

HFC Report for Dec 2023 PC Agenda

1) HFC Management

- Next HFC Management Committee Meeting: Tuesday 12 December
- HFC will need to organise a “Hall Open Day” New Year to publicise conclusion of Solar Panel Project (a condition of ACRE Platinum Jubilee Grant grant).
- Fete and Fireworks Committee will meet Wed 24th January to review method of funding / ideas to boost income for Fireworks and Halloween fundraiser next year.
- Shop Rent will increase in February 2024 by 3% in line with terms of 2021 Lease.
- Hall hire rates will increase 1st Jan by figure expected to be not less than 6% (rising costs include April 2023 staff pay rise (10%) and energy cost increase in April despite savings from Solar Panels).

2) Solar Panels Project

Background: June 28th meeting HFC decision to proceed with purchase from Solar Green of £40K+VAT system (with battery).

a) Current Cost

No Change:

Solar Green July 2023 Quotation: Hall Solar Panels minus battery (£32.563K solar + vat).

Power Board Replacement (£3.836K +vat).

Total combined: £36.40K + Vat.

Note Total without battery is less than the £40K+VAT originally budgeted for in Grant applications.

Risk: Price increase of about £1K due to delay for VAT reduction (due to Solar Panels/Optimisers prices rising in new year once present supplier warehouse stock is used).

Avoidable if HFC pay Deposit to Solar Green to procure/store risk items. **Agreed**, subject to HFC Meeting 12 December.

b) VAT Change

Autumn Financial Statement – VAT reduced to 5% effective “after February”.

No change - Still no formal HMRC VAT announcement yet. ACRE say new Vat Notice should be available soon and confirm details.

A 5% VAT reduction saves approximately £5K on overall project cost.

c) Grants & Funding

No change: Confirmed ACRE Queen’s Platinum Jubilee: £8K + Tom Amos Charity £5K.

CCC Greener Chelmsford Application: Decision believed imminent (they say average turn around on application is 1 month, so decision overdue but have answered grant questions)

Amount requested: Original £10k request (max allowed). Reduced now to £5k (due to VAT reduction).

Confirmed Total Funding: No change

- -HFC + ACRE + Tom Amos: £33K
- -EHPC: The £6K (figure still assumed for match funding grant applications). Final figure from PC TBC

NOTE see Part e) below - Power Distribution Panel Replacement purchase (£3.836K +vat).

d) ACRE Loan:

ACRE now advised loan not needed (with Tom Amos £5K grant and assuming £5K VAT reduction confirmed).

e) Solar Green:

Purchase Orders (total value £36.40K + Vat).

A Purchase Order for overall programme of work has been signed and accepted by Solar Green but with a revised delay for installation of Solar Panels to allow for VAT reduction.

Power Board Replacement: Solar Green instructed to proceed with Power Board before Xmas. Cost (£3.836K + 20% vat). Solar Green have ordered now.

"Payment request" from Solar Green Ltd will come to EHPP for Clerk.

Solar Panels and Invertor etc: HFC Deposit payment for advance purchase of Solar Panels (subject to 12 Dec HFC Committee Management Meeting)

Deposit £12,076.80 (no Vat) will cover purchase x112 Solar Panels.

"Payment request" from Solar Green Ltd will go to HFC.

Balance of *£32.563K solar panel installation + 5% VAT is not until due after Test and Acceptance of system in new year.

Note 1 *Final price subject to a TBC in Solar Green July quote for Scaffolding (was estimated £3.5k).

Note 2 HFC might reconsider Battery decision if cost of battery now less due to VAT change and if final grant/funding able cover extra cost.

Presentation of Solar Green Receipts/Invoices: No Change

SG know one part of final project invoicing to be addressed to EHPC for payment, with rest to HFC.

Invoicing/Receipts for project overall cost need to match grant fund application figures to claim grants at project completion.

HFC will probably have to pay Solar Green in advance of receipt of grants from funders (they typically take a while to check claim paperwork and pay where as Solar Green want asap).

ACRE deadline for project to be finished is 31 Oct - they have confirmed we can present Proforma invoice supporting claim in advance of work completion if needed to meet their deadline.

f) UK Power Network DNO Licence: No Change

Licence (up to 50kW full system capability). Validity 3 Months based on 18 Dec installation date. Solar Green think with late February installation we should still be OK.

g) Solar Farm Developers: No Change

Still to be approached.

- Cell Energy Ltd – big East Hanningfield site (applicant contact Mr Matt Rudling)
- Bluestone Energy Limited – E&SW application (applicant contact Mr David Robertson)
- Low Carbon Solar Park 5 Limited (Sandon Brook – big West Hanningfield site) now called Sandon Brook Solar Farm Limited.

h) New Hall Energy Supply & Export Contract

SSE (current supplier) fixed price contract ends 30th April (offer to fix rates now for 1 year supply is twice current price but SSE only offer 4.1p SEG rate on Solar export).

Octopus. Confirmed their 15p/unit SEG rate on Solar export but only available if we have signed up at same time for a supply contract.

Therefore, no point in contracting with any energy supplier before current SSE contract ends April 30th 2024 and we are able to export solar generated energy.

Import and export prices critical for Hall's Solar Panel energy cost/savings projections - more work needed nearer 1 May to decide best deal.

Energy Supplier – Other Factors

Hall's SMART meter has to be approved by the contracted energy supplier for solar export to be accepted (present Hall SMART meter supplied SSE may be OK but will have to check with selected supplier and takes time).

HFC Can't export energy until Solar Green's installation certification has been cleared by DNO (UK Power Network) and with who ever the contracted Energy Supplier is (in addition to Hall's wanting to also check suitability of Halls SMART meter).

All likely to take around 6 weeks from completion of Solar Panel installation and certification.

3) Other Projects & Funding Priorities

a) Foyer Changes/ Lockable Notice Board

Proposal: Raise new grant application after Solar Panel work paid for (HFC bank account will look more depleted so may be more sympathetic to request).

Apply to Lotter Awards for All for funding. Use same estimates and match funding assumptions as for failed Community Initiative Fund (CIF) grant application covering:

- x1 Greenbarnes recycled plastic wall mounted lockable 3-Bay 9xA4 External Display Cabinet) ;
- Front entrance flooring (fill old door mat well and new laminate flooring plus door mats;
- x2 Prima Poly 3 Seat Tip Up Beam Seating,

Funding application will be based on Total Cost of Project: Approx £7,000 including 20% VAT.

HFC and PC* contribution: £2,500 (split 50/50). Lottery Awards For All: £5,000.

*In 2023, PC previously had allocated up to £1,200 from reserve for project

Figure may need adjustment for rising costs by spring 2024 – say +5%.

b) Car Park /Chase Repairs: No Change

- Chase Entrance (at junction with Tye) tarmac patching repairs needed
*EHPC funding for work confirmed (at Sep or Oct meeting?)
- Carpark Marking. Quote needed to refresh carpark marking and highlight shop and disabled bays to make clear these are reserved use.
- Overflow Carpark. Refresh of granite chippings needed for overflow carpark

Costs both of above TBA (PC usually contribute 50% to carpark work).

c) Play Area (Essential Repairs + Revamp) Budget

May ROSPA inspection condemned Burma Bridge piece of equipment (part of wooded Trim Trail equipment and Tyre Swing all more than 30 years old and at end of life).

At HFC October management committee meeting agreed to make repairs and revamp our fund-raising priority as 2024.

Proposal below would replace wood trim trail items complete and Tyre Swing and add a couple of Toddler age items in corner by Slide, and a Wheel Chair friendly Roundabout and a Small slide/climbing frame.

Three play equipment contractors (Playdale, Kompan and PlayQuip) have visited site since October to inspect equipment /provide recommendations for Charity to set a budget for funding applications in 2024.

Budgetary quotes are similar in magnitude but below is based on PlayQuip at Colchester.

Breakdown gives an order of costs (all figures + VAT) for budgetary purposes;

	£ + VAT
Trim Trail (Typical age 5-11)	
V net rope bridge	2485
Installation	595
2 x rubber bollards	460
2m2 bonded mulch	196
Suspended log traverse	1985
Installation	495
2 x rubber bollards	460
2m2 bonded mulch	196
Suspended rope tunnel	2750
Installation	495
2 x rubber bollards	460
2m2 bonded mulch	196
Suspended wobble board	956
Installation	395
2m2 bonded mulch	196
Rubber step bollards	
£230.00 each.	920
Trim Trail Sub total	£13,240
 Roundabout (Wheel chair friendly)	 <u>£,6875</u>
Inc EPDM wet pour	£3,060
Sub total	<u>£9,935</u>
 Toddler springer Seats x3 Inc bonded mulch safety surface	 £3,255
 A-Frame Nest Swing	 £1,136
Inc Rope Seat (in Place of Tyre Swing)	£3,305
Sub total	<u>£4,441</u>
 Safety Surface Repairs (Swings and Climbing Frame etc)	 £3,000
Total	£34369

Allowing for inflation by time of order next year (say 5%) and VAT (20%) **Total = £36,226 inc VAT**

Funding Proposal to EHPC/HFC:

Grants (Veolia Environmental Trust) (award grants towards projects that make improvements to community facilities and the natural environment)	£25K
EHPC	£15K (plus saving off vat)
HFC from Fundraising & Income	£8K
Total	£43K

There could be an element of village involvement with removal of old equipment and landscaping/planting as part of project implementation.

4) Carpark and Chase - Flooding at Chase entrance:

Entrance to Hall Chase still flooding. Road drain at entrance on The Lawns side of road not draining away surface water. Incident and photo logged on Essex Highways web site (Report ref provided to Lucy).

School have also reported it on Essex Highways web site. Notice on website now says Highways are "aware of the problem – don't keep reporting it".

Chase ditch that runs through back of Abbey Fields gardens has been flooding corner of Playing Field by carpark again (due to resident in middle house having piped ditch).

5) HFC Fund Raising

-Firework/Halloween Fun: Sunday 29th Oct.

Successful (lots of good feedback on Facebook) but profit well down on last year. Just over £1,000 compared to 2022 profit of nearly £2,500 in 2022.

Attendance down but gate donations about same as last year although much fewer visitors from outside village this time (car parks only half full this year).

The take from Food and Rides slightly down but and donations slightly up but the £1,500 profit reduction was due mainly to failure to get same level of business sponsorship as last year (about 8 sponsors dropped out losing us £1,400).

But quite a lot attending said they didn't carry cash for a donation but only 5 people actually used the HFC 's Card Reader at the event for people to do a bank transfer.

Fete and Fireworks Committee will meet again in Wed 24th January to review method of funding, ideas to boost income and avoid risk of making a loss if weather bad on night etc., and to finally decide whether we should run event again in 2024.

Committee want to keep the Fireworks and Halloween a "free event" for people in the village if they can but to make the event worthwhile doing the donations from people attending the event, and from sponsorship must both cover costs and make the profit worthwhile all the effort.

Article in News magazine on Fireworks event explains more.

Book Sale: Sat 2nd December: Lousy weather most of Saturday and attendance down. Profit £65

Mike Plumridge (Treasurer)

for HFC Management Committee