**The Stours Parish Council Meeting on 3rd Nov 2022 at 7.30pm**

Environment Report

1. A Question and Answer session on PV Panels was held in Stour Row village hall on the 8th Aug and subsequently twenty-one households are having PV panels installed (several with batteries), taking advantage of a community discount of approximately £1,000 per household. This will save money on homeowner’s energy bills as well as taking Stour Row closer to being a Zero Carbon Village. It is a localised version of Solar Streets <https://thegreengroupuk.com/solar-streets> and will be offered to all villages in The Stours Parish.

2. A review of heating and lighting in village halls is proposed in conjunction with Dorset Community Action’s Low Carbon Plan for village halls. <https://dorsetcommunityaction.thinkific.com/courses/together-for-our-planet-low-carbon-working-party>

3. Dorset Green Open Homes took place over the first two weekends of October, which was supported by Dorset Council and run by Dorset Climate Action Network (DorsetCAN). This gave an opportunity for local residents to visit homes in Stour Provost, Marnhull, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and further afield to find out more about renewable energy and sustainable living. Support and advice from many of the owners is on-going and their contact details can be found on the website: <https://dorset.greenopenhomes.net>

4. **Planning permission for PV panels in conservation areas**. DC has updated their website to clarify the position regarding PV panels in a conservation area. Planning permission is not required unless the panels are visible from the highway (either ground mounted or on a roof. Please always double check with Dorset Council planning team. [https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/281162/Conservation+Area+Guidance+Leaflet.pdf/835c279f-923a-e861-2c96-676ede48eff9](https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/281162/Conservation%2BArea%2BGuidance%2BLeaflet.pdf/835c279f-923a-e861-2c96-676ede48eff9)

5. NALC conference on Empowering Communities Mon 7th Nov online.

“Climate change is one of the most important issues globally…. As outlined by NALC’s 2021 Climate Change Survey report, the problem for many local councils is that many feel disempowered to act due to a lack of expertise and funding. We will discuss the importance of communities taking on climate action at the local level and the practical steps local councils can take.” [**https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-events/empowering-communities**](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-events/empowering-communities)**.**

6. The Stour Valley Way will be included in Dorset CAN’s Great Big Dorset Hedge Project. Surveys will be conducted to assess the hedgerows and any gaps that could be filled. Working with landowners a planting schedule will be drawn up. BBC Points West will be filming volunteers surveying a section of the route in the local area. ttps://www.dorsetcan.org/uploads/1/3/9/6/13969833/new\_a5\_leaflet\_portrait.pdf.

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