

Sadberge Energy Saving Project



‘To be environmentally responsible, and in particular to make a contribution towards combating climate change.’

That’s one of the main aims of Sadberge’s 2007 parish plan, the vision of how the pretty north east village should develop over the next 20 to 30 years, put together by the community and including everything from law and order to the environment.

After the parish plan was approved in December 2007, villagers Alastair Mackenzie, Joan Vickers and Rich Hurst formed the Sadberge Energy Saving Project. They wanted to ensure their community put their environmental pledge into action.

Sadberge Energy Saving Project and the Energy Saving Trust

Villagers approached the Energy Saving Trust for advice when they were putting together the environmental aspect of the parish plan. Once the Sadberge Energy Saving Project was underway, it became involved with the Energy Saving Trust’s Green Communities local support programme. Through the scheme, the Energy Saving Trust provided the group with in depth advice and support to help Sadberge develop a programme to save energy and put it into action.

‘We recognised the Energy Saving Trust’s experience in

helping communities like Sadberge to cut down their energy use. We had the links with the community and they had the expertise, which made for a good partnership,’ said Sadberge Energy Saving Project leader Alastair Mackenzie.

Sadberge Energy Saving Project’s achievements

With the support of the Energy Saving Trust, the Sadberge Energy Saving Project helped its village cut down its carbon footprint and energy bills. The project was also nominated for an environment award given by a local newspaper.

Their starting point was to encourage villagers to fill out one of the Energy Saving Trust’s simple Home Energy Check questionnaires. Around half of Sadberge’s 300 households completed the forms, and earned two free low energy bulbs from the Energy Saving Trust as a reward.

1

Housholds recieved personal reports outlining simple measures to save energy

The Energy Saving Trust gave each household a personal report outlining simple measures to save energy, as well as the grants that were available at the time to fit larger scale energy saving measures like insulation and double glazing. Around 20 villagers also benefited from an infra-red photograph of their home, which showed them where energy was escaping from.

For people who wanted to fit out their homes with energy saving measures, but didn't qualify for a grant, the Sadberge Energy Saving Project contacted suppliers and organised 'bulk buy' discounts for the village. That meant cut prices on loft and cavity wall insulation, double glazing and energy efficient boilers.

The Sadberge Energy Saving Project's drive to make their village more efficient had impressive results. In just a year:

- ✔ **13 people had loft insulation fitted.**
- ✔ **Four villagers had cavity wall insulation installed.**
- ✔ **One person had double glazing put in.**
- ✔ **Two villagers had a more energy efficient boiler fitted.**

And thanks to a grant from the O2 It's Your Community Fund, the Sadberge Energy Saving Project was able to buy 10 Eco-eye monitors, which residents could borrow to monitor their electricity use and see where they can make savings.

The Energy Saving Trust was on hand to provide information to villagers about everything from energy efficient lighting to smarter driving. There was even a village event to promote solar powered hot water.

'We were quite upfront with our aims when we started the Energy Saving Project,' says Alastair.

2

13 lofts insulated and two energy efficient boilers fitted

'We wanted villagers to save money and to save energy. We wanted to raise awareness, not just among people already keen to tackle climate change but among everyone. I think we've made a great start.'

Sadberge Energy Saving Project's challenges

It wasn't a totally smooth road for the Sadberge Energy Saving Project.

'It was easy to get people to fill in the Home Energy Check forms, but not so easy to get them to take action on the reports they got back from the Energy Saving Trust,' said Alastair. 'But the bulk buying scheme definitely helped.'

Also, two older people in the village were hesitant to take up an offer of free loft insulation. They were worried they wouldn't be able to clear their lofts themselves to make way for the contractors. SESP arranged to have some able bodied people on hand to help the less able when needed.

What happened after the Sadberge Energy Saving Project?

Towards the end of 2010, the Energy Saving Trust suggested that the Sadberge Climate Change Working Group consider setting up a bulk purchase scheme to encourage Sadberge residents to install solar photovoltaic (PV) systems. This suggestion evolved into the Sadberge Renewable Energy Project.

The group soon recognised that some residents who would be interested in investing in PV did not have the necessary south-facing sloping roofs, while some householders with suitable south-facing sloping roofs were not in a position to invest. The group therefore set up a community-based company – Sadberge Renewable Energy Limited – to use funds provided by Sadberge residents to install solar PV

3

22 Solar PV systems installed

Reducing CO₂ emissions by about 26 tonnes a year

systems in and near Sadberge on a 'PV for free' basis. Householders who could not afford to invest but had ideal roofs benefited from free electricity and those who invested received a proportion of the Feed-in Tariff in return.

A total of 22 solar PV systems have been installed in connection with the Sadberge Renewable Energy Project. There are 304 solar panels, giving a combined maximum generation capacity of a little over 69 kW. These generate about 56,000 kWh of electricity in an average year, reducing carbon dioxide emissions by about 26 tonnes per year (probably be slightly less than this, because some of the installations do not face directly south).

The Sadberge Energy Saving Project helped its village cut down its carbon footprint and energy bills.

