

HOUSEHOLD ENERGY NEWS



Summer 2010 edition of The HEN



FITs FOR THE FUTURE

Could a Feed in Tariff work for you?

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Welcome

"Between April & July, oil from BP's Deepwater Horizon poured into the Gulf of Mexico. The facts & figures are shocking but it is the true stories of the people, the place and the wildlife affected that illustrate the tragedy most poignantly ...

Take the account of a sick dolphin, oil coming from its blow hole, that approached a local fisherman. The man turned his boat to allow it to pass, but again & again the dolphin came toward him. It seemed, the man said, to be asking for help. There was nothing he could do.

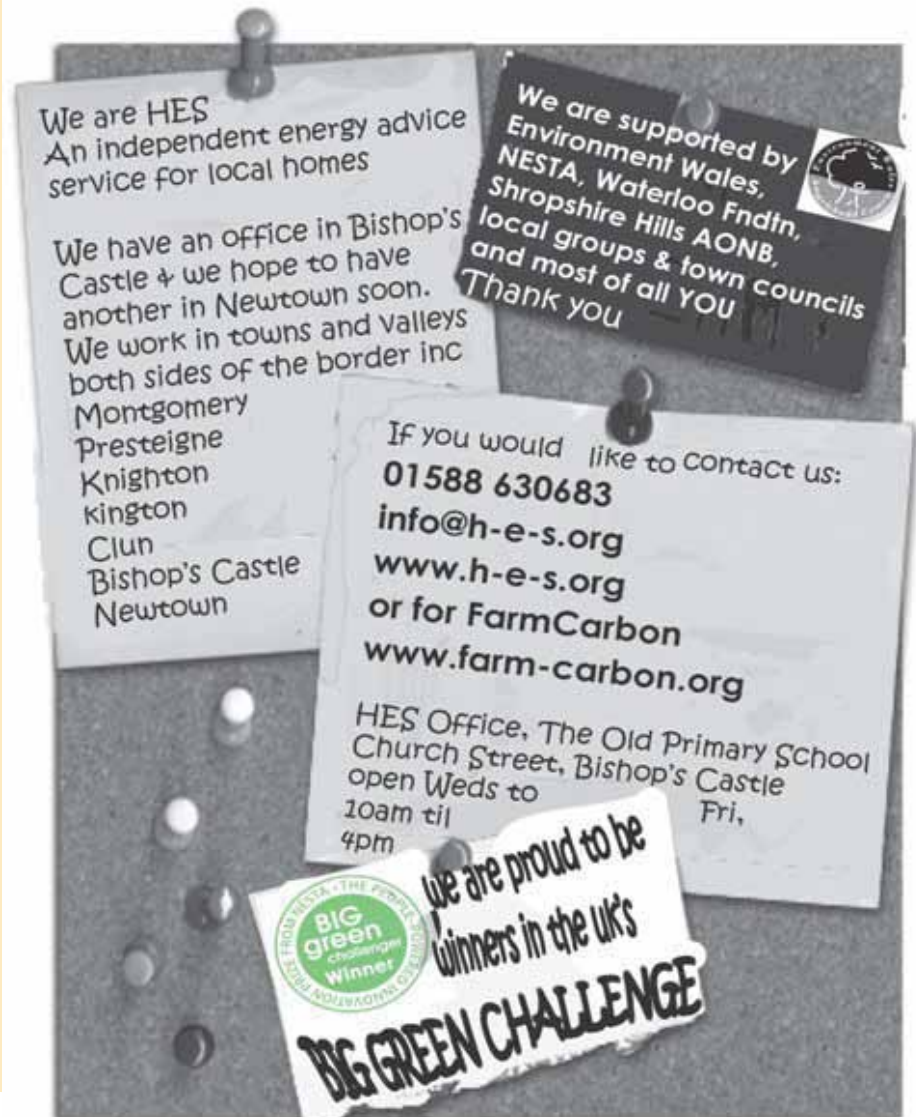
And then there are images from the coast of Louisiana: rows & rows of white crosses, erected by local people, in memory of things that they cared about or depended upon. Things that were spoilt by the oil spill ... bird watching, marsh grasses, oysters, blue fin tuna, shrimping, volley ball ...

So why didnt BP have the procedures & equipment ready to deal with this kind of situation? Oil is central to our economy and companies like BP seem to do as they please. YOU are the ones who are changing this, by making your homes energy efficient & your transport greener. Support for you is growing.

Alongside grants for insulation, the new Feed in Tariffs open up new possibilities.

The range and quality of renewable energy technologies available to generate heat and power is improving too, making generation far more cost effective. Meanwhile, fossil fuels such as oil become scarcer and more difficult to extract safely. Substituting energy from fossil fuels with renewable energy is not just good for the environment, it could also be good for local economies. But that implies that local people and communities take ownership of future energy services. HES has been helping people to look after the places where we live since 2006. We should all be thinking about what kind of energy supplies we want, now and for the future. Call one of our energy officers if you need advice."

Rachel



Could a Feed in Tariff work for you?

Dave Green, who has been our leading Energy Officer at HES for several years, has been following the new tariffs closely. Dave will be leaving us at the end of July to work as a consultant. Our new EO, Matthew Tolley, will be starting in September.

Here are Dave's words of wisdom on FITs.



The new Feed In Tariffs for renewable electricity production (photovoltaics, wind or hydro) are already leading to an increase in renewable energy installations, particularly PV. If you install PV before April 2012 you'll get about 42.8p for every unit you produce plus savings on your electricity bills. If you wait till after April 2012 the figures will be slightly lower and they'll then go down every year for new installations.

For a 2kW peak system costing about £10,000 this should provide an income of about £760 per year. This will rise with inflation, isn't taxed and will last for 25 years. Larger systems would produce a better return. So it's now possible to reduce your carbon footprint and make money.

It's certainly worth considering. The drawback of course is that really you need the money to invest plus a good roof to put it on, we're looking into how PV could be done on a community level with shares available to buy or be provided for social housing. Meanwhile some installers are offering low cost installation if they can keep the FITs, this needs careful consideration. It might not be as good a deal as it sounds.

The next development should be the Renewable Heat Incentive providing similar support for any system that produces heat such as solar hot water, biomass boilers or heat pumps. Unfortunately the new Government hasn't confirmed if the RHI will go ahead in April, so watch this space.

FARM CARBON



Our new service for farmers in South Shropshire

"The new farm carbon service from Light Foot will benefit us in a number of ways ... we can examine input costs and make changes; we can also respond to consumer demand for lower carbon alternatives and to new policies on emissions. Farms are the backbone of the rural economy. Food production uses a lot of energy and we need to know how to manage it best for the future."

Agriculture is believed to be responsible for 25% of carbon, 65% of methane and 90% of nitrous oxide emissions across the world. Our new Farm Carbon service in Shropshire is working with farmers to find solutions.

Farming began in simple ways ... nomadic hunter-gatherers began to take a few animals with them for milk, eggs etc; others spread the seeds of edible plants over an area and returned the following year to find a crop waiting. Farming in this way helped people survive through the winter. It was sustainable. Across the centuries, farming developed and steadily became the backbone of our civilisation, increasingly sophisticated but still rooted to place.

More recently, however, food production has become very industrialised. Farmers have been obliged to change, according to political and financial pressures. The farmer now straddles the boundary between business growth which is linear and natural growth that is cyclical.

The aim of Farm Carbon is to help get farmers on track to a lower carbon future that is more sustainable.

www.farm-carbon.org davel@farm-carbon.org 01588 630683

Simple Savings

Secondary glazing

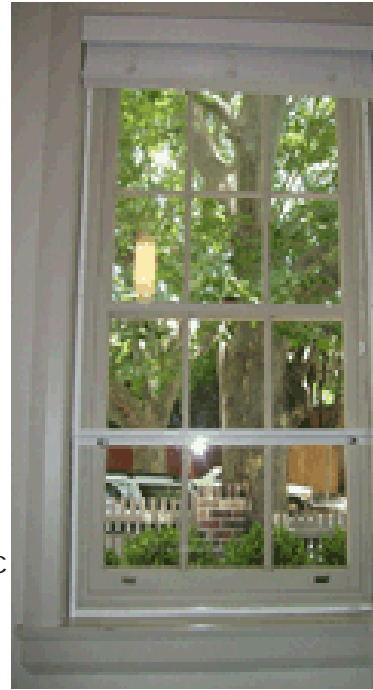
If your windows are a bit draughty, here is one really simple and cost effective idea for you. Secondary glazing will help reduce your fuel bills and keep your home warm next winter.

DIY polycarbonate glazing with magnetic strip is an inexpensive, durable method of secondary glazing your windows. The panels are discrete, easy to remove for cleaning or during the summer & you can buy materials from a DIY store. You will need:

- . Self adhesive steel strip and magnetic strip
- . Sheets of polycarbonate, pre-cut to fit

Wipe the window frame with white spirit and allow to dry. Place the pre-cut plastic sheet in position over the window frame and draw round the edge using a soft pencil. Use this pencil as an outside edge guide. Measure, then cut, the steel strip. Apply to frame inside the pencil line. Work from the top downwards. Place the plastic sheet on flat surface. Apply magnetic strip flush around outer edge. Lift the plastic sheet into position, with the magnetic strip against the steel strip. The plastic strip will then be held in position.

NB As with all draught stripping, you need to make sure that there is still adequate ventilation in the room.



Second car? We love the new Sustrans ad: "Perhaps your second car shouldnt be a car?"

Second hand

Quality Raleigh Metro bike, £110 (worth lots more) Bishops Castle area

Please call Don Boulonois: 01588 638088

Quadra-Fire Castile room heater pellet stove. Powerful - up to 30,000 BTUs per hour.

Suit large room or open plan house. Call Brian North 01584 856655.



NEW!
Our **Thermal Imaging Camera** can help you identify places where heat still escapes from your home in winter. We charge for this service but there is a reduction for HES members. Please call the office for details



Other news

If you missed Open Eco Homes 2010, then let us tell you about it. This weekend event gave people a chance to go on a tour of a small selection of homes (in the Presteigne and Knighton area) that had low carbon footprints. It was also a fantastic opportunity for people to talk to others and exchange practical advice and experience. There were 12 homes on the tour, which included a full range of greener technologies, from simple to sophisticated. The supporting HES "Energy Clinic" was available alongside the tour, based at The Workhouse, Presteigne. On the Saturday, attendees began to arrive and the householders found themselves busy, often showing around groups of 30 or more people at a time. The tour included new builds and renovations, from the bold to the simple ... something for everybody, including:

- A splendid, new build eco-house
- Older houses that had been renovated
- Examples of "ordinary" homes made energy efficient
- Air-source heat pump powered by 20 photovoltaic panels
- Converted chapel with hand crafted internal shutters on old, cast iron windows and plaster made from clay & hazel
- A small field of Solar PV panels- 2kw - tilted towards the sun at seasonally adjusted angles.

HES would like to thank Alison and Anne at Double Take who dreamed, planned and organised the event. We are talking with them about how this event might work in clusters across the towns and valleys where HES works for next year.

2010 has been quite a year for HES so far. This newsletter is going out to 1,500 HES customers and another few hundred supporters on our "contact" list as well. Following our Big Green win in January we have been putting that prize to work and we hope it is reflected on these pages, as new and improved services for you and the places where you live. Watch this space, there is more to come.

This July, Adam, our Chief Executive, was named as one of 50 "green leaders" in the West Midlands. He attended the award ceremony with key speaker Jonathon Porritt on 19th July in Birmingham. We are all very proud of him.



We are VERY sad to be losing Dave Green, our Energy Officer, who is to become a consultant. Meanwhile we welcome Matt, who will be our new energy officer, Denice who comes in as HES manager and Mandy who will be local HES Coordinator in Prestieigne/Knighton.

This September you are cordially invited to take part in the HES online forum: **Membership what why when?** More info will be up on our website soon www.h-e-s.org ... as you know!!!!!!!!!!!!

GETTING THERE

When I first worked out my carbon footprint as a keen, new HES customer, I discovered that half of my direct carbon emissions came from transport. Adam, our CEO, raised this issue in a more general way recently, noting that greener transport was an area in which our service could improve. As it happens, resurveys show that clients have made significant cuts to flying so there is obviously an appetite to change.

AND SO ...

Enter one in a long dynasty of green transport heroes, our very own Dave Thomlinson, who leapt into action



and so the all new HES Greener Transport service was born.

If we want transport that is sustainable, we need to pay attention to the distance we travel and the way we travel. That means local infrastructure becomes very important.

Getting ourselves out of cars and onto our feet, bikes or public transport cuts carbon emissions and our reliance on imported oil. Other benefits include increased health and also cleaner, safer streets, and communities less divided by roads.

Being able to change the way we travel is easier if we know which train services would be useful, where we can safely leave bikes etc Information like this could become part of a local HES advice hub.

And we don't need to stop there.

One idea Dave has put forward is to set up a car share club. This idea works very well, as long as it is well organised. The point is that you can still use a car, but you have to book it in advance. The advantages are that you give up all the hassles of car ownership and save lots of money. You will also walk and cycle more, buy less and plan better. And you get to feel virtuous.

Another idea is to make Biodiesel, made from recycled chip oil, more readily available in this area. Sundance Renewables are a local coop who already produce and sell biodiesel from recycled waste oil and you can call them on 01269842401 or visit their website.

Meanwhile we will look into getting supplies to you ...



Recommend HES
We have ambitions.
We are working hard to be a really great energy service for all kinds of people & the place where they live.
If you like what we are doing, please tell your friends about us too.

I BATHE IN LIQUID SUNSHINE

Tania Dolley

STEP ONE

I became a householder for the first time in Jan 2004 . My new home was a three-bedroomed semi-detached ex-council house built in the late 1940's. It came complete with an old solid fuel central heating system that ran off a coal-fired stove. After a couple of winters spent coaxing the stove into life, and then waiting two hours for heat from the radiators, I decided it was time to reconsider my heating system.

At the start of my long and winding journey towards a more sustainable home, I thought that I would go for a combi gas boiler and, as a great lover of log fires, I also imagined toasting myself in front of an open fire.

STEP TWO

Having connected the house to mains gas in preparation, I started to think in detail about the kind of heating system I needed, but there were so many questions unanswered ... should I go for solar too? What type of boiler would really be best? Was gas really going to be affordable in the long term? I learned relatively early on that, rather than an open fire, a woodburning stove would be much more efficient. But if I was going to burn wood, could I use some of that heat for hot water? The obvious thing it seemed, would be to combine a mix of wood, solar and gas, each contributing towards the heating system.

Insulation ... Early in this story I managed to get my whole house insulated – with cavity walls filled, extra roof insulation, draft excluders and thermo-static radiator valves - at no cost.

The difference this made was extraordinary. I think the cavity wall insulation made the single biggest difference, and my house suddenly felt like it was wrapped in a warm blanket.

STEP THREE

Step three began with a lengthy investigation. I interrogated every plumber, heating engineer, woodstove installer, energy efficiency expert, solar energy provider, HES advisor and hapless individual that I stumbled upon. I learned that combining gas, wood and solar into a central heating system is not feasible and that having a woodburner with back

boiler would use 3 times as much wood, lose the clean burn efficiency advantage and take lots of work. Surely, I thought, if we can land a man on the moon it can't be beyond the wit of humans to create a simple heating system that can efficiently use three different heat sources. But I realised that I was over complicating things. So I decided to follow the advice of a good friend and go for a simple compromise ...

DECISION TIME

I am now the proud owner of a brand new heating system – comprising a freestanding Clearview Pioneer woodburning stove, a solar thermal hot water system with unvented twin coil cylinder (mains pressure, you understand) relocated to the downstairs loo, and a system gas boiler for back up hot water and central heating using the existing radiators. I received a total of £2,400 grants, plus the sale of my old coal stove making it feasible in financial terms.

RESULT

I am totally delighted! Even during the cold winter we had, my little Pioneer was brilliant and it managed to heat virtually the whole house without the complications of a back boiler. I adore this stove which quickly became my New Best Friend! We used gas central heating minimally, but I am not "reliant" on gas and my bills are very small. As a customer of Good Energy I am now earning about £90 per year for generating solar hot water through their Hot Rocs scheme. Since March our hot water has come from the sun, occasionally topped up by gas. With the sunny weather this Spring I am regularly getting a whole tank of 50 – 65 degree C hot water, and the gas boiler lies idle, just as I had hoped!

Best of all is the pleasure I get from soaking in a hot bath of liquid sunshine at the end of a hard day! As I lie there relaxing, I contemplate those hot rays travelling through 93 million miles of space via the solar panels and into my bathwater.

With many thanks to my installers and suppliers:
Solar: Llanisolar (Llandidloes) 01686 412552
Clearview stove Martin Woodman – 07951 153265
Gas boiler: Hereford Boiler Services 01432 379255
Good Energy: Tel: 0845 456 1640



why pay for
air conditioning?

