



## Generating power from PV Panels

**You know** what it's like when someone buys a new car, they need to justify their extravagance "It goes 0 to 60 in less time than it takes to say Oran-Utan, and does over 100 miles per bio-digesting microbe", and you wonder if it takes half a Malaysian rain-forest to make just the wheel arch. And you could go by bus.

So you are bound to be sceptical about any claims for micro-generation using photovoltaic (PV) panels. So I won't make any, just give you the facts from our, albeit limited, experience to date.

What is a PV system? It has three parts and a bit of wiring. PV panels go on the roof; these are just bigger versions of the ones you find on solar-powered calculators, and they convert sunlight to direct electrical current. An inverter, a magic box of electronics, converts the panel current to mains. Finally a new meter alongside the existing electricity meter logs how much you power you have generated, and that's the pay-off.

You receive 41.3p for each unit (kilowatt hour) you generate, even if you use it all yourself. This is known as 'feed in tariff' and it's paid for 25 years, index linked to RPI. It's also tax free.

If you're so inclined you can play the market with any surplus electricity you don't use and export to the grid. In practice it's probably not worth the extra cost of an 'export' meter, especially when your electricity supplier (e.g. Eon) are happy to estimate it and pay you 3p per unit on half of the total generated. That means you actually receive 42.8p per unit

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**You may recall from the AGM** and the article in the *Wheathampstead Pump* that WDPDS is campaigning to help nurture the environment in Wheathampstead. We are pleased to say there was a good turnout for our first event, the screening of *The Age of Stupid*, on 30 April.

The comments that those who attended have made suggest that people in the Wheathampstead area are motivated to do what they can to help protect the environment for future generations. But we are conscious that in isolation it can be difficult to know what to do for the best. WDPDS wants to do what it can to help people locally support each other to find the best solutions.



Our next event involves working in partnership with Energy Saving Trust to run a 'surgery' on energy conservation on Village Day (11 July). To help you make the most of this opportunity to get advice, a questionnaire appears on page 5 which you can fill in and either return to us before Village Day or bring along on Village Day itself. You will see a raffle ticket for a prize draw is attached. WDPDS are donating a home energy monitor (or 'OWL') to the winner.

WDPDS had a DVD of *The Age of Stupid* that members are welcome to borrow. Alternatively it is available from online retailers for a few pounds.

At the meeting we invited local people to share their energy conservation experiences. David Singleton continues this theme (see left) by relating his experiences in micro-generation using photovoltaic panels.



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generated. Of course whilst you are using your own electricity you are saving some 14p per unit by not having to buy it from your supplier.

The government set the feed in tariff at 41.3p so that owners should recoup the not inconsiderable capital outlay and receive about 8% return on investment. Better than cash in the bank? Is this return being achieved in practice?

We have now had 44 days of use from our new system. Too early, perhaps, to say if it's successful – I'll report back in year 2035. All we can say is that the 'standard assessment' said the system should generate 1,851 kWh per year and to date we have generated 402 kWh – some 80% more than the assessment daily average. OK, most of that was during May, not exactly the dullest month. That said three days in the last week of April produced more per day than 20 days in May, suggesting perhaps not surprisingly that it's clear skies we need, not heat of summer.

Sadly it won't work during power cuts, something we seem to have more than our fair share of on Wheathampstead. It's something to do with not electrocuting the maintenance engineers who expect the wires to be dead when switched off at their end.

*David Singleton*

## Badger talk at the AGM

We should like to thank Audrey Randall, the Chair of the Herts and Middlesex Badger Group, who gave a fascinating insight into the lives of badgers at this year's AGM.



In the first part of the evening, Rick Sanderson, our out-going Chairman, reviewed our achievements during the past year. David Watson, our Treasurer, presented his report, illustrated by some of the activities that we were involved in during 2009. Our new chair, Julie Bell, then outlined our plans for the coming twelve months.

And the lively audience contributed many interesting questions.

The new WDPS Committee is as shown below. We welcome Lisa Hobden, who has joined since the AGM.

<i>Chair</i>	<b>Julie Bell</b>	01582 833789
<i>Vice Chair</i>	<b>Nigel Oxley</b>	01582 832900
<i>Treasurer</i>	<b>David Watson</b>	01582 833888
<i>Secretary</i>	<b>Sue Johnston</b>	01582 833679
<i>Membership Secretary</i>	<b>Madeleine Salter</b>	01582 831658
<i>Minutes Secretary</i>	<b>Vivienne Kendall</b>	01582 629930
<i>Newsletter Editor</i>	<b>Richard Brett</b>	01582 833789
<i>Committee Members</i>	<b>John Wackett</b>	01582 834224
	<b>Sonja Fillingham</b>	01582 831899
	<b>Lisa Hobden</b>	01582 629599

### Rick Sanderson

Rick Sanderson has been our chairman for the past seven years and decided to stand down as from the AGM. We are sorry to lose him from the Committee but fully recognise that he has done more than his fair share for the Society, and indeed for the village, and he will be a hard act to follow. He is a tireless campaigner and this, combined with his great attention to detail, made him a force to be reckoned with. He is well known and well respected in the village, and we wish him and Pam all the best for the future.

### OBITUARY - CLIVE PAYNE

Sadly we have to report the death of former WDPS Committee member Clive Payne, who passed away on 7 April after a long period of illness with heart disease. Clive served on the Committee from 2002 to 2008, and was particularly involved in helping out with the WDPS stall at successive Village Days.

Our condolences go to his wife Sue and their family.

## What should our priorities be? WDPS seeks your views

The change in the Committee has encouraged us to take stock of what WDPS should be doing and where our priorities should lie. We would like to seek members' opinions on this. The AGM gave us the opportunity to ask those who were present to fill in a questionnaire, and the results – plus the Committee's own thinking – are summarised below.

1. **WDPS's priorities:**

- Monitoring planning applications, supporting or opposing them where appropriate.
- Conserving . This includes campaigning for:
  - for a Design Statement for signage in Wheathampstead, with the intention of providing guidance to local businesses and community groups and asking them to consider the heritage of the village when designing advertisements and other signs.
  - for the enforcement of the Lorry Ban – see page 6
  - to ensure that Blackbridge Tip is not reopened – see page 4
  - against the re-siting of flight paths over Wheathampstead.
- Appearance. This includes:
  - Planting bulbs
  - Clearing the river when necessary
  - Identifying street clutter such as unnecessary signs and campaigning for its removal
  - Supporting the Parish Council on the appearance of Mill Quay
  - Installing a notice board in the centre of the village.

2. **Newsletters:**

- These should continue to appear regularly and should also be available on the website;

3. **Email communication:**

- For those members who are on email, the Committee should communicate by email on any urgent matters

If you were unable to attend the AGM, you will not yet have had the opportunity to have your say in what our priorities should be. All members are therefore invited to complete the questionnaire below—anonously if you wish—and return it to:

Sue Johnston, 9 Brewhouse Hill, Wheathampstead AL4 8AN. Alternatively, you can complete the form on our website: [www.wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk](http://www.wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk)

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### WDPS Priorities Questionnaire

Our current priorities are listed in the newsletter. What else do you think is important? Should it be given a greater priority than what we have identified so far?

Our organisation has long been called Wheathampstead and District Preservation Society. Do you feel this properly reflects what is important to you about the Society and about what the Society should be doing for Wheathampstead? Please let us have any suggestions for what you feel would be a more appropriate name.



### Blackbridge Tip: Issue remains unresolved

Although recent reports may suggest that Blackbridge Tip will not be reopened, the matter will not be formally resolved until the next version of Hertfordshire County Council’s *Waste Site Allocations* document is published.

The last version of this document – the Issues and Preferred Options draft – was issued in November 2009. It included a list of proposed re-restoration sites, one of which was Blackbridge Tip. No definition was provided of ‘re-restoration’, but it was

clear that if Blackbridge came to be included in the final version of the Waste Site Allocations document, the owners of the land – Lafarge – will press for it to be re-opened as a tip.

Since November WDPS has been campaigning to persuade the County Council to drop Blackbridge Tip from the list. The response from the officer involved has been sympathetic but the ultimate decision rests the councillors, who may or may not agree with an officer’s recommendation.

WDPS will continue to provide updates until it is definite that the tip will not be allowed to reopen.

### Making the most of the river

As the new signs on the approach roads now say, Wheathampstead is a riverside village. The river is the reason why Wheathampstead developed where it did and it remains a treasured amenity. At East Meads it is already open to all, but from Mill Bridge in the centre of the village all you can do is gaze upstream, gaze downstream or fish from Mill Quay. The river banks are out of bounds.

Are there any practical ways in which we could improve access to the river? Are there any ways in which we could make better use generally of the river? Under the Village Plan WDPS has been asked to investigate, so if you have any ideas we’d be very pleased to hear from you.



Please write to Sue Johnston, 9 Brewhouse Hill, Wheathampstead AL4 8AN. Or alternatively email us at [info@wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk](mailto:info@wheathampsteadpreservation.org.uk)

### Reverse of WDPS Priorities Questionnaire

Please use this area for any additional comments.

# Energy Saving Trust Referral Form



Name

Address

Postcode

Tel  Mobile

Email

### Do you own or rent your home?

Homeowner  Privately Rented  Council/ Housing Association Rented  Other

Year property was built:  Number of bedrooms:

Property type (e.g. semi, house):

Main fuel: Gas  Electricity on peak  Electricity off peak  Oil  LPG  Other

Main heating system: Central heating  Storage heaters  Other

Boiler type (e.g. combi):  Boiler age: Before 1997  After 1998

Wall type: Unfilled cavity  Filled Cavity  Solid brick  Stone  Timber  Other

Do you have loft insulation? None  2"  4"  6"  8"  10"  10"+

Is a member of your household over 70 years old? Yes  No

Is a member of your household in receipt of benefits? Yes  No

If answered yes - which benefits do they receive?

National Insurance number:

### Would you like to receive information on any of the following?

Renewable energy technologies  Feed in tariffs  Renewable heat incentives   
Other

### Referral is for :

Cavity wall insulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	EPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scheme to refer to: <input type="text"/>
Solid wall insulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	PG	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Loft insulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	ATP	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Loft insulation top up	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Heater/ Boiler	<input type="checkbox"/>			

Other

The Energy Saving Trust is collecting your data to provide you with advice on sustainable energy, cleaner transport, waste and water. We will retain your data to carry out research and statistical analysis into the energy efficiency of UK housing stock. We may re-contact you in future to evaluate this service. Your local energy conservation authority will also receive your data for the purposes of energy efficiency monitoring, targeting and reporting. If you do not want to receive this help, please cross here.

Reverse of the Energy Saving Trust referral form



Energy Saving Trust will be conducting a 'surgery' on energy conservation in the stall next to WDPS on Village Day (11 July). To help you make the most of this opportunity to get advice and to save time on Village Day, you can fill this in and either:

- return it before Village Day to Sue Johnston, 9 Brewhouse Hill, Wheathampstead AL4 8AN, or
- bring it along on Village Day itself.

You will see a raffle ticket for a prize draw is attached, and WDPS are donating a home energy monitor (or 'OWL') to the winner.

**Note about Energy Saving Trust**

Energy Saving Trust provides free impartial advice, tailored to suit your needs, to help you save money and reduce carbon dioxide emissions from your home.

For example, Energy Saving Trust may recommend a householder to save energy by taking simple measures such as installing energy saving light bulbs, loft insulation, cavity wall insulation, etc. Other measures include solar hot water, solar electricity, heat pumps, energy efficient boiler, wind, etc.

To find out more please fill in the form and/or visit us at our stand on Wheathampstead Village Day (11 July).

For more information please call us free on 0800 512 012 or email us at [enquiries@est.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@est.org.uk)





**See you on Village Day**

**Our stand** at Wheathampstead Village Day is a great opportunity to come and see what we have been working on during the past year – and discuss any concerns you have about the village and the surrounding area.

This year we shall be joined in the adjacent stand by Energy Saving Trust, who will be running a 'surgery' on energy conservation (see page 1).

We very much hope to see you on Village Day—Sunday, 11 July.

### **Volunteers required**

The Wheathampstead Village Weekend will take place over 10 – 11 July, and the Parish Council is looking for volunteers who can help out for some of the time. It can be for as short or long a period as you like. There are specific tasks such as directing parking, and there is a need too for general helpers and dogsbodies!

If you would like to be involved, please contact Julia Warren –

01582 832541 *or*

julia.warren@wheathampstead-pc.gov.uk

## **Wheathampstead Needs Your Help**

We are considering setting up a register of volunteers and perhaps calling it the 'Wheathampstead Volunteer Group'.

This initiative already works well in other villages and we should try a scheme like this in Wheathampstead, as there is nothing currently in place in our village. There are various organisations in Wheathampstead run by volunteers, so would it not be good for the community if we could harness these resources? What is more, there are numerous people that don't belong to any organisation who would be more than willing to help in various projects to improve the look and lives of us all in Wheathampstead. And volunteering for community projects can be recognised as evidence towards key skills qualifications, so ask your school for details if you are taking a CoPE or ASDAN qualification

The 'Railway Project' is a good example. There are now up to 50 different people who have been involved. This project is probably one of the most ambitious things that we will tackle as a community and it is very encouraging that there are so many people wanting to help. WDPS feel that we need to embrace this enthusiasm and not lose the momentum. Those involved with this project have been introduced to many more people in the village and one gets a strong feeling of a community spirit which brings people together.



*Left: The project to renovate the site of Wheathampstead station is a good example of what can be achieved with the help of enthusiastic volunteers*

Therefore we are considering keeping a register of people willing to help in any future project. These projects could range from perhaps cleaning some of the signs around the village to bulb planting to river clearing and to anything else that will improve our village.

We shall involve the Parish Council with this idea as some of the work involved may need their consent. Some work undertaken may have to be risk assessed and supervised. To help spread this message we shall work with the Parish Council and publish an article in *The Wheathampstead Pump*.

We will report more on this in the next edition of our newsletter. However, in the meantime if you have any views on this we would be grateful if you could contact David Watson (WDPS -Treasurer) on 01582 833 888 or davidwdps@aol.com



## WDPS plants bulbs around new signs

WDPS volunteers turned their attention this year to the smart new Wheathampstead signs on the main approach roads into the village and planted a combination of snowdrops and aconites around the signs.



Watch out next Spring for some stunning displays.

## Counting the lorries

WDPS has begun to monitor lorries using Lower Luton Road to provide clear evidence to Hertfordshire Highways that the lorry ban is being openly and constantly defied.

As reported in previous newsletters, WDPS has been concerned for some time about the number of lorries that contravene the 7.5 T. lorry ban on Lower Luton Road. The intention is to stop lorries travelling on the B653 where their business is not within the lorry ban zone but some place far beyond Wheathampstead. In other words these lorries are using Lower Luton Road as a through route.

We have contacted Hertfordshire Highways on numerous occasions and they have indicated that the ban, operated in conjunction with Hertfordshire Constabulary, is complex and difficult to enforce. They have recently started a trial at London Colney where a similar lorry ban will be enforced by the police. The trial will run for 18 months and the results will be known some time after August 2011. If it is successful they will consider applying the same level of enforcement to other roads in the county. Hopefully our efforts will ensure that Lower Luton Road will be given priority in any future trials.

We have recently carried out our own survey of traffic along Lower Luton Road during nine one-hour periods on different working days. In a one-hour period we counted on average 18 lorries, of which 9 were legal and had business within the lorry ban zone, and 9 were illegal. This equates over an eight-hour working day to 72 lorries travelling illegally.

We shall be carrying out further monitoring in the near future and the results will be submitted to Hertfordshire Highways. We shall record the number of lorries (in both directions) at a point near Luton Parkway Station and also at the top of Station Road, Wheathampstead. Using digital cameras we will record details of each lorry and note the times at which it enters and leaves the lorry ban zone.

There will be some that turn off to businesses *en route* and this of course is acceptable. However, those that are timed leaving the zone after only taking long enough to drive straight through will have been using Lower Luton Road illegally. These are the lorries that use Lower Luton Road as a cut through to the major motorway networks, and the ones we wish to ban so our lives are no longer blighted by heavy vehicles.