

Shropshire & Telford Community Energy (STCE) Newsletter Sept 2022



Welcome to STCE's Sept 2022 newsletter. If you've not heard of us before please see the section on who we are on page 2. Otherwise please read on..

STCE is now a formally constituted Community Benefit Society, (CBS) registered under the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). This means that we are authorised to undertake share offers to raise capital for developing renewable energy projects. Our Chair Robert Saunders states that *"after two years work it is wonderful to now be fully constituted. . We would like to thank all those who've helped us get to this point, particularly Sharenergy and the Next Generation grant scheme"*

Would you like to join the STCE team?

STCE is entering into an exciting phase after two years where progress seemed very slow. The project to buy Twemlows might come off soon, the work on the Bishop's Castle Heat and Wind project is progressing well and we have an exciting partnership to deliver rooftop solar with the Big Solar Co-op. Two of the original team have now moved on for personal reasons, and we're now taking on extra responsibilities so we would welcome some new team members to help us deliver community owned renewables in Shropshire & Telford.

If you could help with our website, newsletter or social media or have other skills we'd love to hear from you.

Also as Dave Green has now taken on the responsibility for working with the portfolio of sites that includes Twemlows, we need a new secretary..

We meet every three or four weeks, normally early evening, almost always online. If you're interested in joining us we'd like to meet you.



Bishops Castle Heat & Wind

We have been working with Bishop's Castle Climate Action Group & Lightfoot (a local charity) to develop a heat network scheme for the town, using heat pumps powered by a wind turbine. We have used some of the Next Generation funding made available to us as part of the process of buying Twemlows solar farm, and have employed Sharenergy to run this project on our behalf.

The project has been given significant support by the local community, with only a few objectors. Sharenergy are currently preparing for a pre-planning application for the wind turbine. The studies for the heat network are going well and the results should be published soon. See

<https://lightfootenterprises.org/climate-action/>

Marches Community Hall Funding Application

STCE have put in an application to the Marches Energy Fund for £144k towards the cost of solar panels, batteries and EV charge points for community owned facilities in the Marches. Sharenergy, Community Resource and Community First will be partners, given funding approval.

Progress on Buying Twemlows Solar Farm

STCE are still hoping to be involved in moving the Twemlows Solar Farm into community ownership. This is being arranged by Community Owned Renewables (CoRE) who were set up by Power to Change and Big Society Capital. Twemlows is a 10MW solar farm at Prees nr Whitchurch. It was well built, has been well maintained and it benefits from Feed in Tariff payments. There are five other similar sites involved and a central organisation to run the portfolio is being set up. Dave Green has volunteered to be our representative on that body. A main loan has been arranged and subsidiary loans are being set up. We expect to launch a share offer in the Spring of 2023 to raise around £100,000 towards the purchase.

Twemlows Community Benefit Fund—£20k distributed..

The Twemlows solar farm typically generates £20,000 per year for a Community Benefit Fund. STCE were asked to arrange the distribution of the fund in late 2021. We split the fund in two, half going to community projects local to Whitchurch, with the help of Community Resource. The projects helped include the Blackberry Fair, Queensway Playing Fields, and Lee Brockhurst and Tilstock Village Halls. The money helped to provide insulation, instal batteries, upgrade a kitchen, management of wildlife areas etc.

The other half of the funding was distributed directly by STCE for wider environmental projects. Two organisations benefitted, Lightfoot in South Shropshire for re-vamp of their energy services, (see www.lightfootenterprises.org) and Park Lane Community Centre in Telford , for LED lighting and water recycling, (see <http://www.parklanecentre.org.uk/>).

We expect to have a further £20k available soon, if you know of a project that might like to apply please get in touch.

STCE Working with the Big Solar Co-op

STCE have helped to secure Shropshire Council funding towards the cost of employing a local co-ordinator in Shropshire and Telford for the Big Solar Co-op. Big Solar's first rooftop solar share offer is currently underway, and two of the first three sites will be in Shropshire.

Having Kevin Oubridge working two days a week on delivering more sites locally is a great boon to the aims of getting more local community owned renewables. See www.bigsolar.coop/invest



Who are STCE?

The STCE board consists of 5 volunteers, Robert Saunders, (Chair), Fran Hunt, (Treasurer), Dave Green, (Secretary) plus Howard Betts & Tim Baldwin. We started STCE as a working group in 2020 with the main aim of bringing the Twemlows Solar Farm into community ownership, but we are also keen to see new community renewable projects set up, hence our work in Bishop's Castle and with Big Solar. For more background see our website below

Renewable Energy Targets in the Marches

Marches Energy Agency have undertaken some studies, on our behalf, on how renewable energy targets in the Marches could be achieved. The amount of renewables already in place in the Marches lags significantly behind other areas of the country. MEA's study shows how difficult it would be to get up to significant renewable generation without the use of onshore wind power. Solar power will also be important but it can't deliver all the renewable energy required and it doesn't generate when energy is most needed.

See <https://mea.org.uk/our-work/meeting-the-marches-vision/>

Shropshire & Telford Community Energy (STCE). FCA registered 8829
www.stcenergy.org.uk info@stcenergy.org.uk

To join our mailing list visit
<http://eepurl.com/hgdP8L>