

# UpBEAT

Newsletter from Blackshaw Environmental Action Team (BEAT)

## **From the editors:**

If you think that BEAT's work for the community is worth supporting we are asking you to give a donation to BEAT before the 2nd December 2011. Why this deadline? Because any money donated to BEAT before this date will be DOUBLED by an anonymous donor – up to a maximum of £250.

Not only that - if you decide to Gift Aid your donation BEAT will also receive the Gift Aid (25%). So a donation of £50 will give BEAT £125. If five people did that BEAT might get £625. If you cannot make the donation via the weblink below you can make the donation to BEAT's treasurer who will make the donation via the weblink.

BEAT has decided to combine this with the possibility of becoming a lifelong member of BEAT if you donate £10 or more to BEAT. Just let us have your name and address plus contact details if you want to become a lifelong member of BEAT.

Support for BEAT continues to grow. 54 people have now taken up membership of BEAT and the Blackshaw Food Network has requested to become a formal subgroup of BEAT. The Blackshaw Parish Council has supported BEAT since we started over 13 years ago. A group in Heptonstall wants to set up a group similar to BEAT and has asked BEAT to come to their first meeting to do a presentation.

In order for your donation to BEAT to be doubled and for BEAT to receive the Gift Aid you will have to give your donation through a charity called LocalGiving.com before 2nd December 2012. You can use the following web link to get straight to the BEAT page:

<http://localgiving.com/charity/beat>

You can of course also give donations after 2nd December but it will not be doubled.

Thanks for your support.

**The BEAT team**



**You can contact BEAT on:**

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Secretary: Ash Sharp, tel. 07855 746295, email: [ashleysharp@sustainablesources.co.uk](mailto:ashleysharp@sustainablesources.co.uk)

Treasurer: Finn Jensen, tel 01422 846863, email: [finn.jensen@rocketmail.com](mailto:finn.jensen@rocketmail.com)



UpBEAT no 16, November-December 2011

## **BEAT AGM**

*For the first half of the meeting three speakers gave presentations on community energy projects.*

*Thanks to Emma from Calderdale Council, Polly from the Alternative Technology Centre and Pete from Power from the Landscape for some interesting presentations.*

*At the AGM the three BEAT officers were re-elected. The reports from BEAT's working group and the BEAT treasurer – see UpBEAT no 15 - were approved. It was decided that BEAT should join the Transition Network – see [www.transitionnetwork.org.uk](http://www.transitionnetwork.org.uk). The village clean-up on 15th Oct was planned and the dates set for BEAT meetings in 2012. It was agreed that BEAT's working group can write a complaints procedure for BEAT, which is needed for one of our grant applications. We would like to hear from you whether you are happy to have future BEAT meetings at the Chapel.*

*Local community groups were invited to submit news and articles to UpBEAT. Apart from emailing out the UpBEAT to over 300 individuals we distribute hard copies of it at the Chapel, the New Delight and May's shop. However, due to high production costs we can no longer afford to leave hard copies in Heptonstall, Todmorden and Hebden Bridge.*

## **New BEAT website to be created**

As announced in UpBEAT no 15 BEAT is setting up our own website as well as having a link directly from the [www.blackshaw.net](http://www.blackshaw.net) website. We registered the domain name [www.blackshawbeat.info](http://www.blackshawbeat.info), which also enables us to have email addresses such as [chair@blackshawbeat.info](mailto:chair@blackshawbeat.info), [info@blackshawbeat.info](mailto:info@blackshawbeat.info), etc. If you are interested in helping BEAT develop this new website please contact Finn on 01422 846863 or [finn.jensen@rocketmail.com](mailto:finn.jensen@rocketmail.com). Watch this space for an announcement when the new website is live!

## **Update on Community Orchard & Allotments**

*We are pleased to announce that the Big Tree Plant has agreed to fund various local projects, including our community orchard at Frank and Magg's. This will enable us to arrange training courses on grafting fruit trees, pruning, tree maintenance, turning fruit into produce – free of charge for our community. More details to follow in upcoming issues.*

*Our plan is to plant the wind breaks for the orchards and community garden in March 2012. Various local schools have agreed to help with the tree planting but we need to wait until the weather warms slightly! We can also do the grafting of the fruit trees this winter and maintain them in a sheltered nursery for two years until they and the wind breaks become established. BEAT is working with Treesponsibility and Calderdale Local Orchard Group (CLOG) on this project and we are grateful for their support. However, before we can plant any trees we also need to put up some fencing to protect the trees against animals. We have not yet received any funding for this but have submitted some grant applications.*

*More than a dozen people have registered an interest in one of our community allotments. Blackshaw Food Network is coordinating this and arranged a site visit and apple pressing day on 5th November at the site for the allotments and one of the orchards.*



*The event was attended by around 30 people and CLOG helped everyone make their own apple juice from apples collected from local orchards – we even got to take home! Everyone was interested in the idea of the allotments and orchards, which could be producing food within a year. Both community orchards are within walking distance from a bus stop, so are easily accessible for people. If you want to help, just contact one of the BEAT team.*

## **Government announces proposed cuts to solar Feed In Tariffs**

The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) recently announced their proposals to reduce the FIT payment available for solar PV installations. From April 2012 the FIT will reduce from 43p per kilowatt hour to 21p kWh for installations under 4kW in size. However, the potential killer for the solar industry is that the cut will be applied to any system connected to the grid after midnight on the 11th December, meaning that there is currently a mad dash to complete planned projects before this cut-off! Paradoxically, the consultation period ends after the 11th December cut-off, which has led to a great deal of anger from solar installers who are warning of redundancies and company failures as a direct result of these changes. Citing the rapid expansion of the solar industry, climate minister Greg Barker warned that the government spending cap on FIT payments will be exceeded if the current solar FIT remains.

### **Village Clean Up**

*Thanks to everyone who helped with BEAT's six-monthly village clean-up on 15th October. The glorious sunshine on the day was just right for a walk along our roads, tracks and footpaths while doing something useful to keep our village tidy.*

*Thanks to the Chapel for letting us use their premises and to Dorothy for providing the refreshments including some amazing fruitcakes! Also thanks to Calderdale Council for the litter pickers and litter bags.*

*Finally, thanks to everyone helping with the planting of the daffodil bulbs. We look forward to see the daffodils in flower in the Spring. This year BEAT bought 500 daffodil bulbs and they all got planted. This is on top of the 2500 we planted last year.*



## Making our Local Church and Community Centre Sustainable.

### Greening the Chapel!

The Chapel's council has discussed the plan for the wall insulation of the two downstairs rooms used by the community, for the installation of double glazing in the two rooms and for a 9kW photovoltaic (PV) solar panel system to go on the roof of the Chapel. The total cost of the project will be £27,391. We have submitted a grant application for 90% of the cost but will still have to find 10% (if we get the full amount applied for). We should know in March 2012 if we have been successful.

Bradford Environmental Action Trust (another BEAT!) will conduct an energy audit of the Chapel which hopefully will release another £2,000 from LEADER towards the work – which will only leaves around £700 still to be raised if we get the grant applied for. We also need to apply for planning permission to put the photovoltaic (PV) solar panels on the roof of the Chapel. This will cost £335 and is included in the total cost of £27,391. The company that will install the PV panels, Apollo Solar, has agreed to prepare the planning application free of charge.

### BEAT is setting up 'Pennine Community Power'

To set up community energy projects (like wind, hydro, PV, etc) with the facility to issue shares one will need to have an Industrial and Provident Society (IPS), which in future will be called Community Benefit Society (CBS). Anyone who buys shares in the IPS/CBS will have one vote, regardless of how much they have invested – as in cooperatives, can vote on how to spend the surplus generated and stand for election as a director at the AGMs. The IPS/CBS will have an asset lock meaning that any assets owned by the Society cannot be sold off with the money shared between the shareholders. The shareholders are only entitled to an interest payment on the money invested. The purpose of the IPS/CBS is to benefit the community and BEAT has chosen renewable energy projects as they are good both for the environment and can generate an income that can be reinvested into the community.

BEAT has set up a small working group to do all the preparations for setting up of the IPS/CBS. We have named the Society 'Pennine Community Power', which will have its own website with the domain name 'powerinthecommunity.org.uk'. We have also decided that the minimum share investment each individual can make is £250. The maximum is £20,000.

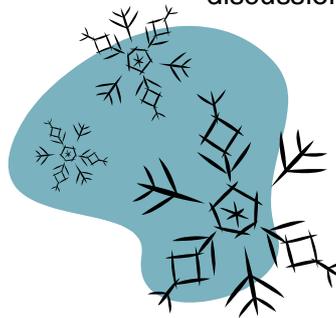
BEAT's working group has formulated the following objectives for 'Pennine Community Power' – but welcomes suggestions from you:

- To build a sustainable community, environmentally, socially and economically
- To develop the profitable supply of energy from renewable resources for the benefit of the community.
- To ensure the democratic control of renewable energy resources through the opportunity for residents to invest and control such resources.
- To ensure that the value from development of renewable energy resources shall be retained within the local economy.
- To create local sustainable livelihoods
- To provide support to other organisations with similar aims
- To educate and inform the general public around the issues of sustainability, climate change and renewable energy.

BEAT has applied to Cooperatives Enterprising Hub for four days a free consultancy to help us with the setting up of 'Pennine Community Power'. The working group is preparing a business plan for this project. More on all this in future issues of UpBEAT and at BEAT's public meeting in January.

## Village SOS

BEAT has submitted a grant application for £30,000 to Village SOS and *we got through the first round!* We have been asked to submit a business plan before 2nd February 2012. The Lottery is giving between £10,000 and £30,000 to around 250 villages to kick start community enterprises, see [www.villagesos.org.uk](http://www.villagesos.org.uk). BEAT has a home page at Village SOS, which you can see at [www.villagesos.org.uk/community](http://www.villagesos.org.uk/community) and type in 'Blackshaw Head', where you can also sign in as a member – to enable you to participate in the online discussions, blogs, etc.



### Upcoming BEAT meetings

**9th November: Nick from Incredible Edible Todmorden did an interesting talk on community gardening. He has created an amazing educational site near Gordon Riggs Garden Centre in Walsden.**

*If you want to see his site you can go from the main road between Todmorden and Littleborough through the pallets factory until you reach the canal where there is a small car park on your left. Walk along the foot path on your left a couple of hundred meters until you get to Nick's site, which has a fence around it. On the site you will find some large poly tunnels, apple trees, ponds, etc.*

**14th December: Richard Armitage and Anne Handley are speaking on insulating 'hard-to-treat' houses (stone walls, no cavity walls, pre-1930 buildings, etc), Calderdale's environmental pilot projects and preparation for the Green Deal.**

*The meetings will be held at 7.45pm at the Methodist Church in Blackshaw Head. Everyone is welcome. BEAT is paying the Chapel £15 for a two-hour session. So if you are working and want to make a donation of £1 towards the costs of using the Chapel we will be grateful.*



You may have noticed that some households in Blackshaw Head now have photovoltaic (PV) solar panels on their roofs. The panels produce electricity for the house and what is not used by the household is exported to the grid. You can get these PV systems in any size – depending on the size of your roof and your budget. Ideally, the roof should be south-facing – to receive the maximum sunshine/light. If you haven't got a suitable roof you can place the solar panels on the ground but it is obviously more risky. The panels do produce some electricity even when the sun is not shining- as long as it is not dark! Likewise, there should be no trees or houses casting a shadow on the solar panels as this will reduce their productivity. There are two main reasons why you may consider buying PV panels: 1. They do not produce any greenhouse gases while in use (although the manufacturing and transport of the panels do). 2. You get paid for all the electricity your PV produces, including the part you use in your house. You will get paid extra for what is exported to the grid and you will obviously also save money on your electricity bills as you will not be importing as much electricity. The price of a PV system has come down by 50% over the last year, from £5,000 per kW installed to £2,500 per kW according to Business Green. So a 4 kW system could now cost around £10,000 plus 5% in VAT.



## **Living with photovoltaic solar panels**

If you want to install a PV system you may want to do it so it is grid connected before 12th December 2011 (see Green News below for latest update) as this will ensure you are paid 43.3 pence per kW produced and you will not face any reductions in this tariff from 1.4.2012.

If your PV system is installed after 12th December but before April 1st 2012 you will receive the 43.3 pence until 31.3.2012 but from 1.4.2012 the Feed-in-Tariff is likely to drop to 21 pence per kW. This is the government's proposal in a consultation that will run to 23rd December 2011. Whether you are 43.3 pence or on 21 pence FiT on 1.4.2012 your FiT will increase each year in line with inflation and all your income from the PV panels is tax free for 25 years – although it is unclear if the 25 years is only for installations grid connected before 12th December 2012.

The government estimates that under the new proposals, feed-in tariff PV costs will be limited to between £250m and £280m in 2014-15, reducing the impact of PV installations to an estimated £3 a year on energy bills by 2020. The consultation also proposed a new energy efficiency requirement that would mean any household or business applying for feed-in tariff incentives from April next year would have to meet minimum energy efficiency standards.

The consultation suggests these standards could include ensuring the building has an Energy Performance Certificate level of C or above, or requiring people to take up Green Deal measures before they can install solar panels. This will be difficult/expensive to achieve in much of the housing stock we have in Blackshaw Parish (stone wall, often with no cavity wall or impossible to install with cavity wall insulation). DECC said that as a transitional arrangement installations with eligibility dates between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013 would have 12 months from entering the feed-in tariff scheme to comply with the energy efficiency requirement.

The inverters usually last between ten and fifteen years and therefore would need replacement during the lifetime of your PV system. The solar panels can last 25 years or more but decline in efficiency by around 0.7% per year, so some installers guarantee that they will still be 80% efficient after 25 years. The government estimates that even with the 21 pence per kW it will give a return on your investment of 4.5-5% depending on type of panels and individual location.

There are many different types of PV solar panels and inverters, some more efficient than others. So it is worth doing some research first and to get several quotes as the price varies a lot between suppliers. For more information and to see a PV system please contact Finn or Laura on 01422-846863 or [finn.jensen@rocketmail.com](mailto:finn.jensen@rocketmail.com) or Paul and Judith on 01422-649404.