



Edinburgh Community Energy Coop

Giving Edinburgh residents a vehicle to promote and develop renewable and low-carbon energy

Members' Newsletter No.1 December 2011

Introduction

Welcome to the new Edinburgh Community Energy Co-op Newsletter. We hope to produce this on a regularly basis to keep the membership better informed about what we're doing, and what's going on in Edinburgh in community energy projects.

The Energy Co-op started work on an exciting project in Leith in July having been awarded funding from the Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund (CCF). Firstly, working with the Energy Saving Trust we circulated all households in the Leith Neighbourhood Partnership area (Leith & Leith Walk Wards) with a discounted insulation offer.¹ (This offer applies to the whole of Edinburgh, so if you're interested ring 0800 512 012.)

We asked Leithers to help with a survey to gather information on how much energy an average household in Leith uses, and to gauge interest in Leith in developing community-owned renewable energy schemes.² If you live in the Leith Neighbourhood Partnership area and you haven't filled out the survey yet please help us out by doing this soon. If you need it in paper format write to us at the address at the end of this newsletter.

Secondly, we are hoping to develop a community-owned renewable energy scheme in Leith by installing solar panels on the roofs of suitable community buildings to generate electricity for the benefit of the local community.

¹ See <http://edinburghcommunityenergy.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/79396-est-council-tax-ad-edin-297x210-v2-lo-res.pdf>

² See <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ECEC>



You may have heard about the government's 'Feed-in Tariff' scheme which pays a premium price to electricity generated in this way, whether it is used on-site or exported to the grid. Unfortunately unexpected changes to this scheme (see below) have rather dented the economics of this project. Whilst we will continue to work with the three or four community centres which have expressed an interest in looking at solar energy, we will be tweaking the project to put more emphasis on energy saving over the remaining four months of current funding.

There is a new section of the Co-op's website which looks at the Climate Challenge Funded Project here: <http://edinburghcommunityenergy.wordpress.com/leith-renewables-project/>

Solar Church

Saughtonhall United Reformed Church has become the first church in Edinburgh to fit solar panels on its roof. The panels cost less than £30,000 and should pay for themselves in six or seven years.

Evening News 29th October 2011
<http://tinyurl.com/c2c48jn>

Leith Community Energy Day

....and the Energy Co-op AGM were held on Saturday 15th October 2011 at the Norton Park Centre on Albion Road. As well as an update on the Climate Challenge Fund project speakers included Juliet Swann of Friends of the Earth Scotland, who put community renewables in the wider Scottish energy context; Jane Campbell, who told us about Transition Edinburgh South's solar project; and Jan Webb of the Edinburgh University Heat & the City Project outlined her project which is looking district heating projects in urban areas. Finally Daniel Prince gave a householder's perspective on installing solar panels, including an outline of performance of his panels over the last 12 months.

The presentations are available here: <http://edinburghcommunityenergy.wordpress.com/2011/09/22/leith-community-energy-day/>

If you missed the conference on 15th October we are planning to hold another couple of meetings in the Leith area early in the New Year. The first will be on **21st January 2012 at South Leith Parish Church Halls in Henderson Street at 10.30am.** Details soon.

The AGM decided elected the following people as members of the General Council of the company: Stuart Hay, Peter Roche, Stephen Downie, Stan Eadie, Liam Young, Ian Cooke, Mark Lazarowicz, Andrew Tait, David Hawkey, and Joanna Currie.

Feed-in Tariffs Debacle

The Feed-in Tariff (FiT) scheme, introduced in 2010, pays householders for the power produced by their solar power systems and has led to over 90,000 new systems being installed in the last 18 months. For each kilowatt hour generated householders are paid 43.3p even if they use the electricity themselves. If the electricity is exported householders are paid an extra 3p/kWh on top. Unfortunately the Government is now reducing the tariff to 21p from 12th December.³

³ See <http://tinyurl.com/5wy8med>

Hundreds of campaigners backing the UK's solar industry protested against the plans and lobbied MPs on 22nd November. The 'Cut don't Kill' campaign aims to force the government to rethink its proposals, because of the damage it will do to the solar industry.⁴ The price of solar panels has been falling rapidly but these cuts are "too fast, too soon".

Renewable Heat Incentive

On 1st August 2011 the UK Government launched a Renewable Heat Premium Payment scheme designed to help householders afford renewable technologies. This will only run until 31st March 2012, so if you are interested in applying you had better be quick. The scheme is a forerunner of a Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) scheme for domestic customers.⁵ Vouchers are being issued on a first come first served basis by the Energy Saving Trust.

The Renewable Heat Premium Payment applies in Scotland. Anyone can apply for solar thermal (hot water producing) panel funding, but if you currently use mains gas for heating you cannot apply for a heat pump or biomass boiler.

£4 million of the £15million Renewable Heat Premium Payment budget was allocated to help fund renewable heating projects in Social housing. Castelrock Edinvar Housing Association was amongst the winners of funding under this scheme.⁶

The first phase of the Renewable Heat Incentive opened for applications from non-domestic generators on 28th Nov 2011. Businesses and communities across Britain are now able to apply for a renewable heat tariff payment for biomass boilers; hot water producing solar panels and heat pumps.⁷ This scheme will eventually be extended to householders in 2012.⁸

⁴ Watch the campaign video here: <http://www.oursolarfuture.org.uk/>

⁵ See <http://tinyurl.com/brzdpmc>

⁶ <http://tinyurl.com/cyaj5sl>

⁷ See <http://tinyurl.com/6mbhnu3>

⁸ <http://tinyurl.com/c3pm765>

Green Deal

The UK Government has launched a consultation on its Green Deal which will provide home energy saving upgrades to householders at no upfront cost. The Green Deal will be launched from October 2012. Every British home and business will be able to install packages of energy-saving technologies such as insulation at no upfront cost, making their property warmer and cosier straight away, with repayments made over time out of the energy savings. Strict standards will be put in place to prevent consumers being ripped off by cowboys. A new requirement on energy companies to provide £1.3 billion a year to ensure everyone is able to benefit from the Green Deal – no matter their income or the type of house they live in. Additional help will be available to ensure the fuel poor get better boilers and fix draughty homes, while subsidy will also be provided to help tackle homes that are hard to insulate – including solid wall homes.

The consultation document is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/cz13wh9>

Stenton's solar plans delayed

The village of Stenton in East Lothian near Dunbar has four houses with solar panels as well as panels on the village hall. Seven more houses in the village were hoping to get panels, but are now unlikely to go-ahead because of the changes to the FiT scheme.⁹ However, even at the new feed-in-tariff rates of 21p, a good return on investment can still be made according to Ecosource Solutions.¹⁰

Leith Community Turbine

A community wind turbine project led by Pedal in Portobello and Greener Leith has won more than £50,000 of funding in a competition run by the Energy Share website. The groups hope to build Scotland's first community-owned urban wind turbine on Seafield Waste Water Treatment Works. The turbine, which is predicted to cost between £1 million and £3.5m to build, could be running by early 2013 if planning permission is granted and funding is in place.¹¹

Micro Power News

If you're interested in keeping up with news about small-scale renewable and community energy schemes on a weekly basis, take a look at Micro Power News here:

<http://www.microgenscotland.org.uk/news.php> You can sign up to receive this by e-mail every week here:
<http://www.microgenscotland.org.uk/enews.php>

Visit us at: <http://edinburghcommunityenergy.wordpress.com/>

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⁹ Herald 22nd November 2011

<http://tinyurl.com/cm6rat6>

¹⁰ Low Carbon Economy 24th November 2011

<http://tinyurl.com/d6u9elj>

¹¹ Scotsman 6th Dec 2011

<http://tinyurl.com/d4rna9q>

