The Schools' Energy Cooperative

Fact sheet and update ***April 2022***

Since 2014 The Schools' Energy Co-operative has installed solar PV systems at 90 sites from Poole to Teesside. This includes 85 schools, 3 nurseries/ children's centres, a children's hospice, and the cloisters of Salisbury Cathedral. We expect to save more than 1,100 tonnes** of carbon dioxide each year, for at least the next 25 years.

Our total capacity now exceeds 3.6 megawatts, and the installations are expected to produce almost 3.2 gigawatt-hours of renewable electricity each year. This is enough to power around 860 typical UK homes, or to make more than 50 million cups of tea! Since 2014, aggregate output from our systems has been 100% of our initial projections.

Our members have funded this amazing growth. Our first share issue was in 2014, and our fifth in 2020/1 raised £690,000.

June 2021: The Mayor of London visited our installation at West Acton Primary School, joined by Ealing Central and Acton MP, Rupa Huq, and leader of Ealing Council, Peter Mason.

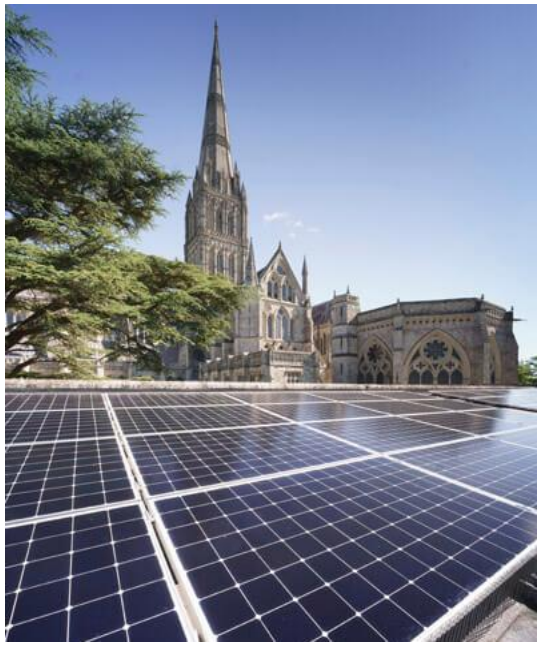
Our success had been driven through our partnerships. As well as several Academy Trusts, we work with Ealing Council and Ealing Transition (16 sites, 528 kWp), Harrow Council (7 sites, 289 kWp), and Salisbury Community Energy (5 sites, 202 kWp). This includes a solar PV installation on Salisbury Cathedral's Chapter House & Cloisters. We have recently agreed to work in partnership with CREW – Community Renewable Energy Wandsworth - which has a pipeline of schools that wish solar PV to be installed.

We have also just been given the go-ahead for a large installation at a secondary school – this will be around 370 kWp, making it our largest installation so far.

Work in progress on a school installation

The first 83 of our sites are supported by the Feed-in tariff (FiT) subsidy, which finally closed to March 2021, for projects pre-registered prior to March 2019. We have now completed 7 sites without this subsidy, representing more than 500 kWp of generating capacity.

Whilst the cost of electricity and fossil-fuels have recently surged, solar PV equipment prices continue to fall – and our "fuel" is free! As a result, larger sites are now viable without subsidy. For smaller sites, some form of subsidy is usually required – 3 of our "FiT free" sites (including West Acton Primary School) have been supported by a grant from the GLA's London Community Energy Fund (LCEF). In total, we have installed nearly 800 kWp on 22 schools with LCEF support, and we were recently awarded two further grants under this scheme to support new sites in Wandsworth and Harrow, and further work in Ealing.



Our solar panels at Salisbury Cathedral

The schools themselves use most of the energy generated by the PV panels, and any excess is exported to the electricity grid. As we own the systems, the schools pay us for the power they use, at a discount to their normal electricity cost. On our first 83 systems, we also get the FiT subsidy. These income streams fund our operating costs, and payments to our shareholders. We retain some money for the future, and everything left is paid to the schools. To date we have distributed almost £34,000 as school dividends.

*** compared to generation from gas*

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