**Climate Change Project (Draughton Action to Zero)**

**Presentation to Draughton residents at the Annual Parish Meeting**

**on 24 April 2023**

**An overview to set the scene for a forthcoming consultation event**

**Background to the Draughton Acton Zero (DAZ) Project**

* An opportunity to apply for grant funding was identified and an application submitted to get started on the investigation of potential project options
* Consultants (Locogen) were commissioned and have now reported in detail with encouraging advice.
* Their report identified 6 potential sites which might be financially viable for schemes for local renewable installations.
* Financial analysis indicated we would need one major customer for any large installation (up to 1MW), able to pay far more than the current National Grid feed-in tariff.
* The report also gave pointers towards expert information on minor proposals for upgrading village homes, using insulation and solar panels.

**But why should we bother with a climate project when we are such a small community?**

* The UK Government and its experts, with little capital available for the eyewatering costs of installing renewable generation at scale and upgrading the Grid to cope with this (£100bn + £100bn), are facing the massive challenges of decarbonising our national energy usage. There is no evidence of any plan or strategy ready for publication, yet the Government, of course, has to be visibly and publicly responsible for driving change.
* As such, they are concentrating on efforts to deal with large energy schemes and have little incentive to bother with small ones.
* However, small schemes are able to feed into what little Grid capacity there might be locally (which may not be big enough in isolation to interest either other the generators or the Government).
* These are the schemes which could be successfully tackled by small local councils like Draughton.

**And is it really worth it at the moment?**

* Taken in isolation, establishing renewable generation in Draughton would be a drop in the ocean and not make much difference to the national picture.
* But by acting together with a good fraction of the 10,000 local councils in the UK, the sum of our efforts could easily equal the output of a small power station! That would be really worth it!
* With this in mind, we have initiated conversations with the UK government via YLCA and NALC. These went through YLCA in January and up to NALC in February. They featured in the representations by Baroness Scott of Needham Market, which NALC made to the Secretary of State for Energy on Feb 24th. They now feature on the YLCA & NALC agendas, but we are still trying to turn this into positive help on the ground.
* Much depends on these representations, which, clearly, we need to feed into the Government in a meaningful way if any regulatory changes are to be introduced to support community energy schemes. We have asked for some readily achievable steps, which do not cost much and which will help the Secretary of State promote some positive developments in tackling climate change.

**How far have we got?**

* We have identified two major customers and are discussing possible plans with them.
* But both of our large projects will need some encouraging signs from Government.
* Meanwhile, as part of our project, we can pursue community interests in looking at how we can help villagers make their own contributions to decarbonising energy usage. The national promotion of heat pumps for heating in domestic properties is probably not suitable for Draughton, certainly for older houses, at the moment. We hope to be able to offer some more realistic options for the village.
* Ideally, we would like to be able to offer village residents access to locally generated energy, likely to offer savings compared with energy costs available from suppliers drawing from the Grid, and we are investigating possible options: no easy task, given the restrictions in the current regulatory regime.
* In the meantime, an easy and effective way of saving energy (and costs) is to convert all of our lighting to use of LED bulbs (and the parish council is doing just this to power the footway lights in the village).
* Remember: all of our actions count. Nothing is too small.

**What will I learn if I come to the forthcoming consultation event?**

* How Draughton residents can make a difference and be a component part of the essential changes needed to counter climate change………

**Will we get cheap electricity?**

**-**come along and find out!

Richard Neale

24 April 2023