



HUMBER AND WOLDS RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL: NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE SWITCH BULK OIL BUYING SCHEME

OVERVIEW

Rural residents often have no gas connection and are therefore unable to take advantage of dual fuel energy prices. In addition, they pay a premium for using heating oil compared to mains gas. The sector is unregulated and this often means that individuals purchasing heating oil directly from the companies are at a disadvantage. This leads to increased risk of fuel poverty among rural communities.

SOLUTION

The organisation used its experience of establishing and running a successful bulk heating oil buying co-operative in East Riding of Yorkshire, and replicated this scheme in North Lincolnshire. The scheme is membership based (£20 per year to join) and North Lincolnshire Council provided funding to enable the first 100 members to join for free. Village co-ordinators helped publicise the scheme, collate orders from members, and acted as a conduit for other energy saving advice and information to local residents. The aim was also to link the scheme with the local Credit Union to support any residents who were struggling with the upfront cost of oil orders.

OUTCOMES

The scheme has enabled residents who have joined the scheme to date to benefit from reduced energy costs and environmental impact by reducing the number of tanker journeys.

To date, a number of people have signed up and four oil orders have been placed with savings of approximately 2p per litre meaning an average household saving of approximately £10 on a 500 litre order.

People who enquired about the scheme and were outside of it geographical remit were directed to a neighbouring oil co-operative, strengthening thereby links with other organisations.

OBJECTIVES

To establish a bulk buying heating oil co-operative in North Lincolnshire, in order to meet the demand from residents who are outside of the remit of any existing regional oil co-operative.

MORE DETAILS

Project title:	North Lincolnshire Switch Bulk Oil Buying Scheme
Group name:	Humber And Wolds Rural Community Council (HWRCC)
Theme:	Managing and purchasing energy
Area of benefit:	North Lincolnshire
Date:	Dec 2014-Dec 2015
Contact:	@hwrcc.org.uk

A PIECE OF ADVICE

Membership levels have been lower than expected despite the scheme being widely promoted across North Lincolnshire, using a range of methods. Promotion to individual communities did not work as expected, with lower-than-expected interest from Parish Councils, Village Halls and schools in promoting the scheme. A key challenge to the project has been the significant drop in world oil prices which affected the financial incentive for joining the scheme.

HWRCC feels that further consultation with residents in the proposed off-gas communities would have been beneficial prior to establishing the scheme. An alternative to setting up a scheme from new could be to combine the Bulk Oil Buying Scheme into existing successful regional scheme, although this could bring issues with some suppliers who may not work in both areas.