



VOICES OF SUSTAINABILITY

Newsletter Vol 0007

Summer 2024

IN THE COMMUNITY WITH OUR ENERGY TEAM

Spring 2024 has seen our Energy Advisors attending community events across Moray, from Community Lunches to B.A.L.L. Groups, Energy Related Workshops and Drop-In Sessions.

They have been assisting residents with queries on their energy bills, issues with meters, online accounts, available grants – in fact anything at all energy related put their way.

Activities have included discussions around Smart Meters and how they can make life easier, sharing energy saving tips and highlighting the dangers of carbon monoxide, including distributing detectors to those without.



Portknockie B.A.L.L. Group

If you run a community group and would like us to come along, please call 01542 888070 or email info@reapscotland.org.uk

THE PRIORITY SERVICES REGISTER

The Priority Services Register (PSR) is a free UK wide service which provides extra advice and support, including when there's an interruption to your electricity, gas or water supply.

THE BENEFITS

Support and information during a power or gas supply interruption

You can contact the network operators in the UK 24 hours a day, every day, and get priority updates in a power cut. If your electricity or gas needs to be temporarily switched off to carry out essential maintenance, you will get prior advance notice to allow you to plan ahead.

Connection to local emergency services

Your electricity and gas companies work with local authorities, emergency services and agencies, like the British Red Cross, to provide extra support

Emergency power

If you use medical equipment/aids which use electricity or water the PSR helps to prioritise help during prolonged supply interruptions. Portable generators or bottled water can be delivered when necessary.

Emergency gas

If you are on mains gas and your supply is interrupted for a prolonged period, we will aim to help you with emergency electrical heating and cooking appliances.

Communication tailored to your needs

You can request a format that suits your needs, e.g. Large Print, Braille, textphone, audio or a language other than English.

AM I ELIGIBLE TO JOIN?

Many people are! Just some of the criteria include being of pensionable age, having children under 5, having a disability, chronic illness, anxiety, depression, being hard of hearing or sight impaired or if you use medical equipment reliant on water or electricity.

To sign up visit www.psr.co.uk

Or call REAP on 01542 888070 for assistance.



ITS EASIER WITH A SMART METER

AND YOU DON'T NEED TO BE A TECH WIZARD TO USE ONE

Smart meters are an easy way to feel a bit more in control of your energy use, and you don't have to be a tech wizard to use one.

More than half of homes in Great Britain already have a smart meter. They can make life easier in lots of ways, including by sending your gas and electricity readings straight to your energy supplier. That means no more checking the meter in difficult to reach places.

You'll also get more accurate bills based on the energy you've actually used, not an estimate.



THE FACTS ABOUT SMART METERS

- **They're easy to use**

Smart meters are designed to be simple and clear. The person installing your meter will show you how to use the smart meter display, and leave you with a guide.

- **You don't need internet access**

Smart meters use a secure smart meter network, so you won't need an internet connection in your home.

- **You can still have a smart meter if you rent your home**

If your gas and electricity bills are addressed to you and you pay them, you can choose to have a smart meter installed.

- **Your information will be safe and secure**

Only you and your supplier can see how much energy you are using and when.

- **You can still have a smart meter even if you are a prepay customer**

If you're on a prepay meter you can still get a smart meter. Your smart meter display will show you when you need to top up your credit. You can top up in different ways, e.g. using your mobile phone, in a shop or online.

- **Can everyone get a smart meter?**

Some homes can't get a smart meter yet, but will be able to get one soon. Your energy supplier will be able to tell you if you can have a smart meter.

For support regarding smart meters, please call us on 01542 888070 or email info@reapscotland.org.uk

CLIMATE HUB CAFE

REAP were in collaboration with tsiMORAY and In Keith when we held a Climate Hub Café at the North Church Hall to discuss a sustainable future for Keith.

After some banging soup and home bakes from the Keith Deli Shop, 13 of us gathered to listen to our speakers and discuss further collaboration and climate positive actions for the future. The Climate Café was part of a tsiMORAY project funded through the Scottish Government's Just Transition Fund to facilitate collaboration for climate action in our communities. Ann Davidson from tsiMORAY introduced the session and led the discussions at the end.



REAP's energy advisor Faye Winter gave a presentation first, mentioning that advising on individual and community renewables can help tackle the root causes of fuel poverty (high in Moray) but that it's not easy. Many of the people REAP help with energy advice and fuel bills will need help and action from government and companies to reduce standing charges, insulate and retrofit their homes going forward.

Bryony Beck, Development Officer for Keith, spoke about the community action plan for Keith she's been working on with local stakeholders through In Keith, including the pop up shop, litter picks, active travel, a local market and plans for a Keith Climate focused hub.

Kerry McInnes from UHI Just Transition Project presented the findings of her project's research on 'green' jobs in Moray. Opportunities have been identified for UHI Moray to provide training for trainers, welding, retrofit and hydrogen.

Local businesses such as Moray's distilleries are interested in data analysis and skills training to help with their transition to net zero. Sustainable agriculture and land use, waste and the circular economy also provided opportunities for the future.

Coming just a week after SSEN were presenting plans for new upgrades to the transmission system taking place in the area, we were pleased to have a presentation from Gary Hughes from SSEN Transmission. He gave us an overview of why SSEN are working to massively upgrade the transmission system - the current system was built in the 1960's to bring power into remote areas from the centre - now we need a modern system to take power from local renewables, out! There is estimated to be a 50% rise in electricity use by 2050, as fossil fuel systems are replaced and renewables relying on electricity replace them and include transport and other sectors (eg electric cars, hydrogen etc). Gary also spoke about community benefit funds, housing initiatives and the 'jigsaw' nature of solutions to achieving net zero.

Ann from tsiMORAY led participants through some discussions on next steps and what we'd learned at the climate Café. People agreed they'd learned a lot, and also on the need for training for skills like insulation and renewables installation - and that there was not enough at the moment in Keith, Moray and indeed the North East. There was also a call for a local initiative to involve Keith Grammar in green job discussions and events, and for community shares in renewables to help real ownership of resources in the community.

We all had an informative and collaborative evening - looking forward to the next event.

For more details and to get involved, contact Faye@reapscotland.org.uk or ann@tsimoray.org



CARBON MONOXIDE AT HOME

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a highly poisonous gas that is produced by the incomplete burning of fossil fuels (including gas, oil, petrol, wood, and coal.) It is known as the 'Silent Killer' as you cannot see it, smell it, hear it, or taste it. If you breathe a lot of it in can be fatal.

If you have any gas appliances in your home, an open fire or log burner, LPG or oil-fired boiler in your home, these are all potential sources of Carbon Monoxide.

It is important to ensure all appliances are well maintained to ensure they are working efficiently, and the summer is the ideal time book a service!



Getting your chimney swept annually is vital to keep you and your family safe; a blocked/damaged flue can cause a build up of carbon monoxide which can prove fatal.

For help to find a registered sweep/further advice, contact our friendly team of energy advisors on 01542 888070.



Servicing Gas Appliances

For servicing and safety checks on all gas appliances – including boilers, cookers and gas fires, always choose a gas safe engineer. If you are a home owner, it is good practice for the engineer to leave you with a Gas Safety Record after each visit. If you rent your home, your landlord has a legal duty to employ a gas safe engineer to carry out annual safety checks. Visit www.gassaferegister.co.uk to find a local, registered tradesman.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

All homes with any potential source of Carbon Monoxide should be fitted with an audible CO alarm that complies with BS EN 50291. For more information on CO alarms, or if you are struggling to source one, please get in touch and we can assist.

funded by



GROWING YOUR FUTURE

As part of our work in minimising the impact of human activities on the environment and our passion to build community capacity in sustainable living, alongside other organisations in the Land Based Sector, REAP participated in an event organised by the University of the Highlands and Islands, Moray titled “GROWING your FUTURE”.

The event was to raise awareness of potential career options within the Land Based Sector and give the chance to get a taster of some of the roles within the industry. The event gave pupils the opportunity to participate in interactive Land Based related workshops and meet with businesses and individuals who work within this sector.

Our workshop focused on the germination of seedlings. Using a takeaway tub, young people filled the tubs with coir, which is a sterile peat free, recycled product made from coconut fibres, as peat is being banned due to its environmental impacts, and then went on to sow basil seeds. After the workshop, the young people took the tubs home to see them grow. The workshop demonstrated the importance of growing food locally and how this can reduce CO2 emissions.



NEW ELGIN COMMUNITY GARDEN

The walled garden at the rear of New Elgin Community Hall on Land Street in Elgin is developing well although the fluctuating temperatures and changeable weather has certainly been challenging. Stormy weather damaged the small cold frame / lean-to greenhouse and unfortunately the earlier sowings failed to germinate as a result. The volunteers have now resecured the frame, repaired the door and now the tomatoes and other seedlings have germinated well and been potted on or planted out into our raised beds.

Other crops which are coming on well include shallots, garlic, spring cabbage, beetroot, small globe carrots and chard. The peas which we had planted earlier have obviously gone down well with the locals as the plants have already been picked bare.

The first and second early potatoes are looking good having been earthed up and hopefully we will not be disappointed when they are harvested.

Looking ahead we are ensuring that there will be replacement vegetables once the beds have been cleared and hope to get a selection of Kale, Sprouting Broccoli, Courgette, Runner Beans, Winter Cabbage and quicker salad crops growing.

Our fruit selection is also coming along well with the currants, gooseberries, strawberries and apple trees all setting fruiting.

Other jobs to do;

Take rosemary cuttings from the main plant which has recently been damaged by wind and pot on cuttings.

Collect Lupin seeds which are setting well and sow. Along with the rosemary cuttings, these can be shared with anyone who wishes to grow them in their own space.

Tidy out the flower raised beds which have been over planted throughout successive years and consider alternative planting arrangements. WEED, WEED & WEED!!



If you would like to come along and join us you would be made most welcome.

Contact us on 01542 888070

Email info@reapscotland.org.uk

New Elgin Community Garden, Behind New Elgin Community Hall, Land St, Elgin

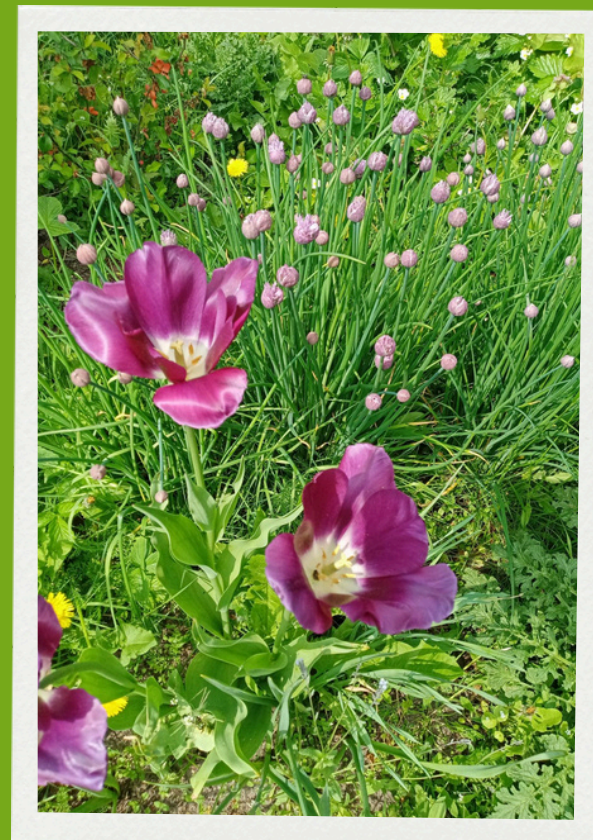
Tuesday - 12.30pm - 3.30pm OR Thursday - 9.30am - 12.30pm

THE OAKS THERAPEUTIC GARDEN

It has been a very busy time of year in the garden as all of the sunshine and wet weather has allowed our flowers, vegetables, trees (and weeds) to bloom and expand in full force! There has been an explosion of green alongside very tall and bright tulips, earlier in the spring. Now, other colours are beginning to emerge from the greenery as flower begin to bloom.

It's wonderful to see the garden come alive again after the long winter and we've been busy planting out flowers, vegetables and salads in the garden beds. Our participants and volunteers have been enjoying being out in the sunshine, weeding, hand-mowing and caring for the beds, alongside lots of seed sowing, potting on and planting out.

We had a great time making windowsill planters recently for a workshop and participants got to take home their upcycled tetrapack cartons, filled with salads and microgreens. These will be harvested on their windowsills and can be added as a lovely, healthy and vibrant garnishes to any lunch/dinner dish!



If you'd like to come and have a go at gardening alongside others in a safe and welcoming environment, then please email info@reapscotland.org.uk

We hold sessions on Tuesday afternoons (1:30-4pm) and Thursday mornings (10am-12:30pm).

REAP'S THERAPEUTIC GARDEN OPEN DAY!



Everyone is welcome to come join us at REAP's Therapeutic Garden to see what we do and to meet the team.

The project aims to improve mental & physical well-being for adults through gardening, nature-connection & time spent socialising in natural, peaceful surroundings.

If you've been thinking about joining or you're just interested in the project, here's a great chance to visit and learn more.

Where: The OAKS, Morriston Road, Elgin, IV30 6UN
When: Tuesday, 16th July. Drop in anytime between 1pm – 3pm.
Free to attend and there will be refreshments available.

Have A Go Workshop starts at 1.30pm.

**TUESDAY 16TH JULY,
1PM-3PM (DROP-IN)**

WWW.REAPSCOTLAND.ORG.UK



Charity No. SC037988
Company No. 316989



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.

GOOD NEWS STORY

For a number of years, Keith Community Council has been sharing the old 'green sheds' at Seafield Park with the Keith Show group. The 'sheds' are regularly used as their community workshop as well as storage. In December of 2022, they identified the need to carry out significant repairs to the building to ensure its future. With different groups using the building and being voluntary managed, they decided to apply for assistance from the Hill of Towie Community Benefit Fund in April 2023 for 'Phase 1' and the Edintore Community Benefit fund in August 2023 for 'Phase 2'.

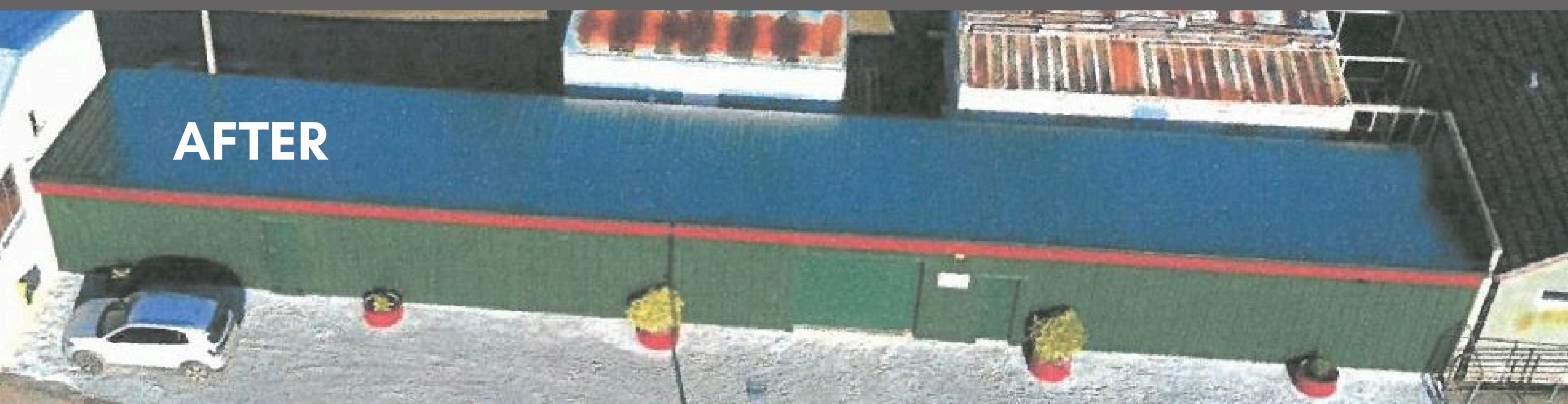
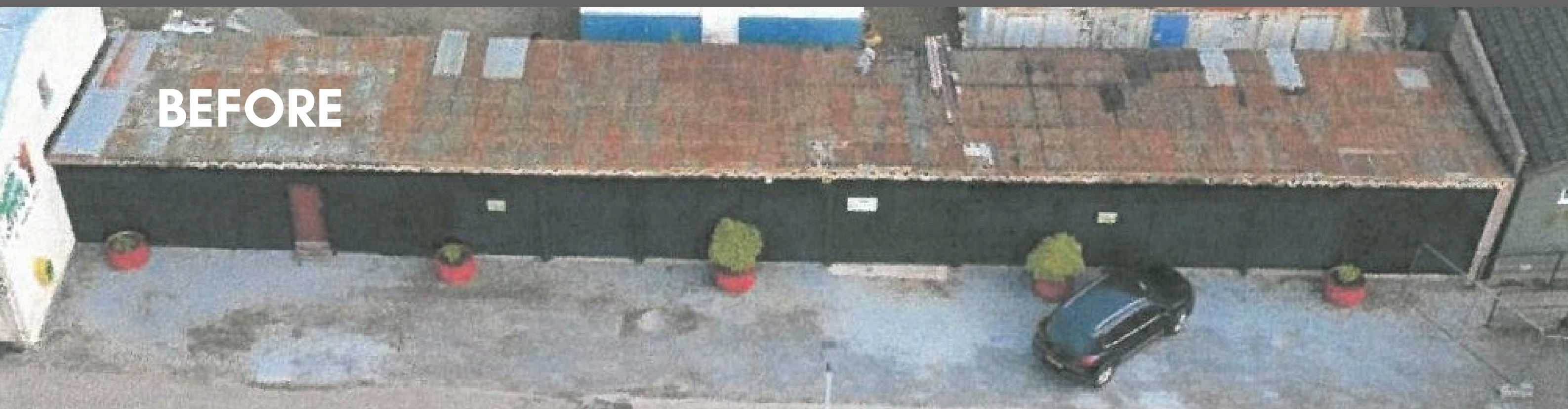
Phase 1 of the project was to replace the roofing timbers, clad with insulated profile sheeting and refurbish the original stone wall to the rear.

Phase 2 of the project was to replace the front of the building's tin work, doors and timbers.

The groups were delighted when Keith Community Council were successful in their application and were granted £17,700 to complete 'Phase 1' of the project from the Hill of Towie fund in June 2023.

In September 2023, the subcommittee, Keith in Flower, was successful in the application of £4,400 from the Edintore Community Benefit fund for phase 2 of the project.

They would like to send a huge thank you to the panel members of both community funds as well as RES and Koehler for supporting their project. Without this support, the building would have been left to ruin.



The Edintore Winfarm Community Benefit Fund is open for applications.
Closing date: 5pm, Tuesday 25th August 2024.



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



Koehler
RENEWABLE ENERGY

COMMUNITY ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROJECT

The Community Energy Efficiency Project, in conjunction with Moray Climate Action Network, aims to provide a transition to a fair and clean future for our Community. This is being achieved by supporting the installation of renewable energy and retro-fitting energy efficiency measures in community buildings throughout Moray. Achieved by assisting community groups to better understand their buildings and the carbon- (and cost-) reduction options open to them, as well as support to develop project plans and to secure funding to implement them.

The support available to Community Groups includes:

Discussing viable options to community space buildings, regarding the heating and Energy options, and working to obtain energy surveys of their buildings that will allow them to access available funding.

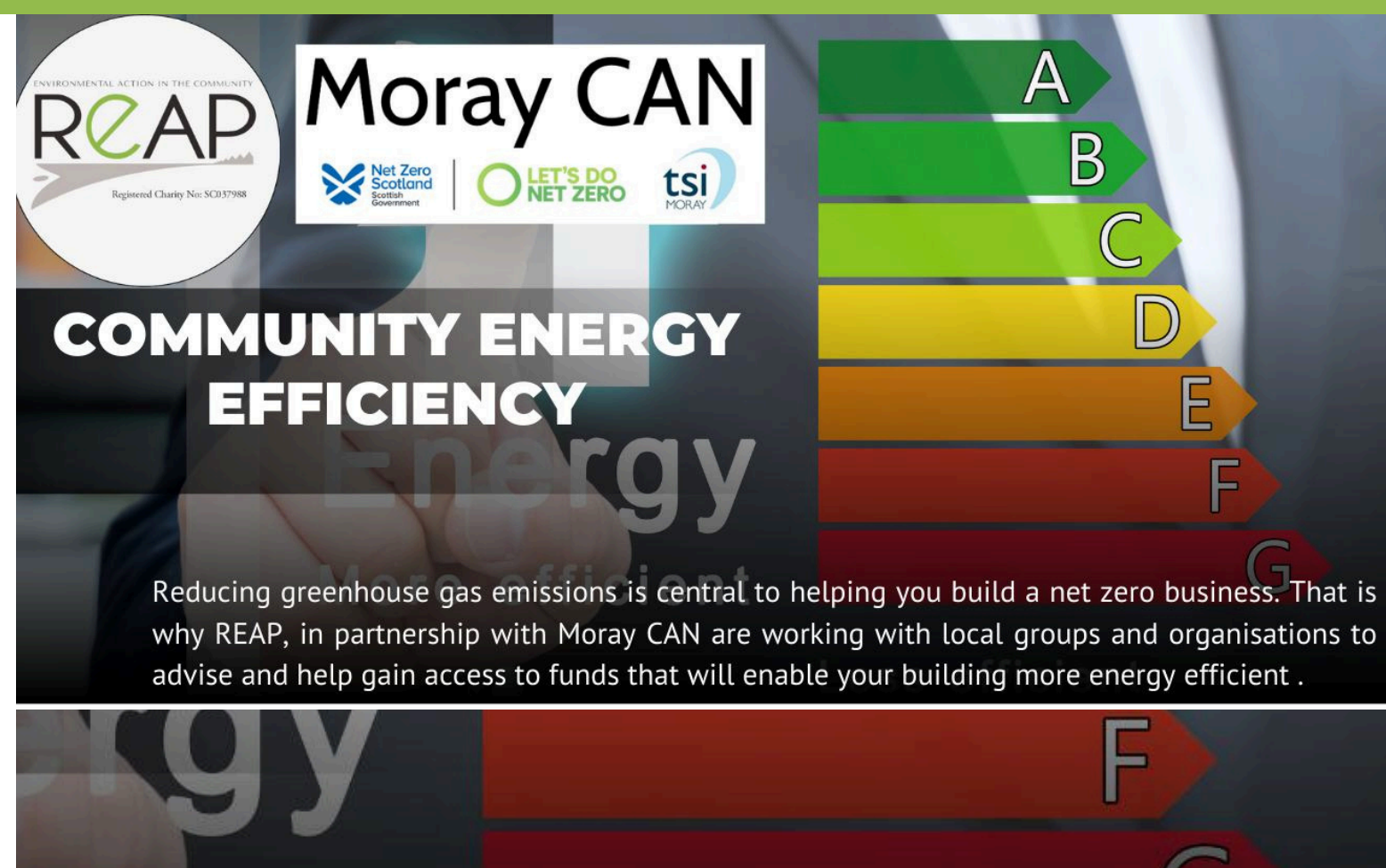
We can also offer support by providing:

Information on local suppliers for quotes.

Information on where to access funding to carry out the plans.

Guidance on ascertaining whether the proposed improvements are likely to need planning permission / building warrants / landlord or superior consent / other permissions or consents.

Contacts for planning permissions if needed.



The short-term outcomes that can be achieved for your community group through this advice are:

An increased understanding of your community building/s and their renewable energy and/or energy efficiency options.

Being better prepared to move to the next stage in developing your net zero projects with funding applications, feasibility studies or / and appointing contractors.

An increased knowledge and understanding of what a just transition means, for you and the wider community.

FUNDED BY

Moray CAN



Please contact the REAP office on 01542 888070 or email info@reapscotland.org.uk to book an appointment with our Community Energy Efficiency Advisors.

KEITH COMMUNITY POWER HUB (KCPH)

READY, SET, GROW!

Our office is buzzing with excitement as our sunflower race kicks off! We've planted our seeds, and now it's a friendly competition to see whose sunflower will reach for the sky and claim the title of "Tallest Sunflower" by the end of August. Take a look at our office windows for our community board and get a front row seat to our sunflower race! We want to see your sunflowers this summer! If you have sunflowers growing, take a photo and send it into us and we'll pop it in our community window.

Here's how you can join the fun:

1. **Plant Your Sunflowers:** Whether you're a seasoned gardener or a first-time grower, grab some sunflower seeds (*Helianthus annuus*) and find a sunny spot. Plant them about 1 to 2 inches deep in well-draining soil.
2. **Measure and Record:** Keep track of your sunflower's growth. Measure its height every couple of weeks and create a growing chart. Let the race begin!
3. **Community Board:** Swing by our office windows and check out our community board. Share your sunflower photos, updates, and measurements with us—we'll proudly display them for everyone to see. You'll also see our sunflower facts! If you have any more sunflower facts, we'd love to know about them. In addition, to our sunflower display window, we have a community board for showcasing local events. You can give us your posters for display by coming into our office or by emailing info@reapscotland.org.uk.



The KCPH is funded by



REAP'S CALL TO ACTION:

Beyond sunflowers, there's more we can do together. Explore opportunities to improve local services, collaborate, and sustain positive change. Let's keep making a difference. Together, we're building a greener, more sustainable future!

If you'd like to find out more about our current projects please give us a call on 01542 888070 or email us at info@reapscotland.org.uk.

Remember, each sunflower embodies resilience and hope. So, let those petals reach for the sun, and let our community flourish. Happy growing!



KEITH COMMUNITY POWER HUB (KCPH)

OUR VOLUNTEERS

We celebrated Volunteer Week this June 2024 and wanted to take the time to put our appreciation for our volunteers in writing. We want to thank our incredible volunteers who allow us to have a wider impact on our community in Moray. Thank you for your hard work, commitment and enthusiasm. The work you do is amazing!



Volunteering Impact: Our dedicated volunteer's enthusiasm and hard work has propelled our reach which has a long-lasting impact on the many lives that their efforts touch. But volunteering isn't just about giving—it's also about personal growth:

Practical Skills:

In our therapeutic and wellbeing gardens, volunteers cultivate practical skills—whether it's tending to plants, creating green spaces, or nurturing the soul.



Interpersonal Skills: Volunteering hones communication, teamwork, and empathy. It's a chance to connect with others and build lasting relationships.

If you'd like to find out more about our volunteering roles call 01542 888070.

FREE MOBILE DATA

In our digital society, equal access to the internet is not a reality. 2.5 million households struggle to afford the internet in the UK, and 1 in 14 households have no home internet access at all. This often affects vulnerable people who are already experiencing multiple inequalities.

Being able to access the internet is essential to be digitally included. You need internet access to participate in our everyday life – to connect with opportunity, services and loved ones.

REAP has introduced digital inclusion support as part of the development of our community hub in order to help tackle digital exclusion in rural communities, and we are proud to partner with the Good Things Foundation's National Digital Inclusion Network to join the National Data Bank.

The Databank offers free mobile SIM cards from partners Virgin Media O2, Vodafone and Three to help digitally excluded people get connected through any SIM enabled device (e.g. mobile phones, tablets and/or WiFi dongles).

You may apply to receive a SIM card If you are:

- Age 18+
- From a low income household
- Have insufficient access to internet
- AND/OR cannot afford your existing monthly contract or top up

Please enquire with a member of the REAP team by popping into our office at 177 Mid Street, Keith, AB55 5BL or call us on 01542 888070.

