



## **Media release with pictures**

Issue date: **14 November 2017**

### **TRESOC awarded grant to develop Anaerobic Digester at Old Parsonage Farm, Dartington Hall Trust Estate**

Totnes Renewable Energy Society (TRESOC) has secured a second Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) grant of £18,000 to look at the feasibility of developing a 100kW anaerobic digester (energy plant) at Old Parsonage Farm on the Dartington Hall Trust (DHT) estate.

The plant would process farmyard manures with other green materials and, potentially, food wastes from cafés and restaurants on the estate. These feedstocks would be processed by anaerobic bacteria in an on-farm digestion tank to produce methane gas, which would be used to generate electricity and heat. The spent digestate, with valuable plant nutrients, could be used as a clean organic fertiliser on the farm.

Roger Papworth, RCEF Programme Manager, commented: “The Rural Community Energy Fund was pleased to award a Grant to Totnes Renewable Energy Society as this is a great example of a community group investigating renewable energy options that the fund aims to support. We look forward to hearing of a positive outcome once this work has been completed.”

Jo Talling, the Dartington Hall Trust’s property director, said: “We welcome this research into whether an anaerobic digester would work on the estate, as there are currently large quantities of farmyard and food waste produced here that are unharvested. We would be very keen to add to the existing renewable systems we’ve been installing on the estate since 2016: the two biomass boilers heating The Green Table Café, listed Dartington Hall courtyard buildings, the Granary and Space studios, as well as a solar array. We look forward to hearing the news.”

The feasibility work will be carried out in partnership with tenant farmer Jon Perkin at Old Parsonage Farm on the Dartington Hall estate, and Dr Phil Hobbs of Anaerobic Analytics, a leading international expert in biogas research specialising in optimising bioenergy productivity. Careful monitoring of the energy demand of Parsonage Farm and the wider Dartington Hall estate will be completed with Totnes-based Argand Solutions.



Jon Perkin and his goats at Dartington Dairy

In the event that the study proves that a digester would be commercially viable, Tresoc would seek to raise finance for construction through a community share offer, ensuring that the plant is owned by the local community. This ensures that the economic benefits from the projects are shared locally too.

The RCEF grant will also be used for engaging with the local community, with the extension of Tresoc's successful Renewable Energy Experiential Learning (REEL) programme to include two more local schools. The local community will be invited to several meetings to discuss the project, which are planned to take place early next year. Interested parties will be invited to take part in a 'walk & talk' session, to visit the site and to ask questions about the project in an informal setting.

Tresoc's Renewable Energy Experiential Learning (REEL) Project, co-delivered by the Bio-regional Learning Centre, is a 4-day module for Key Stage 2 students within the Totnes area. It includes practical, hands-on making, site visits, critical thinking ideation and presentation of learnings. Tresoc ran the pilot project at St Christopher's Prep School Staverton in June this year. Thanks to a donation from an anonymous Tresoc supporter, we were able to make a short film during the pilot to show potential sponsors and schools what the project is all about. Here is the link -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2yitscN1Xw>



Photo caption: Making a basic Archimedes screw with pipe and elastic bands.

PHOTO: (L to R) Oliver Simons, Katrina Freeman, James Power, Scarlet Burden, Trixie Morrell and Lilyann Cleland.

Please share this link and help us to raise awareness about the project. If you would like to support the project or are interested in bringing it to another primary school, please contact TRESOC on 01803 867431 or email [admin@tresoc.co.uk](mailto:admin@tresoc.co.uk).

The REEL project at St Christopher's has had several positive outcomes. The School has already asked if we can run the project again next year and we are now exploring how we can facilitate that, this will increase the longevity of the project, giving each school the ability to carry out the project for themselves with each year group. Furthermore, Tresoc are now developing a solar 20kW PV array for St Christopher's which will double up as a covered walkway around the building to protect the children from the rain. To finance the array, Tresoc will be launching a new share offer early next year. Finally, the REEL project has been nominated for the RegenSW Community Initiative Award.

RCEF is a £15 million programme, delivered by WRAP and jointly funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (DBEIS). It supports rural communities in England to develop renewable energy projects which provide economic and social benefits to the community.

For more information on RCEF, visit [www.wrap.org.uk/renewables](http://www.wrap.org.uk/renewables)

**ENDS**

For more information, please contact [Ian.Bright@tresoc.co.uk](mailto:Ian.Bright@tresoc.co.uk)

Attached images may be used in connection with this press release.

## Notes to editors:

### Rural Community Energy Fund

- RCEF is being delivered by WRAP on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (DBEIS).
- For more information on RCEF, visit [www.wrap.org.uk/renewables](http://www.wrap.org.uk/renewables)
- RCEF Facebook, visit [www.facebook.com/RuralCommunityEnergyFund](https://www.facebook.com/RuralCommunityEnergyFund)

### Key Contacts

- Ian Bright, Managing Director, Totnes Renewable Energy Society – 07968 364458
- Dr Phil Hobbs, Director, Anaerobic Analytics – 07972 247191
- WRAP – [renewables@wrap.org.uk](mailto:renewables@wrap.org.uk) – 01295 819900

### Totnes Renewable Energy Society Ltd

- The Totnes Renewable Energy Society Ltd (Tresoc) is an Industrial and Provident Society (not for profit and trading for the benefit of the community) formed in 2007 by a group of local residents concerned about climate change. Tresoc aims to empower the local community to develop and control its own renewable energy supplies, and to ensure that the maximum value resulting from the development of local resources is retained by the community.

### Dr Phil Hobbs, Anaerobic Analytics

- Dr Hobbs has a distinguished career in chemistry, including posts as Principal Research Scientist with the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research, and with North Wyke Farm Research Facility and Exeter University, working to optimise biogas energy production.

### WRAP

- WRAP is a not for profit, working with governments, businesses and citizens to create a world in which we source and use resources sustainably. Our experts generate the evidence-based solutions we need to protect the environment, build stronger economies and support more sustainable societies. Our impact spans the entire lifecycle of the food we eat, the clothes we wear and the products we buy, from production to consumption and beyond. More information on all of WRAP's work can be found at [www.wrap.org.uk](http://www.wrap.org.uk)

### The Dartington Hall Trust

- The Dartington Hall estate has been installing renewable energy systems since 2016. A 950kW Viessmann biomass boiler heats The Green Table Café, the listed medieval Courtyard buildings and the Granary; and a 215kW boiler installed in 2017 heats Space studio buildings. A five acre 500kW(p) solar-PV array installed in 2016 meets some of the estate's needs through its existing high voltage distribution network. The Dartington Hall Trust (registered charity no 279756) offers opportunities for a growing community of people to experiment with living a larger, more connected life, discover their true potential, and pioneer meaningful change in themselves and society. This approach is inspired by the vision, values and activism of Dorothy and Leonard Elmhirst's 20<sup>th</sup> century experiment, which the Trust is reimagining to meet the challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Follow @dartington on Twitter and Facebook.