

HOLBETON CC DOING ITS BIT FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

With the aid of generous grants from a number of sources Holbeton Cricket Club has acquired and successfully installed a solar power scheme for its pavilion in Flete Park and is now using a battery-powered mower to cut the grass on the playing square.

The pavilion dates from the 1880s and until now had no utilities except cold running water. We used a calor gas urn to heat water for tea and all our ground maintenance equipment ran on fossil fuel.

In 2020 we started to explore whether it would be possible to install an affordable off-grid solar power system that would provide us with electricity. Our original intention was for this solely to provide light and power, but as we sought financial assistance from possible donors it became clear that if we were able to link the project to a reduction in our use of petrol then we could garner more support.

We therefore developed a two-phase project. The first phase was the acquisition and installation of the solar system to give us light and the ability to heat water using electricity, and the second the procurement of a battery-powered cylinder mower to cut the square.

After considerable research we selected an off-grid system supplied by Sunstore Solar Ltd, but we were also lucky enough to have the very generous donation of two solar panels from Ethical Power Ltd which significantly reduced the cost. The system has a total battery capacity of just over 6kWh which is more than adequate for our needs. The ground-mounted panels are sited behind the pavilion, facing south, where they have good exposure to the sun.



The rest of the solar system (batteries, controller and inverter), which we installed and connected ourselves, is inside the building. Lights, power sockets and a consumer unit were installed by an electrician friend who also did the final connection between the two elements. We have purchased an electric urn which had its first use when we hosted a touring side for a Sunday afternoon game in mid-August.

Phase 1 was financed by generous donations from Councillor Dan Thomas from his Community Fund; Yealm Community Energy Community Fund; Holbeton Parish Council Climate Change (through Harry Baumer); and our own fundraising activities, notably the annual club barbecue at the pavilion. We are very grateful to everyone.

We envisaged the second phase, acquiring the mower, would take some time as we would have to embark on more fund raising. The model we selected, which has aerator and scarifier attachments, cost over £2000. However, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has a County Grants Fund scheme with a specific Tackling Climate Change theme. We therefore applied through the Devon Cricket Board (DCB) and were lucky enough to be awarded a £1500 grant towards the mower. We are grateful to Nick Goodliffe at DCB for his help and support.



Holbeton Parish Council offered further funding for Phase 2 (thank you Harry) which we matched with more of our own money, and we were therefore able to purchase the mower halfway through this season. Light, manoeuvrable and easy to use and adjust it has been a huge success and has been described by Roger Light, our lead groundsman, as “an absolute godsend”. We have been able to retire our petrol driven, very heavy cylinder mower and

anticipate making further petrol savings when we come to aerate and scarify as we will no longer need to hire or borrow petrol-driven aerators or scarifiers.

Having successfully achieved all this our next aspiration is to acquire a solar-powered robot mower to cut the outfield, which would provide another saving in petrol use as well as taking the pressure off our volunteer mowing team. This will require more research and, of course, fundraising. But we live in hope.