DORSET COMMUNITY ENERGY

Regen Peer Power Event

Thursday 29th June 18:00- 20:30 Colliton Club, Dorchester

Powering Dorset Together

Dorset Community Energy – progress to date and ideas for the future

Pete West – Secretary, Dorset Community Energy

Topics to be covered

- **Dorset Community Energy progress to date**
- **Future potential DCE developments**
- **Summary of lessons learned and reflections**

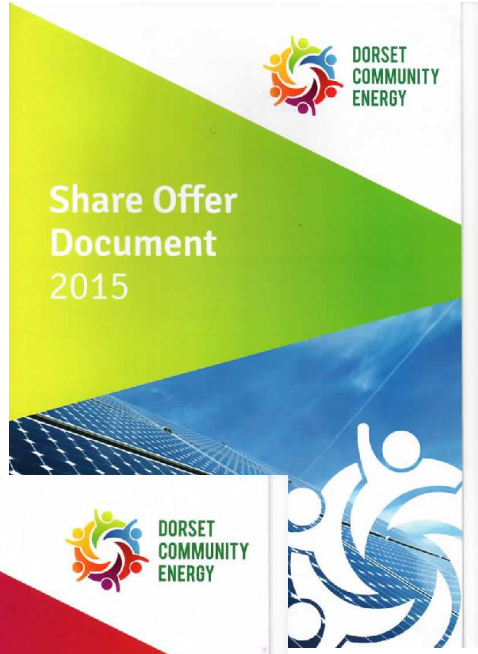
- **Questions at the end- 5 mins**
- **Opportunity for more discussion at 19:40**

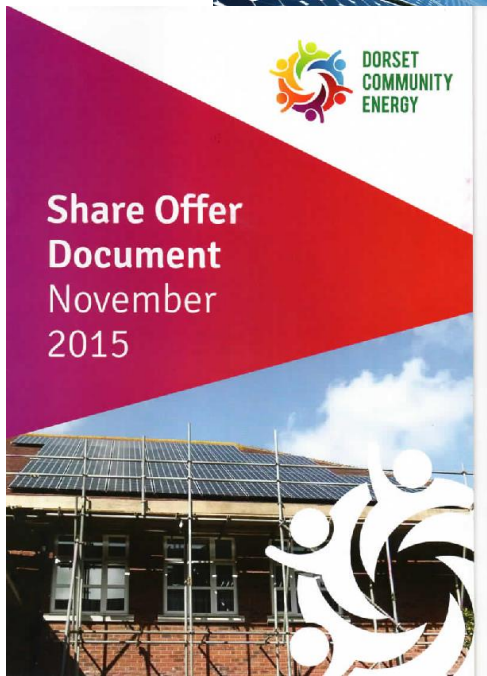
Dorset Community Energy

- **Dorset Community Energy is a not-for-profit Community Benefit Society registered with the Financial Conduct Authority in August 2013, with support from the Big Lottery 'Communities Living Sustainably in Dorset' programme.**

- **£489,000 was raised by 2 share offers in 2015, from 150 individual members - mostly Dorset residents - to finance community solar PV installations.**

- **Members receive 5%- 6% pa interest on their shares and capital returned in annual instalments between years 4 – 20.**





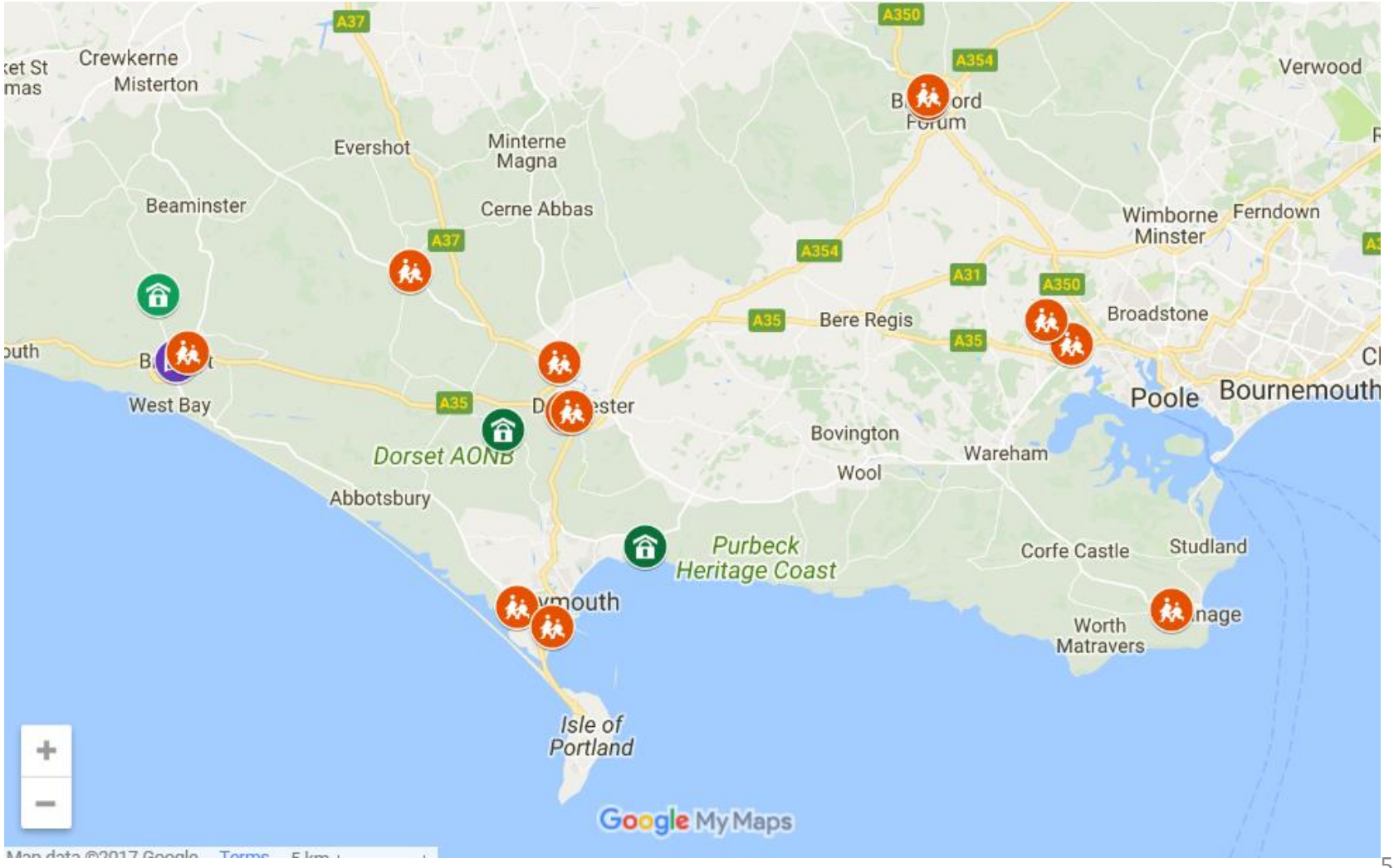
Dorset Community Energy progress to date

- **420kW of community-financed PV installations have been completed on 12 schools and 4 community buildings**

- **Total financial savings to the schools and community buildings from free or low cost solar electricity are estimated at £600,000 over 20 years**

30kW of solar PV at Budmouth College

16 community - financed solar PV installations in Dorset



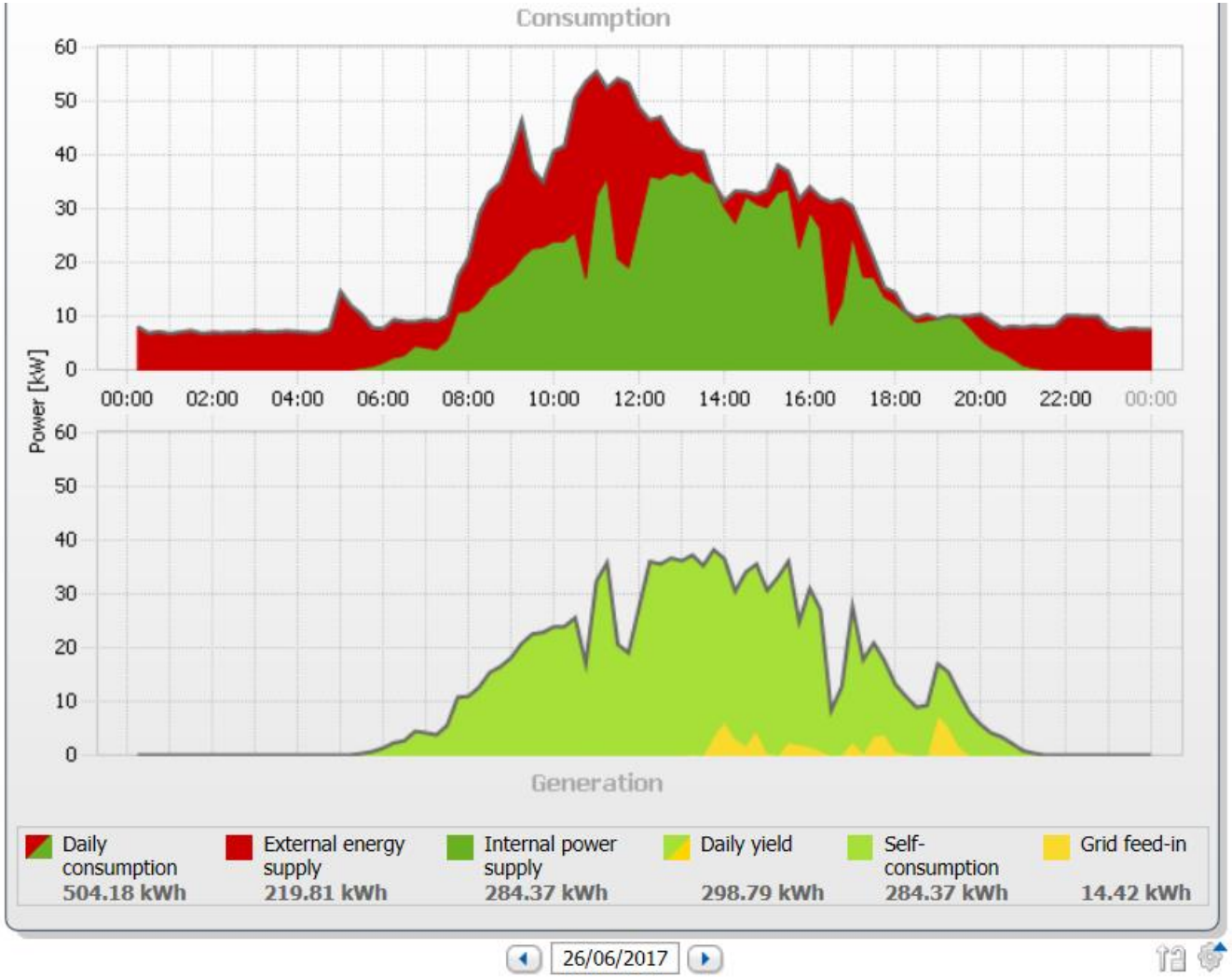
The Swanage School – 49kW

- the solar electricity saves over £3,000 p.a.

Milldown Primary School, Blandford 49kW

- the solar panels supply half of the school's annual electricity use

Detailed web-based energy analysis is possible – Holy Trinity School, Weymouth (50kW of PV)



Dorset Community Energy educational activities

A 24-page solar energy teaching pack has been developed by Alison Jay, Dorset County Council's Sustainable Schools Project Officer, together with 2 boxes of solar energy models and equipment for free loan to schools. A number of Dorset Community Energy volunteers are actively involved in educational activities.

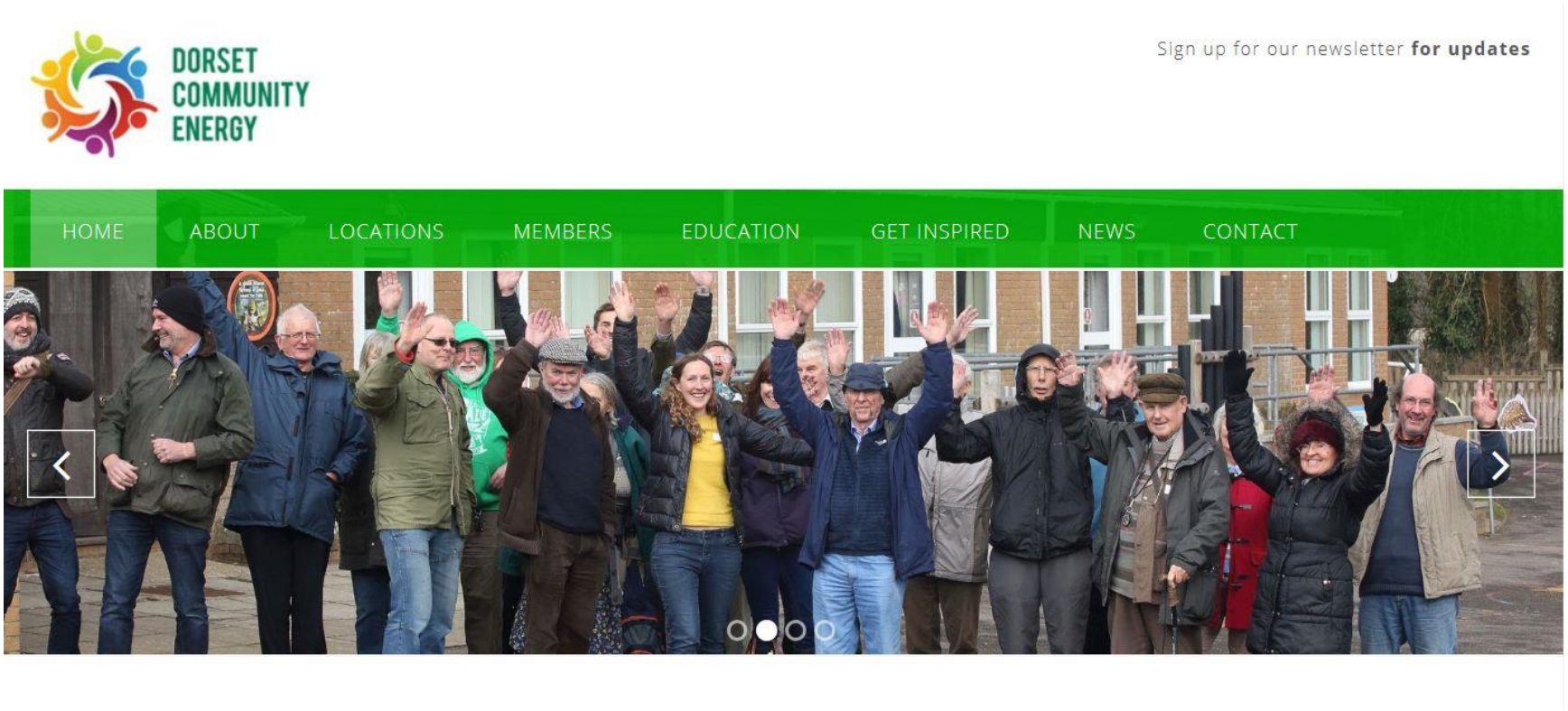
Educational activities

Co-operating with Dorchester Churches Together Ecology Group

One World Day

August 2016

New website launched in early June



The website www.dorsetcommunityenergy.org.uk includes a sign-up form for a new public-facing newsletter and buttons for members and schools

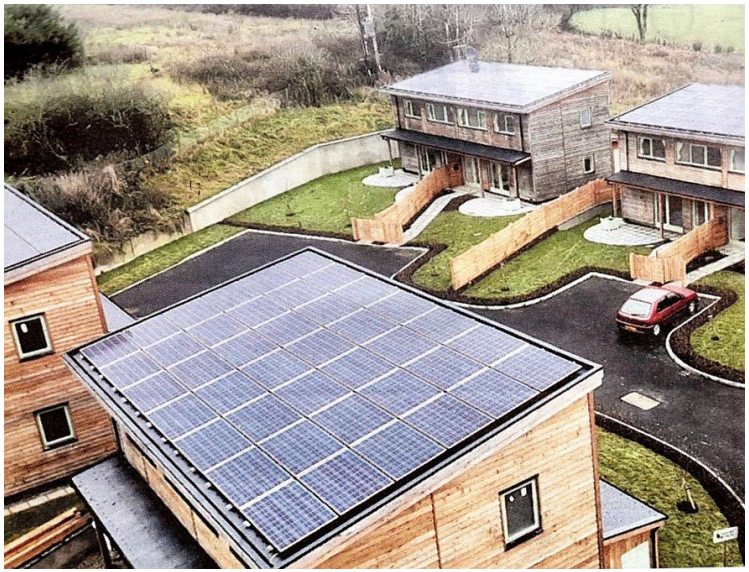
Potential new opportunities

Seek funding for an expanded energy education programme

Potential new opportunities

To partner with Dorset - based Community Land Trusts and Housing Associations to support new zero -carbon affordable homes.

The photograph is an example of a small housing development in West Wales using local timber construction, high insulation and renewables. The build cost was £70,000- £100, 000 per semi-detached house. There is a shared electric car and annual energy costs are estimated at £200 per year.



Potential new opportunities

Local direct supply of renewables to householders at a discounted price compared to grid electricity- potential wind energy/ solar PV pilot in Salway Ash which would likely be developed by a separate legal entity such as a Community Interest Company

Lessons learned and reflections

- **Developing a community energy project which requires financial investment is almost identical to running a business and the same skills are required.**
- **A wide range of skills are required by the directors including accounting and financial management, technical knowledge of renewables and energy efficiency, organisational skills relevant to the co-operative sector and community engagement / communications skills.**
- **For projects with a capital investment below £500,000 there is unlikely to be enough surplus to pay directors or staff more than a modest remuneration. Some volunteer input is likely to be needed.**
- **Larger projects such as community solar farms are likely to be more financially viable but may require management by experienced external consultants, with the main local benefit being a community benefit fund.**

Lessons learned and reflections

- **A high level of motivation is required, as projects can be complex and challenging- for example over 200 separate legal and technical documents were required before the 16 Dorset Community Energy solar PV installations could be registered to receive the Feed-in Tariff.**
- **Government policy changes can be very difficult to manage- for example almost all the support measures in the 2014 Community Energy Strategy were removed between May and November 2015 and Feed-in Tariff rates for new PV installations were reduced by 2/3 in January 2016.**
- **Moral and practical support is available via emerging community energy networks and from the established co-operative sector through Co-operatives UK.**
- **It is important to see community energy as part of a wider process of social change towards a more ethical, equal and environmentally sustainable future.**

DORSET COMMUNITY ENERGY

Any questions?