Wadebridge to create a town centre hub. It will be a one-stop shop for organisations such as those who provide government-backed home insulation, solar installations or our own Demand Reduction Programme.

New members can join, existing ones to stop in for a chat and get information about on-going and proposed projects.



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