



VOICES OF SUSTAINABILITY

Newsletter Vol 0005

November 2023

WARM HOMES DISCOUNT SCHEME

You could get £150 off your electricity bill for winter 2023 to 2024 under the Warm Home Discount Scheme.

You qualify if you either:

- get the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit
- are on a low income in Scotland and meet your energy supplier's criteria for the scheme

If you receive the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit, you will automatically get a letter telling you about the discount if you're eligible.

Otherwise, you'll need to apply directly to your energy supplier.

You might be eligible if all of the following apply:

- your energy supplier is part of the scheme
- you (or your partner) get certain means-tested benefits or tax credits
- your name (or your partner's) is on the electricity bill

Your electricity supplier may have extra eligibility criteria. They'll also tell you which benefits mean you are eligible.

Contact your electricity supplier to check if you're eligible and to apply. They will decide who gets the discount in Scotland. You cannot apply for the discount by contacting the Warm Home Discount Scheme.

The number of discounts suppliers can give is limited. Contact them as early as possible. Check with them even if you were eligible for a discount last year.

If you're eligible, your electricity supplier will apply the discount to your bill by 31 March 2024. You'll need to stay with your supplier until it's paid.

For assistance please contact our advice helpline on 01542 888070 alternatively email: info@reapscotland.org.uk



HELP WITH ENERGY BILLS

If you are finding it difficult to meet the costs of your energy we are here to help. In addition to energy saving tips, there is support available.

Remember that energy suppliers have an obligation to support you in times of crisis or in an emergency.

For further information please contact our advice helpline on 01542 888070 or email: info@reapscotland.org.uk

THE PRIORITY SERVICES REGISTER

The Priority Service Register (PSR) is a free service available across the UK that provides extra advice and support to customers who have communication, access, or safety needs.

Applicable to suppliers of all utilities, the service was designed by and is regulated by Ofgem.

You are eligible for the free PSR Service if you:

- Use medical equipment reliant on electricity or water.
- Live with children under five
- Are blind or partially sighted.
- Are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Have a chronic illness.
- Have anxiety, depression, or any mental health condition.
- Have a disability.
- Are of pensionable age.
- Loss or impairment of smell.

You can also go on the PSR temporarily if you are living on your own for the first time, suffering a bereavement or a relationship breakdown meaning you need a bit of extra support.

Registering on your energy supplier's PSR (the company you pay your bills to), should automatically put you on the register with the distribution network operator. This can be checked by giving them a call if you are unsure.

The electricity network operator for Moray is Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN), and for gas is Scottish Gas Network (SGN).

The PSR helps utility companies to look after their vulnerable customers better, offering extra support in electricity power cuts, or gas and water interruption.



The PSR helps utility companies support their customers by giving:

- Advance notice where possible of power cuts, especially if power is needed for medical reasons.
- Priority support in an emergency.
- The option of an identity and password scheme.
- A nominee scheme, where you can nominate someone you trust to receive your bills and correspondence.
- Help with prepayment meter access, for example moving a meter if you can't safely top up.
- Meter reading service if you are unable or unsafe to take meter readings.
- Accessible information. For example, bills and account information is large print or braille.
- Help reconnecting your gas supply if needed.

If needed..

The emergency number for electricity power cuts is 0800 300 999.

If your gas goes off unexpectedly, call the gas emergency helpline on 0800 111999.

For more information on, or help accessing the PSR or anything else mentioned, the REAP Energy Team will be more than happy to help.

You can call the office on 01542 888070 to make an appointment, or pop along to see us at 177 Mid Street, Keith.



BEWARE OF CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

What is Carbon Monoxide (CO)?

It's an odourless, invisible and highly toxic gas, often referred to as the silent killer. Small amounts of CO can poison you. Annually, about 30 people die and thousands are affected by CO poisoning in the UK

Where does CO come from?

CO can be produced from any carbon-based appliance, including gas cookers, gas fires, gas barbecues, Calor gas heaters, paraffin heaters, etc. Other fuel and cooking appliances, such as those using charcoal, peat, coal, wood (including wood burning stoves), as well as petrol, oil, or LPG can produce CO if working inefficiently or without proper ventilation

Signs and Symptoms at Home

- The flame on a cooker is lazy and is a yellow or orange colour when it should be blue.
- Soot, yellow or brown staining on or around appliances.
- Pilot lights that frequently blow out.
- Too much condensation on windows or walls
- Flues, used chimneys, and vents that are blocked either on purpose or by accident, such as a bird's nest

Signs and Symptoms in People

People often say constant exhaustion was the first symptom. Other signs that could point to CO poisoning are:

- Symptoms that only happen when at home
 - Symptoms that disappear or improve when people leave home and re-appear when they return
 - People in the same house experience similar symptoms around the same time
 - Pets show symptoms around the same time as people



HEADACHES



NAUSEA



DIZZINESS



BREATHLESSNESS



COLLAPSE



LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

funded by



Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week: 20-26 November 2023

ACTION FOR WELLBEING

REAP aim to deliver projects and services to meet local needs, including promoting local growing of food and utilising growing spaces in communities in order to provide an outdoor activity that helps improve wellbeing. And that is why, earlier this year REAP dug into the growing space, a walled garden, at the rear of New Elgin Community Hall, on Land Street, Elgin to achieve this objective.



There is strong evidence that gardening and particularly gardening in a group can bring about many benefits to those who participate, irrespective of health, age, and personal circumstances. Although not exhaustive, some of the benefits include;

- Less stress: gardening can help minimise anxiety and depression – generally improving your mental wellbeing, physical strength and flexibility – it keeps you moving.
- Social inclusion: gardening with others and meeting new people improves community spirit and lessens the negative effects that isolation can bring.
- New skills: gain new knowledge, such as how to grow fresh tasty food, or bring your own experience to the project to help others to do just that – grow your own food cheaply and sustainably and benefit from increased freshness and vitamins.
- Community gardening is for all: intended to be inclusive throughout the community and therefore it is an excellent opportunity for those who may not have their own garden, or those who may have physical disabilities or other physical or mental condition.

So why don't you come along and participate, bring your own gardening knowledge (plants & veg) and help others benefit from your experience – lets improve the community spirit, even if its just a little – just remember what grows from the acorn.

New Elgin Hall Growing Space, Land St, Elgin

Tuesday – 12.30pm – 3.30pm

Thursday – 9.30am – 12.30pm

Email: info@reapscotland.org.uk



THE OAKS THERAPEUTIC GARDEN

Harvesting & Seed Saving

As the days are getting shorter, the leaves of the big trees at The OAKS are turning colour and many of our flowering plants are going to seed. We've been saving some of the seeds that have dried and gone brown, like calendula, sunflowers, lettuce, runner beans, evening primrose and sweet peas.

We're sure to leave some for the birds too!

We've also been harvesting our lovely spring onions, carrots, beetroots and the last of the courgettes. A colourful, autumnal feast for the participants to take home!

Alongside harvesting, thanks to the greenhouse, we can also sow some winter greens and salads. It's lovely to see some new shoots coming up even as the days get colder. We've also been planting bulbs, ready for a beautiful spring display and planting out some winter salads.



We've recently welcomed along a couple of new participants too! If you or someone you know could benefit from some therapeutic gardening, we're still open to new participants. So please get in touch with Sarah (sarah@reapscotland.org.uk) for more information about the referral process.

THE OAKS THERAPEUTIC GARDEN

Workshops

We have some workshops coming up that are also open to the public. Keep an eye out on our social media for more information and to book a space.

Composting (Tuesday 28th November, 1-3pm)

Christmas Nature Crafts (Tuesday 5th December, 1-3:30pm)

Willow Wreath Weaving (Thursday 14th December, 10am-12:30)

REAP's Therapeutic Garden at the OAKS runs on Tuesday afternoons and Thursday mornings at The OAKS, Morriston Road, Elgin for people experiencing mental health challenges, social isolation or bereavement and those with mild physical health issues. We welcome referrals from health and social care professionals. For more information, please see our website: reapscotland.org.uk/oaks-therapeutic-garden/



On the Air Waves!

We were visited by KCR's Dena Cruickshank this month to record a bit about REAP's Therapeutic Garden at the OAKS for their garden radio programme, 'Down the Garden Path'. If you missed it, you can catch up, for free, here:

<https://www.mixcloud.com/KCR1077/down-the-garden-path-with-dena-cruickshank-17-october-2023/>

WINDFARM COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUNDS

REAP administers the windfarm community benefit funds for the Hill of Towie Windfarm owned by Renewable Energy Systems and the Edintore Windfarm owned by Koehler Renewable Energy. Here are details of two projects funded by the Edintore Benefit Fund.

In 2022 The Bin Rangers Club won funding for their project, 'Learning together in the forest & on the hill to enjoy the natural world'.

The funding went towards equipment to use during activities and events, leaflets and advertising costs to promote the club and compasses & maps for orienteering.



'I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank you for your organisation's generous grant support given to the Bin Ranger Club. You have provided the club with resources which will help it to develop and grow itself over the coming years; by continuing it's work to support young people in growing into confident individual's through active engagement with the natural world in which they live.'

Keith Grammar School received funding in April 2023 to take their new S6 pupils on a school trip to bond with their peers and build confidence planning their future. These children had spent most of their important schooling years during the pandemic being home schooled and missing our socialising with their friends. The parent council felt these children had shown hard work, commitment and resilience and asked the Edintore Windfarm Community Benefit Fund to grant funding for a school trip.

Around 18 pupils enjoyed a trip to Badaguish near Aviemore where they enjoyed team building activities, sessions with Careers advisers, relaxation techniques and build self-confidence and resilience for life both in school and in the workplace. This trip managed to create an even stronger bond in their year group and was a great opportunity that all pupils and teachers are all grateful for.

Keith Grammar school parent council would like to say a massive thank you to Koehler Renewable Energy and the Edintore Windfarm Community Benefit Fund for funding the Trip which was greatly appreciated by all the S6 year group who attended.



To apply for a grant for your project visit:
reapscotland.org.uk/community-grants/
or email faye@reapscotland.org.uk



KEITH COMMUNITY POWER HUB (KCPH)

The Keith Community Power Hub (KCPH) is located at 177 Mid Street, Keith AB55 5BL.

We offer a one-stop shop to help manage your finances, fuel bills, gain inspiration for ways out of poverty, make new social links through workshops and access relevant information for your support needs.



The Hub provides an outreach location for the Moray Citizens Advice Bureau every Tuesday morning (by appointment only, please call 01343 555163)



Our warm safe space is open to all. You can pop in for help to access online accounts using our iPads, or for your printing/photocopying needs.

Our opening hours are:

- Monday 9.30am - 3.00pm
- Tuesday 9.30am - 12.30pm
- Wednesday 9.30am - 3.00pm
- Thursday 9.30am - 12.30pm
- Friday 9.30am - 12.30pm



The Moray Firth Credit Union join us from 11am - 1pm every Thursday (no appointment required) Come and speak to them for family savings options and low cost loans.

SUSTAINABILITY WORKSHOP
Monday 4th December 2023 2-3:30pm
Longmore Community Hall, Keith AB55 5HA

Let's turn off the lights and turn up the conversation.

Guest Speaker
Richard Lochhead MSP

The poster features illustrations of a globe, wind turbines, a solar panel, and a small tree on a green base. At the bottom, there are logos for The Robertson Trust, REAP, inKEITH, and ZERO CARBON MORAY.

The KCPH is funded by The Robertson Trust



MORAY ENERGY ACTION SUPPORT SERVICES (MEASS)



It is vital that everyone, inclusively, has the opportunity and equal access to energy support services. To help tackle inequalities in support services, REAP will offer a support lifeline to Moray's extremely vulnerable households that have been negatively impacted by the rising cost of energy bills. The project will cater for those with a long-term health condition, their carers and families, including energy consumers in vulnerable situations struggling with daily living and mobility as a result of health challenges and cannot get by on their own. Those that have been disproportionately impacted by the cost-of-living crisis and are also having to deal with fuel poverty. The project will also cater for young people leaving care. If you fall under any of these categories or know someone who could benefit from the MEASS project, please contact REAP on 01542 888070 or email info@reapscotland.org.uk

MEASS is funded by the Moray Local Action Fund (MLAF)