

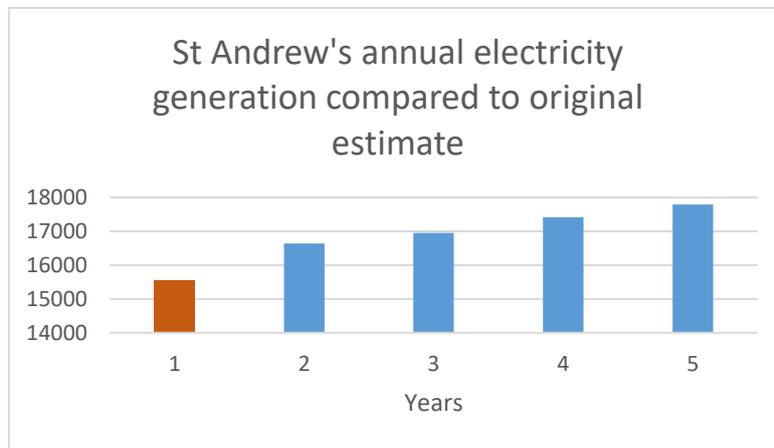


Power for Good

## Chair's Report for year ending 30<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2019

### St Andrew's, West Bromwich

This is the second time we have held our AGM at St Andrew's and it is good to be back. It is also good to report that St Andrew's generation figures yield a pleasing chart:



Year 1, in brown, is the estimated output we were given by the installers. As can be seen, each year the generation has exceeded the estimate, and in fact each year has been better than the previous one, which can only be accounted for by the hours of sunshine enjoyed by St Andrew's going up each year. Other conclusions we might draw is that these panels do not need cleaning, and the invertors are still working well – as indeed they should be at their age. They should work well at least to year 10.

The treasurer of St Andrew's has calculated that they have made a 30% saving on their electricity bills.

### Performance of all the Panels

|                         | Estimated     | Actual 2018   | Actual 2019   |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| St Andrew's             | 15,561        | 17,418        | 17,791        |
| St Richard's            | 8,074         | 7,113         | 8,046         |
| New Life Baptist Church | 14,492        | 16,135        | 17,058        |
| <b>Totals</b>           | <b>38,127</b> | <b>40,666</b> | <b>42,895</b> |

As can be seen, St Richard's still falls slightly short of the estimate, but there is a significant improvement on last year, which reverses the previous downward trend. We had the panels

cleaned in April last year, which is half way through our financial year, so we haven't yet got a full year's figures since the cleaning. A pleasing figure for St Richard's is from the last quarter, the first full quarter since the panels were cleaned, which was 3,743 kWh, compared with 2,902 kWh from the same quarter of the previous year. The cost of the cleaning was £300, which came from project 1's operating costs. We are expecting the cleaning will pay for itself over time as the generation figures go up, but there is the question of when they will need to be cleaned again.

St Richard's need to be cleaned because they lie flat, and are under the flight path from the airport. This means they get dirty and are not washed by the rain. St Andrew's and New Life Baptist Church's panels are on pitched roofs and so do get washed by the rain.

### **Overall picture**

To date, St Andrew's has generated over 68,000 units, St Richard's over 30,000 units, and New Life Baptist Church over 39,000 units. This represents a carbon dioxide saving of about 68 tonnes, and a significant financial saving in energy bills to the congregations.

### **Payment of a return to Investors**

The members of the Board are recommending a 1.5% return to Project 1 investors this year. This is lower than we predicted in our business plan, but still better than the banks are paying. At this stage, we are being cautious in our calculations in the expectation we will be able to pay out higher percentages as the years go by.

The return to Project 2 investors is not due until next year.

### **Future Projects**

At the time of writing, we are awaiting the outcome of a bid to the Lottery Climate Action fund. This is just an initial application, and success at this stage would mean we could proceed to a stage 2 application. The process of applying so far has been a heartening one as eight faith groups, Birmingham City Council, and Birmingham Community Energy have all said they would like to join us in a partnership to implement the project. We are applying for about £200,000 to pay salaries for a team of professional energy advisors who would form a comprehensive understanding of the energy consumption and environmental impact of the faith buildings in the Birmingham area, and from that baseline understanding produce an action plan.

During the course of contacting our potential partners, it was very good to learn of the commitment of just about all the church denominations to reducing their carbon footprints, and of the work of 'Footsteps: faiths for a low carbon future' who have members from a range of different faith groups, all similarly committed to net zero carbon. This group has representation on the Council's taskforce, Route to Zero. As was said in the bid:

It is widely recognised that faith organisations take a lead in setting the values of their many grass roots adherents, and their buildings are held in high regard by their congregations and local communities. In retrofitting energy efficiency and renewable energy generation measures on their buildings, they will be making a strong statement that will contribute to local discourse, and awareness-raising on decarbonisation

We hope that those who decide on allocating Lottery grants, will share this view, and agree that we could make good use of their money.

### **The Board**

The members of the Board remain the same, and in addition we are very grateful for the assistance of some non-members, in particular Nigel Owen who takes the minutes for us; Mike Harrison who has accountancy training and is much more proficient on Excel than the rest of us; and, of course Ron Crowdy who has prepared the accounts for us again this year. My thanks, as always, go to everyone who does the important background work in managing our venture.

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Margaret Healey-Pollett  
January 2020