

Local Groups Financial Sustainability Plan

The plan developed by Hook Norton Low Carbon group provides an income for the group providing it with the resources and independence from grant funding or reliance on donations, to pursue its environmental agenda.

The plan is quite simple.

Firstly by putting affiliations in place with a renewable energy provider and an ethically, socially and environmentally responsible telecoms provider, the group earns a commission on the electricity and telephones of its members.

In choosing an electricity provider, we asked the three independent renewable suppliers for their proposals; Good Energy, Ecotricity and Green Energy UK. We found Good Energy would only pay a nominal one off commission when a householder switched to them and their prices are high; Ecotricity would pay 3% commission but their prices were high; Green energy UK would discount the electricity making it cheaper than brown supplies and pay 5% commission. All were offering 100% renewable. This made it an easy decision; with Green Energy UK our members mostly save money as well.

The Phone Co-op is an ethical socially responsible organisation, whose prices are lower than BT (saving our members money) they have an excellent environmental record and offered 6% commission (except for line charges).

A community member with a typical electricity bill of £50 per month and telephone (including broadband) of £25 per month will earn the group £4 per month or £48 per year. So a hundred members gives an income of £4,800 p.a., and promoting in the wider community can share the savings and increase the income further; and they are both using 100% renewable electricity and saving themselves money at the same time.

To set up the same scheme in your own group is very simple. We started by switching half a dozen members initially, then they relate back how easy it was to the wider group at the next meeting, and we will take it out to the wider community as part of our community engagement program this winter.

For more on our two partners look at www.greenenergyuk.com and www.thephone.coop or my own website www.ramsaydunning.co.uk

The next steps;-

1. To set up the affiliation schemes send your details to tim@greenenergyuk.com and matt.lane@thephone.coop . If you copy me at groups@ramsaydunning.co.uk in on the emails I will keep a register of affiliates which will increase our collective negotiating power in the future.
2. They will each give you prices etc and set up the affiliation
3. Then all you need to do is collect names addresses and emails and forward them on to your affiliation partners. They will collect the other details, and deal with Direct debit and bank details, and nobody will be switched over unless they give the go ahead. You are not switching people over, just collecting their details, with their permission, for your affiliation partners to talk to them, and switch them if they choose to go ahead.

Our next step following the same principles is to negotiate discounts on other energy and energy efficiency products. If you have copied me in then I will send details of those schemes as they are set up.

Please don't hesitate to come back with any questions or information experience you would like to share. I'm using my own website at present, but may transfer everything to our group website when we have one set up.

Please pass this on to other groups who may be interested, the more of us there are the greater the negotiating power we will have.

This document was written by me; Ramsay Dunning on 18th October 2009

Contact details:- groups@ramsaydunning.co.uk web site www.ramsaydunning.co.uk

Tel 07896917404 or post Namaste, High Street, Hook Norton, OXON OX15 5NF