

You asked by phone for some information re: funding options for Community Buildings for renewables and energy efficiency improvements.

A. RHI

mentioned the **RHI Premium Payment Community Scheme**. However, this is for domestic properties only. It is about communities working together to identify clusters of homes that could have installations and negotiating bulk purchase discounts.

That said, there is already a non-domestic version of the RHI for which community buildings are eligible. The Energy Saving Trust have this to say on their website: <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Professional-resources/Funding-and-finance/Renewable-Heat-Incentive>.

The RHI is for heat-generating renewable technologies such as heat pumps, solar thermal and biomass central heating systems. Communities would need to find the money to pay for an installation upfront, but would get RHI payments over a number of years for heat generated and, over time, make money on their investment. I've mentioned some ways of finding the upfront funding in 'C'.

B. Grants

- 1) **EDF Green Energy Fund:** This fund is open until 31st August: www.edfenergy.com/products-services/for-your-home/our-services/green-energy-fund.shtml#
- 2) Derbyshire County Council currently has two pots that groups might apply to (apologies if you already know about these and I'm teaching you to suck eggs!):
 - **Community Building Grants:** www.derbyshire.gov.uk/build
 - **Community Action Grants:** www.derbyshire.gov.uk/cag

My contact at the councils says: 'They are not specifically for energy efficiency/ climate change related projects but as many sustainability projects also have wider community benefits they may be worth a look.'

- 3) **Western Power Community Chest:** This pot for new boilers, insulation etc is currently closed, but it may run another round next year: www.cse.org.uk/projects/view/1166. The area it covered included Derbyshire.
- 4) Last year DECC ran something called the **Local Energy Assessment Fund (LEAF)** (<http://greencommunitiescc.org.uk/>). This funded a range of projects, some of them involving community buildings. Grants ranged from £2K to £130K. In Melbourne we worked with MCCL – the community org which runs the community centre there - to do an extensive audit of the building and run two community events. This means that MCCL now know exactly what they need to do to improve the building's energy efficiency. Some groups in other areas of the country who already had this kind of info were able to apply for funding for installations. In Belper the group had solid wall insulation installed in a cottage and they plan to open it up to

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the public regularly (this is a house not a community building, but LEAF offered the scope for community buildings to apply for this sort of thing).

There are rumours of a second round of LEAF later this f/y. There are no guarantees at the moment that it will happen, and the criteria may be slightly different to last time, but it's definitely worth groups keeping an eye out. Last time orgs like MEA were able to help groups write their applications – they were able to include up to £1K for our time in their bid's budget and if they were successful we then claimed this. If they weren't successful we didn't claim it, so the risk lay with MEA rather than the groups. We would be happy to do this again if there is another round and if DECC allows this again.

Because LEAF had such short timescales last time it was really only suitable for groups who already had a suitable project in mind.

5) **Energy Share:** www.energysshare.com - this org doesn't have a fund open at the moment, but its worth registering with them to hear when they are next giving out grants.

6) These guys got **lottery money** for their village hall solar panels: www.northkilworth.com.

One word of warning re: accepting a grant for the installation of renewables – if the grant comes from public funds it can make an installation ineligible for FIT/RHI payments (but it doesn't always). Individual projects would need to check with OFGEM before going ahead with an installation.

C. Other Forms of Funding

Community Shares: A number of community orgs around the country have set up community-owned renewables on community buildings. Local people buy shares in the project, these are used to purchase a solar panel or air source heat pump etc. The building gets the free electricity/heat and those who bought shares get a return on their investment as the renewable earns FIT payments or RHI payments. Here are some local(ish) examples:

- Torrs Hydro Project (Derbyshire-based): <http://torrs-hydro-new-mills.blogspot.com/>
- SHOCK (Nottinghamshire based): www.sustainablehockerton.org
- Green Fox (Leicestershire based): <http://greenfoxcommunityenergy.coop/>
- Tutbury EcoPower (Staffordshire based): www.tutburyecopower.co.uk

A short video guide to funding a project through a Share Issue:

www.planlocal.org.uk/videos/videopages/funding-your-project-through-a-share-issue.html

Energy4All has worked on a number of community-owned projects (mostly wind turbines): www.energy4all.co.uk.

These short videos explore different ways of funding renewables on community buildings: www.planlocal.org.uk/videos/submenus/submenu-funding.html.

I've recently come across this org: www.puretrust.org.uk. Don't know much about them, except that they offer low cost loans for renewables.

Resources Groups Might Find Useful:

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- www.planlocal.org.uk – this is an excellent resource from a charity called Centre for Sustainable Energy which guides groups through the process of setting up a community owned renewable. There are short videos on allsorts of topics (including some really inspiring case studies) and lots of factsheets and activities to help groups work out issues such as deciding what renewables to have, finding funding, getting the community on board etc. All the website resources exist in hard copy in the form of a level arch file full of factsheets and two DVDs with the videos on. This can be ordered from the website by groups and by orgs like RAD. Well worth having on your desk for reference.
- www.acre.org.uk/news/2011-news/news-2011-get-generating-guide - an easy read with lots of case studies. Specifically designed with rural communities in mind.
- **Churches:** last August I had an enquiry from a church in Derbyshire that wanted to become much more energy efficient. Some of the resources I found for them are listed below:
 - <http://www.london.anglican.org/resources/Blocks/12303/Final%20Report.pdf> – the Anglican church buildings surveyed for this report vary in construction date from 1350 to 1995. Lots of innovative ideas for making church buildings more efficient.
 - <http://www.london.anglican.org/resources/Blocks/12303/Generic%20Building%20Solutions%20-%20Applications%20Limitations.pdf> – more from the same Anglican project.
 - <http://ew.ecocongregation.org/resources/module7> - a document about greening church buildings.
 - www.shrinkingthefootprint.org
 - <http://ew.ecocongregation.org>
 - www.sechurba.org.uk/site/other_cases/ - Case Studies from a project MEA ran.
 - www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-shropshire-14189887 – a church which got a loan for renewables and will pay it back with FIT payments and will use income generated after that for other things.

D. Basic Energy Efficiency

Community buildings can often save money on energy without spending anything. A few simple first steps are:

- Measure how much energy you're using by taking regular meter readings. MEA has a free tool to help community organisations to do this: www.wesave.org.uk. Becoming aware of how much you're using is the first step in reducing energy usage.
- Make sure bills aren't estimated – utility companies usually estimate in their favour not yours!
- Derbyshire County Council has energy monitors for non-domestic buildings which they loan out for free:
www.derbyshire.gov.uk/council/news_events/campaigns/save_energy/business_monitors/default.asp.

Once people know how much they're using there are simple steps they can take to reduce their bills. For instance:

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- Is the heating set to be on at times when the building is actually being used, or is it coming on at other times? It's worth periodically checking this as you may find that times at which the building is being used change slightly over time.
- Does someone change the heating settings in autumn and spring to reflect the changing seasons? This is the kind of thing we all do at home, but it can get forgotten about in a community building used by lots of people.
- As and when your light bulbs go you could replace them with energy saving ones – by doing it as they go you spread any small extra cost for these bulbs over a period of time. A wide range of bulbs is now available, especially online.

More tips:

- www.est.org.uk
- www.mea.org.uk/resources/fact-sheets