

Littlebury Energy Project



SAFFRON WALDEN
COMMUNITY ENERGY

PULL-OUT SUPPLEMENT

Littlebury Energy Project update

Thank you to everyone who completed the survey for the Community Energy Fund feasibility study. The survey data will help analysis of the heat required in Littlebury, and the findings will be shared at an event in mid-September.

Got questions?

The LEP team has pulled together a page of FAQs to help residents understand the potential outcomes of the study at <https://lep.swce.co.uk/cef/>

Using Electric Bikes for Cheaper, Greener Local Travel

Rapid advances in battery technology have enabled widespread adoption of electric bikes (ebikes). Can an ebike be a realistic option for greener local journeys in the countryside? We spoke to several village residents about their ebikes.



An eMountain Bike

What is an ebike?

Legally we are talking about 'electrically assisted pedal cycles'. The electric motor assists the rider while pedalling with up to 250 watts of power and a top speed of 15.5mph. Above that speed there is no further assistance from the motor. Just like a regular bike, ebikes do not need a licence, registration, road tax or insurance.

Why did you choose an ebike and how do you use it?

Our villagers gave different reasons for purchasing ebikes (and an etrike!).

- One uses a folding Brompton electric bike to travel to and from Audley End station and takes it on the train to London. He picked it to deal with local hills and to give a good speed while not arriving at work too hot and sweaty.

"For Littlebury, by Littlebury"

Littlebury Energy Project



SAFFRON WALDEN
COMMUNITY ENERGY

- Another local adopted a Synch Monkey “fat tyre” bike after recovering from a foot injury from an accident. “I was desperate to get out again and the assistance of the ebike was the perfect solution.” He uses the bike for exercise and short trips to Saffron Walden for shopping. Buying his wife an ebike has allowed evening bike rides and picnics, and they are anticipating taking their grandson along too. He adds “Built-in lights mean I can cycle at night as well”



“I utterly love my Synch bike”



Tern GSD Cargo Bike

- Another Littlebury family replaced the car school run with an ebike (Tern GSD from Cambridge Cycle Company, Pampisford). Motor assistance smooths the hills to Saffron Walden especially with two children on the back. After over 900 miles, they say that apart from a few sub-zero conditions in winter, the majority of trips are great fun. They usually arrive back no later than the motorists doing the same run, and really feel the health benefits of regularly getting out.
- Another resident says “I have always enjoyed cycling the local tracks and bridleways, but knee problems meant I needed a bit more help on the uphills. Since getting an off-road ebike (picture at top of article), I’ve been able to get out regularly

and further than before (more than 40 miles on a charge off road). My wife has balance issues that precluded a bicycle, but getting an electric tricycle has allowed her to finally join family rides. Good sized front and back baskets on the trike also give us storage for any kit or shopping!”

Does ebiking have to be expensive?

Many employers offer the government’s cycle to work scheme so you can buy a bike with a discount off the price via your income tax.

“For Littlebury, by Littlebury”

Littlebury Energy Project



SAFFRON WALDEN
COMMUNITY ENERGY

Uttlesford District Council also now have two schemes to help. You can rent an e-bike or pedal bike for up to 6 months at a subsidised rate through the Saffron Walden Bike Club. You can also use the ebike (and bike) hire scheme for short journeys between the 11 hubs around Saffron Walden including the Leisure Centre and Audley End Station. See <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/8918/EV-bikes-hire-or-try-before-you-buy> for details.

Are there any downsides?

Ebikes are heavier than normal bikes due to the battery, so are more difficult to manoeuvre when not powered. If you run out of charge away from a power supply, it can be a long hard cycle home! There have also been reports about fire risk of the batteries, but this appears to be largely associated with batteries that have been damaged, cheap bike conversion kits or inappropriate chargers. One of our keen ebikers says “The only slightly negative thing is that I wish there was a dedicated cycle path from Littlebury to Saffron Walden, as Windmill Hill is a bit treacherous.”

Home Improvements to an all-Electric House

This month we look at an example of improvement options for a house with existing storage heating.



Cliff and Fiona Snow have lived in Rookery Lane, Wendens Ambo since 1998. The cottage was built around 1840, and has several extensions. Heating is via electric storage heaters, with LPG gas fire back-up. The cottage has never had a wet central heating system and the close railway precludes oil storage.

Cliff has undertaken a continuous programme of improvement over the years to increase energy efficiency and reduce running costs.

He says “We increased the house insulation over time, adding loft insulation eventually to 270 mm. The 1980s breeze-block extension was the coldest area so we externally insulated it with Celotex boards clad in composite weather boarding. At the same we installed insulation under a new lounge floor.”

“For Littlebury, by Littlebury”

Littlebury Energy Project



SAFFRON WALDEN
COMMUNITY ENERGY

“In 2001, while a new extension was built with wooden double glazing, we retrofitted all existing windows with the same units. Later we added secondary glazing to the ground floor units. Last year, the SWCE Thermal Camera revealed issues with some other double-glazed windows which were rectified by adding secondary glazing (supplied by Paxtons Home Improvement but self-installed) so that the windows are now effectively triple glazed. “



Secondary Glazed Bedroom Window



Quantum Heater and Reflective Heat panel (to be fitted)

“We have upgraded the storage heating system with more advanced models as they became available. The current models are predominantly Quantum Smart Storage Heaters. The advantage of this type of heating is that’s its clean, green energy (Octopus Energy), with virtually no maintenance costs. The downside is that it is very expensive to run. To control the cost, we use an ‘Economy 10’ tariff (cheap rate at 2.30am-7.30am, 1pm to 4pm. 10pm to 12.30am) and use wireless, digital time-switches to control the heating within zones. We also use our immersion heater and

tumble-dryer during cheap rates using smart switches and mobile phone app.”

“Over 8 years we have cut our electricity usage by almost 50%. While we are keen to move on to Heat Pump / Solar Technology, we should complete our insulation upgrades first by extending the external wall insulation. Solar panels with battery storage are something we will pursue next year to reduce running costs of the current all-electric system. “

More details can be found at <https://lep.swce.co.uk/2024/07/13/home-improvements-to-an-all-electric-house/>

Contact Littlebury Energy Project (LEP) at contact@lep.org.uk or 01799 25250

“For Littlebury, by Littlebury”