

MORE Renewables

Chair's Report

Performance

Our systems at Forge Bank, Halton and at Lancaster Boys and Girls Club produced 90,868 kWh of electricity and 269 kWh of heat in 2019, 11% above our predictions. As in previous years the arrays at Lancaster Cohousing that were installed in 2012 continue to perform best in comparison with what was predicted when we installed them, but this is because the predictions of output in 2012 were more conservative than in later years. You can see from the table below that the output per kWp (the size of the system) is greatest for the system installed at Lancaster Cohousing in 2014.

The Boys and Girls club solar thermal (hot water) system continues to perform poorly. Unlike the amount of electricity produced by a solar PV system, the amount of heat produced by a solar hot water system depends on the amount of hot water used and the settings of the boiler that also heats the water. If the gas boiler is set to provide hot water first thing in the morning then the solar system is not able to put any more heat into the water when the sun is up. The performance of the Boys and Girls Club solar thermal system was particularly poor last summer, we think because the timings of the boiler had been changed. We were hoping to monitor it this summer, but until the Covid-19 restrictions are lifted the Club will not have significant use to enable us to do this. Unlike the Lancaster Cohousing systems, where we have a lease, we have a shared ownership agreement with the Boys and Girls Club. This means that the poor performance of the solar thermal system just delays when the system will become owned by the club.

Our income was 14% more than predicted, at just under £21,800.

Performance of MORE Renewables systems in 2019

System	predicted for year kWh	Actual kWh	kWh/kWp	Difference %	predicted £	actual £	Difference %
LCH1	38461	45573	916	18%	11153	13250	19%
LCH2	33027	36783	937	11%	5835	6461	11%
B&G Club PV	8643	8512	851	-2%	1848	2048	11%
B&G Club ST	1837	269		-85%	265	30	-89%
	81968	91137		11%	19102	21789	14%

Future plans

The feed in tariff has now come to an end and there are no subsidies available for solar PV systems. However, as stated in last year's report we pre-registered a small solar PV system at the Gregson community centre, to enable us to receive Feed in tariff payments for a

system there if installed by the end of March 2020. This was dependant on the Gregson Community Association completing repairs to the roof before that date, which did not happen. However, because of the Coronavirus crisis the deadline for completing pre-registered projects has been extended by 6 months so there is a possibility that we may be able to install this system.

Some subsidy-free systems are being installed, such as the one at Burneside, by Burneside Community Energy that we bought shares in last year. These generally require large, easy to install on roofs and a host organisation that will use most of the electricity generated and is prepared to pay a decent price for it.

We have been in discussions with a community organisation in Lancaster who have plans for a new building which could accommodate a 20 kWp system. We have offered them a shared ownership agreement, such as we have with the Boys and Girls Club. The directors consider that this agreement spreads the risk between the two organisations: we cover our costs (including share interest payments, community benefit payments and something for administration) but do not make a surplus above this. However, if income is less than expected we do not make a loss, as the system remains ours for longer. (It becomes owned by the host organisation when our total income covers all our costs). Our preliminary financial modelling for this system shows that to make it viable we would need to use around £10,000 of our accumulated cash, rather than funding all the estimated £20,000 cost by issuing new shares. These plans mean we did not send out an email in 2019 asking if members wanted to withdraw their shares, and only paid back £2000 to one member.

In the current Covid-19 crisis this project is now on hold and a final decision on whether it will go ahead will not be made until the restrictions are lifted.

Community benefit payment

Last year we retained our community benefit payment so we now have £3195 to spend. James Somerville, who used to run the LESS Home Energy Service, and his wife, Gina, have set up a new Community Interest Company, Green Rose, to give energy efficiency advice in the North Lancashire Area. They do home visits at which they also install simple energy efficiency measures, such as draught excluders and new light bulbs. The Directors recommend that we give them a grant of £3000 to pay for 30 home visits.

Anne Chapman

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