



Dorset Community Energy Directors' Report 2019-20

Summary

The directors are pleased to report a successful year, with total solar generation 5% above the original estimates used for the 2015 share offers. In addition we have managed to sort out an export metering problem at Milldown Primary school which will result in approximately £1000 per year additional income from export sales. There were no significant operation and maintenance problems in 2019-20, although Octopus Energy purchased our previous Feed-in Tariff (FIT) provider Co-operative Energy, which created a significant amount of admin work to re-register our 16 FIT contracts with Octopus Energy and also switch our export sales contracts to Octopus Energy.

DCE solar PV installations on schools and hospitals (PV3)

The 2019 share offer successfully raised a total of almost £445,000 which together with a capital grant of 40% from the Low Carbon Dorset Fund is being used to finance 700kW of solar panels on schools and hospitals. Unfortunately the coronavirus pandemic and lockdown has delayed installations, especially on the hospital sites managed by Dorset Health Care. However following an agreement on Covid-19 safe working practices, the installation at Bridport Hospital is due to commence in early September 2020, followed by Blandford Community Hospital and Alderney Hospital towards the end of 2020. Fortunately the Low Carbon Dorset grant claim period has been extended to 31st March 2021 due to many other projects also facing coronavirus delays.

A summary of completed and confirmed new installations to date (late August 2020) is:

Site	Size (kW)	Status
Wey Valley Academy	97	Completed
Blandford School new installation	86	Completed
All Saints School , Weymouth	61	Completed
Beaminster School	112	Completed
Bridport Community Hospital	99	About to start
Blandford Community Hospital	50	Later this year
Alderney Hospital	97	Later this year
Sturminster Newton School	41	Later this year
TOTAL TO DATE	643	

Dorset Community Energy director Tom Burnett is following up on a number of other schools that have expressed interest and will give a presentation on PV3 at the 2020 AGM.

Energy Local Bridport

Following training from Energy Local CIC, Energy Local Bridport was launched in early January 2020 with 2 street stalls in Buckydoo Square and a public meeting in the Town Hall. The level of interest exceeded expectations with 90 people expressing interest in changing their supplier to Octopus Energy, who would provide the metering and billing to enable locally generated

renewable electricity to be supplied to local households @9.5p/kWh. Octopus Energy would also supply the back-up power when there was insufficient local renewable electricity generation through an innovative Time of Use tariff, including a 12-hour overnight rate of 10 pence/ kWh. A similar project currently operating in Bethesda, N Wales has resulted in a saving of approximately £70 per year for participating households. Energy Local Bridport would be the first example in England of direct local renewable electricity supply to householders through the existing grid.

The project was originally based on supplying locally generated electricity from the 50kW wind turbine near Salway Ash, but due to the high level of interest Dorset Community Energy successfully applied for a Rural Community Energy Fund feasibility study grant to identify sites to add 2 separate 200kW ground-mounted PV arrays, each requiring an acre of land. One site has already been selected as the best option from a planning and grid connection perspective and work is currently underway to identify a potential 2nd site.

However the project development has also been delayed because of the coronavirus lockdown, as participating households need to switch to Octopus Energy and have smart meters fitted to enable the real - time local renewable generation to be metered and supplied @9.5p/ kWh. Smart meter installations were put on hold due to Covid-19 restrictions and are just about to restart. Also there has been a delay in Octopus Energy developing and piloting the bespoke metering and billing system.

Dorset Community Energy director Derek Moss will give a presentation on Energy Local Bridport at the 2020 AGM.

Educational activities

Director Pete West has continued to provide talks and practical solar educational activities to schools on request. One highlight was a session with pupils at Charminster CE Primary School when Pete spent a day at the school in mid- November 2019 and gave lessons in making spinning paper plate solar models to 3 separate classes of Key Stage 2 pupils (7-9 years old) . The school then asked to borrow the solar experiments equipment. On collecting it a few weeks' later Pete was amazed to find the pupils who attended the sessions with him had followed up by teaching Key Stage 1 pupils (5-7 years old). There is further information on the Education page of the Dorset Community Energy website

Newsletter and communications with members

DCE director Emily Bullock will give a short presentation at the 2020 AGM on the newsletter and website and lead a discussion on ideas for how members could be more actively engaged in Dorset Community Energy activities. One example could be educational activities and helping to develop climate and energy educational resources.

New developments

DCE will shortly have 250 annual interest payments and associated statements to send to members (currently processed manually) therefore the directors have agreed to seek quotations to contract out the annual financial admin as from 1st January 2021. Organisations such as Sharenergy and Ethex, who provide similar membership management services to other community benefit societies, will be invited to quote. Interest payments and capital repayments due in November 2020 will be processed internally as previously.

Pete West will discuss this briefly at the AGM and answer any questions.