

# NEWSLETTER FOR KINGS THORN, THE BIRCHES & ACONBURY

A Newsletter for the Villages of King's Thorn, Little Birch, Much Birch & Aconbury – May 2011 – First published in 1977

## **DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTIONS AND NATIONAL REFERENDUM: PRESS RELEASE FROM HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL:**

On Thursday, May 5, as well as taking part in the local elections to vote councillors onto Herefordshire Council, voters will also be able to take part in the first nationwide referendum for more than 35 years.

Voters will be asked to say “yes” or “no” to changing the system used to elect Members of Parliament at our general elections.

The overall responsibility for the referendum lies with the Electoral Commission, although your voting paper will be collected in when you hand in your ballot paper for your local councillor – this could be at your local polling station, or via a postal vote.

The commission is keen that everyone understands what they are voting for in the referendum, so look out for an explanatory booklet they are sending out to every household in the UK.

This booklet will be supported by an advertising campaign – run by the Electoral Commission – and further details can be found at [www.electoralcommission.org.uk](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk)

If you are not registered to vote, you will not be able to vote in either the local elections or the referendum.

To check that you are registered, or if you wish to change your preferred voting

## **DIARY DATES FOR MAY**

- 5<sup>th</sup> May - Local Elections and National Referendum on voting system
- 7<sup>th</sup> May - Kinderly A Cappella Group – Much Birch Church
- 8<sup>th</sup> May - Dawn Chorus Walk and Breakfast
- 10<sup>th</sup> May - Evergreen Club Outing
- 10<sup>th</sup> May - Whist Drive LBVH
- 11<sup>th</sup> May - LBPC Annual Meeting & Parish Council Meeting LBVH
- 14<sup>th</sup> May - Flicks Matinee – ‘Tangled’ MBCH
- 17<sup>th</sup> May - Much Birch W.I. Resolutions and Members Meeting MBCH
- 18<sup>th</sup> May - LBVH Committee AGM
- 19<sup>th</sup> May - MBPC Annual Meeting & Parish Meeting MBCH
- 20<sup>th</sup> May - 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage Digital Switchover
- 25<sup>th</sup> May - Gardening Club LBVH
- 27<sup>th</sup> May - Much Birch Village Market MBCH

## **ADVANCE NOTICES**

- 21<sup>st</sup> June - Much Birch W.I. Meeting

arrangements, please contact the electoral registration team on 01432 260107.

The last day for receipt of applications to appoint someone to vote on your behalf (called a proxy vote) is April 21.

**John Burnett 01432 260224.**

## **LBPC NOTICE RE: ELECTIONS 5<sup>TH</sup> MAY**

All residents who have registered to vote, will receive polling cards for Herefordshire Council Elections automatically. There will be no contested election for Little Birch Parish Council as its five available seats have been filled by five nominated candidates. No further nominations were received, therefore no election poll was required. The only changes in the membership of LBPC are, that Cllr. Sue Jones is standing down, and Elaine Godding is nominated.

## **MBPC NOTICE RE: ELECTIONS 5<sup>TH</sup> MAY**

The 5<sup>th</sup> May will be a busy day, with the district council elections and the national referendum on whether to change the parliamentary voting system or not. As with Little Birch Parish Council, Much Birch will not now be having a contested election for its Parish Council. This is because only five nominations were received for the six parish councillor places on MBPC. This means that there is a vacant seat on the Council. Parishioners are invited to give some thought as to whether they would like to put themselves forward for the next stage of the process, known as co-option. There will be further information once the official forms have been sent to MBPC by Electoral Services at Herefordshire Council; this will be placed in the June edition of the newsletter.

#### NEWSLETTER COPY

From time to time there are bound to be local issues that people feel strongly about, that they put into words, and will wish to have published in this newsletter. Open discussion of issues, is very welcome, and readers are encouraged to express themselves, but the newsletter cannot become the vehicle for personalised attacks by one member of the community, or one group within the community, against another. This would not only go against the ethos on which the newsletter was founded 33 years ago, but also the advice received from Little Birch Village Hall Management Committee for dealing with copy of this nature.

As has always been the case, if words used, are provocative, or disparaging of other members of the community, the writer is asked to self-edit the sections concerned, in co-operation with the newsletter team. In this way, all views can be aired with confidence that the newsletter will not become a forum in which people have a public 'go' at one another. Hopefully we are all agreed on this.

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#### THE CASTLE INN

It is good to see our local pub open again. Please support it, as the saying goes, 'Use it, or lose it.' If by some chance this newsletter reaches you *before* the day of the Royal Wedding, please note that The Castle Inn are inviting the community to celebrate at the pub from **10.00a.m.** onward, **Friday 29<sup>th</sup> April**. There will be a wedding breakfast, an all day kitchen bbq, competitions, and photographs will be taken. Further details 01981-540756

#### KINDERLY A CAPPELLA VOCAL GROUP SING AT MUCH BIRCH CHURCH

On Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May at 8.p.m.  
Proceeds to Much Birch Church.

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#### DAWN CHORUS WALK & BREAKFAST

##### Saturday & Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> May

This magical walk through fields and woods is not to be missed!!

The bird song will be identified by Adrian Hodges & John Penrice.

Meet at Merrivale Farm at 5.30am sharp (by kind permission of Sue and Bob Mason).

The walk will be followed by a cooked breakfast at LBVillage Hall. Please phone **01981 541027** in order that we can ascertain numbers for catering.

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#### MUCH BIRCH 100 CLUB DRAW

The April draw took place on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2011 in Much Birch Community Hall at 10.30am. The winners were:

1. No 25 - Mrs. J. Wilson, Much Birch
2. No 48 - Mrs. S. McLeod, King's Caple

The next draw will take place on **Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2011 at 10.30am** in Much Birch Community Hall  
John Jones - Chairman

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#### EVERGREEN CLUB

On **Tuesday 10th May**, we are going to South Wales. In the morning we go to Carleon, best known for its Roman remains. After lunch we travel Dewstow Gardens.

**The cost is £13 (£15 for non-members).**

The number to ring is **01981 540932**.

The pick-up times are:

Brandon Coach Depot	8.45
The Park, Wormelow	8.55
Tump Lane (bungalows)	9.00
Poor Clares Convent	9.10
Kings Thorn bus shelter	9.15
M. B. Church bus stop	9.20
Axe & Cleaver bus stop	9.25
Peterstow (Broome Farm lay-by)	9.35
Fontaine Court	9.45

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#### WHIST DRIVE

Our next Whist Drive is on **Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May** in Little Birch Village Hall. We shall start at **7.30 pm**. The entrance fee is £1.50. Excellent prizes and refreshments will be available. New players are always welcome.

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#### LBPC ANNUAL MEETING & PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

These two meetings will be held on 11<sup>th</sup> May at 7.45p.m. at Little Birch Village Hall.  
Parish Clerk - Liz Callwood  
01981 - 540081

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#### FLICKS IN THE STICKS MATINEE

Disney's 'Tangled' **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2.30p.m.** Much Birch Community Hall.

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#### MUCH BIRCH W.I.

The May meeting takes place in Much Birch Community Hall on **17th at 7.30pm**.

This is the Resolutions and Member's evening, when we discuss the resolutions going forward to the National AGM.

On June 21<sup>st</sup> the speaker will be David Barrie, whose subject is 'The Food We Eat'.

For further details please contact Kath, 01981 540382, or Caroline, 01981 540422

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#### VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE AGM

This will take place on **Wednesday May 18<sup>th</sup> at 7.30p.m.** in Little Birch Village

Hall. Please come along and support your committee, they are working hard for you. They have done a wonderful job over the past few years in refurbishing the hall which is now a very comfortable and spacious venue for all sorts of activities. The committee is always open to suggestions for activities, particularly new and different ones so please come along with lots of ideas. We know you have some as they were placed on flags at the Planning for Real event held recently so help the committee put them into action. The committee would also be delighted to welcome any new members. In particular, we need someone who would be prepared to take bookings. Everyone enjoys having a local venue for those most important community get-togethers but the venue has to be maintained and the get-togethers organised – someone has to do it! So please consider giving a little time to this worthwhile cause and do something for the community – Mr Cameron would be so grateful!!

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#### **MBPC ANNUAL MEETING**

Will be held on **Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May** beginning at **7.p.m.** Followed by the **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING** at which parishioners have the opportunity to approach the parish council with any parish matters that are of concern to them. The ordinary Parish Council meeting will follow the above. All at Much Birch Community Hall.

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#### **2<sup>ND</sup> PHASE DIGITAL SWITCHOVER**

**20<sup>th</sup> May.** Don't forget any final tunings you may need to carry out on your t.v.

#### **LITTLE BIRCH & KING'S THORN GARDENING CLUB**

Mr. Andy Pederick, ex. Pershore College and nursery owner, will give a 'hands-on' demonstration and talk on

'The propagation of Trees and Shrubs'. at the **May** meeting of the club on **Wed. 25<sup>th</sup>** at **7.30pm.** in Little Birch Village Hall.

New members are always welcome and a 'taster' meeting can be attended for **£2.** donation. John Bryant 540316.

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#### **MUCH BIRCH VILLAGE MARKET**

The May market will be held on **27<sup>th</sup> between 2.30 pm and 4.30 pm** in Much Birch Community Hall.

For anyone new to our market .... there are suppliers of rare breed pork and beef, free range chicken, duck, and lamb, a cheese supplier, Ray, with her hand made chocolate, Mr. G's chutney, jams and marmalade (depending on the supply of ingredients), and fresh bread. You can also find craft stalls with greeting cards and other embroidered items, and felted gifts. There is also a Fair Trade stand.

Hopefully, Dan will be returning to sharpen scissors, knives and garden tools in time for all those summer jobs!

Much Birch WI will be there with a book stall, selling books for their two charities for 2011, The Hereford Talking Newspapers and the Hereford Eye Scanner Appeal.

Refreshments, and 'take home cakes' are locally made and sold in aid of McMillan Cancer Support.

Please come along to show your support for local suppliers.

For further details, please contact Kath, 01981 540382

#### **CAUTIONARY TALES**

**The Blandford fly (*Simulium posticatum*)** is a species of black fly, a biting insect originally seen around Blandford Forum and villages bordering the River Stour in Dorset, England. Now it has spread to other areas of the country including our own. Its larvae breed in the weed-beds of the slow flowing river, and the suspicion is – near garden water features.

When the fly emerges, the female seeks a blood meal before mating. It usually bites the lower legs causing pain and swelling, after which secondary infections can set in.

The danger period seems to be from about 10th May until mid-June, but could be longer. You seldom notice it until it's gone, leaving a spot of blood, then spend the next week nursing anything from an annoying itch to a large incapacitating swelling.

How to avoid being bitten:  
1. It only flies close to the ground, Cover up exposed flesh from the waist down. Do not lie on the ground or on a low sunbed. If you're bending over eg. gardening, cover up your arms.

2. If you still feel at risk, use an insect repellent like the tansy plant (grows as a weed in the garden) rubbed hard into the skin - not pretty but smells strong.

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#### **LETTER**

##### **Re: Kingsthorpe bus stop**

I agree that having a bus stopping outside your house is not very nice, but apparently a bus from Hereford has been stopping in that spot for 41 years.

I and others have been in touch

with Stagecoach to complain about the bus stop being moved to the north of the Thorn junction, albeit for a short period, without prior consultation with regular bus users of whom many are quite elderly. There is a passenger safety issue alighting onto a sloping grass bank when the bus from Hereford stops north of the Thorn, then having to cross the top of the Thorn with not only traffic coming up the Thorn but also traffic turning into the Thorn from Ross & also from behind the bus, & this happening possibly in the dark.

Derek Nash – Aconbury Close.

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#### LETTER

##### **Re: King's Thorn Bus Stop**

Bus users have informed Stage Coach management and MBPC that the only safe place to wait or alight from the bus is on the Ross (south) side of the Thorn junction, as they have for decades.

We point out that stopping North of the Thorn junction is unsafe for the following reasons:

A) Waiting or disembarking on to a hummocky bank of long grass is both unpleasant and unsafe, particularly for the elderly, the disabled and parents with young children.  
B) The alternative is to stand on the corner of the road in the path of turning traffic, which is unnerving for drivers and dangerous for bus users.  
C) Using this bank involves crossing a road on a dangerous corner, particularly at night. Inevitably, we live in a car-dominated area. But residents, who choose to use our excellent bus service for economic, environmental, health or

convenience reasons must not be treated as second class citizens and bullied into catching their bus from an unsafe site. Stagecoach management have assured us they will put their customers' safety first. So if there is not soon to be a nasty accident, we are sorry, but bus users must continue to use their safe bus stop on the south side of The Thorn junction, as they have always happily done.

Catharine Sadler.

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#### LOCAL NEWS

Sincere sympathies are extended to **Dr. Annette Wissler and Richard Riddell** following the death of Annette's mother, **Frau Eva Wissler**. Frau Wissler had made many trips to Little Birch over the years and thoroughly enjoyed the local area and talking to people. A few weeks ago, she sent a very generous donation of £100 for Little Birch Hall funds. Annette, supported by Richard, has been a tower of strength to her mother and gave her the utmost care. Over the last 2 years, she drove at least every other weekend to Germany to look after Eva and since Christmas has virtually stayed there. The last 3 weeks of Eva's life was spent in Hospital and Annette spent every minute with her whilst Richard also travelled there most weekends. We send to them both our condolences in their sad loss.

It is also sad to record the death of **Michael Glover** of Hollybush Lane. Much Birch Church was full with family, neighbours and friends on April 11<sup>th</sup> to give Thanks for Mike's Life. This was conducted by

Rev. Mark Johnson. The poems, 'The Final Flight' was read by his daughter, Janette, and 'God's Garden' by granddaughter, Hannah MacDonald. Dick Brimacombe read the lesson and the eulogy was given by Robert MacDonald, son in law, from which these notes are given. Mike was born in London in 1938 and with other children, was evacuated during the war to Clevedon in Somerset. After the war, he returned to south London to finish his education. He belonged to a local youth club where, at the age of 13 or 14, he met June, to whom he was married in 1958. They lived in Kent for some years where daughter, Karen, was born. At this time, Mike worked for the Distillers Company and then when his boss moved to Whitbreads, he persuaded Mike to join him there. Meanwhile, Janette was born to complete the family.

The family moved to Much Birch in the summer of 1974, when Mike joined the staff of HP Bulmer and he remained there until his retirement. At this time, Mr. Peter Prior (who also died recently) became Chairman of the Company and under his direction, Bulmers expanded both at home and abroad with several newly formed companies making up the Group and Mike was made Purchasing Manager for the Group.

Mike and June obviously loved their family and were delighted when the daughters were married and later this was enhanced when in turn, the grandchildren were born.

Mike was quite a good sportsman in his younger days and was a tenacious footballer

so when the grandchildren visited, he was in his element with them playing in the garden. He and June were faithful members of Much Birch Church where at one time he was churchwarden and one of the organisers of the combined Church fetes in the 1970's and 80's. Mike was also involved with fundraising for the Cathedral School and was a keen member of the Rotary Club, where with Dick Brimacombe, he was a volunteer grass cutter at St. Michael's Hospice.

In retirement, Mike loved to play bowls. When Parkinson's Disease cruelly came along, Mike showed great determination to live as normal a life as possible and June could not have given greater care. He still managed to get to Church regularly and play bowls with disabled friends at Leominster. When June could no longer manage to keep Mike at home, he moved into Lynhales Nursing Home, where he passed away on 30<sup>th</sup> March. He was a devoted husband, father and grandfather, a determined, straightforward and sometimes forthright man of great integrity. On the front of the Service Book is a delightful photograph of Mike with his natural charming smile. He will be sadly missed by his family and all who knew him. We send our sincere sympathies to June, Karen, Janette and their families.

Several friends have been in hospital recently and it's good to report that they are now back at home and making good progress.

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## **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH Crime**

About 1600 litres of heating oil was stolen from a domestic tank at a house in Eaton Bishop between 2nd and 9th April.

At around 3.15pm last Tuesday 12th April, an attempt was made to steal a horsebox from a farm on Garway Hill. The owner of the horsebox was in a field about 200 yards away and saw it moving across the farmyard, and the farm dogs were running towards it, barking. This must have put the would be thieves off, because by the time the owner got there, there was no-one in sight, but the horsebox had been moved some distance.

A shed was broken into in a rear garden of a property in Ewyas Harold between 8pm on Sunday 10th April and 2pm the following day. The thieves approached over fields at the rear of the property, and forced the lock off the shed and stole a hedge trimmer, a lawnmower, a generator and some power tools. The thieves then used the victim's wheelbarrow to carry their booty back across the fields.

Also in Ewyas Harold, a 42" cut Countex ride on mower was stolen from a locked stable at a property not far from the one above around the same time, so was almost certainly carried out by the same suspects.

Between 4pm last Tuesday 12th April and 6pm on Wednesday 13th, thieves forced their way into an industrial unit in Vincent Carey Road, Rotherwas, and stole a quantity of power tools including electric planers, nail guns etc.

Longtown Primary School had unwelcome visitors overnight on 12th/13th April - vandals

broke several spindles on the ramp leading to the pre-school class hut in the rear playground, it is the second time that this has happened recently. With the school holidays upon us and lighter evenings there will probably be similar incidents at schools in rural areas, if you live near a school please let us know if you see or hear people on these premises at times you suspect they should not be there.

A JCB, registration number W854EOX was stolen from a farm building near Watery Lane, Lower Bullingham, between 5pm last Wednesday 13th and 8am the following morning. The thieves cut a padlock from a gate into the yard, and the JCB was driven across fields onto the Rotherwas relief Road.

Around 3pm on Wednesday 13th April, cash was stolen from the till of the village store in Ewyas Harold. A dark skinned male, aged between 25-35 years, about 5'10" with a thin build, and wearing a dog-toothed top was seen behind the counter by a member of staff, he then ran from the store and the theft was then discovered.

## **Suspicious incidents**

A White Ford Transit tipper W34\*JBB was seen collecting scrap in Holme Lacy around 10am last Wednesday 14th. There were three males with the vehicle, one aged about 60 with a thin face, wearing a blue boiler suit and a baseball cap, another male was in his 30's and described as 'burly' and there was also a lad of about 15. Please call us on **0300 333 3000** to report 'scrappies' if they call on you or if you see them in your area, preferably at the time they are around. If a unit is free

we will follow it up straight away, otherwise we will make enquiries with the registered keeper of the vehicle - it's good to let them know we are on their case!

Also, these scrap dealers should have a licence, most of them don't, and the Community Protection Team from the council, who we work closely with, can issue a £300 fine if they catch them in action!

We have had several calls over the last few months from businesses who have received a call from a male trying to sell them advertising space in a community magazine supporting youths. He is telling callers that he is 'with the police' and in some cases calls himself a 'community police officer'.

He has given the name 'Pete Williams' to one business, and gets quite rude when questioned. The number is withheld.

This male is nothing to do with the police, and we'd be quite interested to speak to him, so if you have any information with regard to this individual, please let us know.

Thanks for taking the time to read all this, and please keep the calls coming in!

Golden Valley & Hereford  
Rural South Local Policing  
Teams

PC 2368 Chris Lea

07855 785080

CSO 6173 Fiona Witcher

07779 141232

CSO 6993 Kevin Powell

07779 141232

CSO 6366 James Cooke

07779 141223

CSO 6482 Katie Middleton

07779 141223

E-mail -

[goldenvalley.lpt@westmerciam.pnn.police.uk](mailto:goldenvalley.lpt@westmerciam.pnn.police.uk)

pnn.police.uk

or

E-mail -

[herefordruralsouth.lpt@westmerciam.pnn.police.uk](mailto:herefordruralsouth.lpt@westmerciam.pnn.police.uk)

rcia.pnn.police.uk

Non - emergency number 0300

333 3000

#### ***PLEASE HELP - MISSING CAT***

We live at 2 The Old Shop, Much Birch opposite the Poor Clares Convent. On Tuesday 12th April our beloved black short haired cat went missing from our home. He didn't have a collar on (he kept losing them). He has yellow eyes and a very distinctive little lump on the back of his head under his fur. He goes by the name of Rodney. He was a rescue cat and so would be approximately 11 years old. We understand the worst could of happened but if you could all please keep a look out for him we would appreciate it. Many thanks Laura, Darren & Ava Newman. 01981 540451

Thanks to all who have sent in copy, it is much appreciated.

Just a reminder - that this is your newsletter and it will be as interesting as you make it.

Again, our youngsters are seriously under-represented so where are you??? We want to hear from you.

Send items for the newsletter to [birchesnews@btinternet.com](mailto:birchesnews@btinternet.com) or deliver by hand to 'Bramleys' in Aconbury Close, King's Thorn.

**COPY DEADLINE  
FOR JUNE ISSUE**

**18<sup>th</sup> May**

#### **Much Birch Parish Council Hereford**

Parish Clerk (Administration & Finance Officer) Vacancy

6 Hours per Week

Salary - negotiable (dependent upon previous experience)

We are looking for a motivated and experienced administrator to fill the role of Parish Clerk.

This includes advice to the council on policy and procedure, financial management and the maintenance of and storage of records. You will have experience in office administration and handling accounting / financial processes. Good interpersonal skills and written/ verbal communication skills along with the ability to organise your workload and meet deadlines are essential. You will also need IT skills, including the ability to use financial spreadsheets.

Previous experience of parish council administration is desirable but not essential as training will be available.

A full driving license is necessary as is the use of a vehicle.

Please apply in writing, enclosing your CV to Cllr Alison Cook via email to [thecooks@wyenet.co.uk](mailto:thecooks@wyenet.co.uk).

Informal enquiries to the same email address or telephone 01981 540703

Tel. 01981 540030  
Email: [info@deanandsun.co.uk](mailto:info@deanandsun.co.uk)  
[www.deanandsun.co.uk](http://www.deanandsun.co.uk)

Valley View, Barrack Hill,  
Little Birch, Hereford HR2 8AX

**DEAN&SUN**  
Solar Electric Installation



**GRAHAM DEAN ELECTRICAL** is going Green and becoming **Dean & Sun**. During our accreditation process research we have noticed so much confusion around the subject that we thought it would be a good place to start to share our findings.

Having these solar panels installed on our own home (as opposed to the business installing them – which we shall also be!), the offers we'd seen in the papers seemed too good to be true and we were hunting for a hidden catch.

Basically if you install solar PV panels on your roof, (ideally south facing) to generate electricity, **the Government FIT (Feed In Tariff) will pay you 41.3p** for every unit (1kw) of electricity you generate and an extra 3p for surplus that goes back to the grid. **This is guaranteed, index-linked and tax-free for 25 years!** The Government is due to review this tariff later this year as larger scale 'solar farms' are eating away at money meant for homeowners, businesses and communities, therefore the tariffs may well change in 2012 on new installations – but NOT on panels already installed by then.

An average 3 bed house with a south facing roof can expect approximately £920 per year (£770 for electricity generated, £30 from surplus sold back to the grid and £120 in savings on their fuel bill. Typical installation costs can be around £5K -12K depending on size and location. (more info at [www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk))

Obviously there are wider issues associated with renewables and arguments on both sides as to whether these installations will make a global difference. But I'm simply speaking on an individual household level and they can be appealing to those unhappy with interest rates and people are choosing to invest in their 'roof tops'. Whilst there are no longer grants available for PV installation – the logic behind such a high FIT tariff is to ensure those adding the cost of installation onto their mortgage would receive more back in tariff payments per year than they would pay out in loan over the 25 year period. It's an excellent way to reduce energy bills and reduce your carbon footprint – especially when combined with energy efficient appliances and waste reduction etc.

Whilst it is always advisable to double check, the Permitted Development Rights Act has now made it simpler to install panels and planning permission isn't usually necessary on roof installations if it falls below the ridgeline and doesn't protrude more than 200mm.

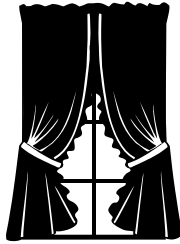
To qualify for the FIT tariff you must have the panels installed by an MCS (Microgeneration Certification Scheme) Approved Contractor. This is where **Dean & Sun** can help. Graham is a local electrician, diversifying into this area and currently undertaking the accreditation process and we hope to be fully operational by May 2011. We shall be installing the panels on our own roof, so can advise first hand on practicalities and performance and directly answer any questions you may have. Please contact us at [info@deanandsun.co.uk](mailto:info@deanandsun.co.uk) with any questions or to request a free on site survey and quotation.

Yours sincerely

Graham & Sarah Dean



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