



Wood Fuel

Article by Charlotte Bruton, Bioenergy Advisor, TV Energy

As part of their remit, TV Energy has been actively promoting the use of wood fuel across the Thames Valley for the last year. As a result more and more opportunities for wood fuel heating are being identified and in many cases this option is being seriously considered.

For example, Shortenills Environmental Education Centre near Chorleywood has recently been awarded a TV Energy Community Renewable Energy grant to conduct a feasibility study into the potential for wood fuelled heating on their site. Econergy Ltd has been brought in to conduct the study and to draw up design plans. Through Econergy a capital grant of 40% is available from the NOF/DTI funding or capital funding is available through the DTI's Clear Skies grant for community and domestic renewable energy schemes. The beauty of projects such as Shortenills is the links that can be established with organisations such as the Woodland Trust who own and manage Philipshill Wood close to the education centre. The timber extracted could be chipped for use in the education centre at little extra cost to the Woodland Trust and with the benefit of a guaranteed income.

Other projects are being developed in the Thames Valley and Chilterns through links with Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire County Councils and their boiler replacement schemes for schools, education centres and other municipal buildings. The TV Energy Community Renewable Energy Grant Scheme awarded four grants this year to wood fuelled heating projects including Shortenills which are currently in the feasibility phase. In addition, numerous other prospects are emerging such as farm conversions e.g. barns to offices and workshops, and other new developments.

The key to success for wood fuelled heating at the moment is to target areas with no mains natural gas supply. Wood heat can be realistic for many users and is well worth considering if oil is the main source of fuel and boilers are due for replacement. Currently, wood heating is not competitive with mains gas, but it can compete with oil. In the next few years with the increase in climate change levy on fossil fuels wood heat should be commercially viable for many more end users.



Oil boiler due for replacement

The grant schemes available at the moment make wood fuel an attractive option and, for many of the end users TV Energy are working with it is also a useful educational tool. A key factor that also makes wood fuelled heating attractive is the availability of fuel. If the user has access to their own fuel supply this can make excellent economic sense. The location of wood fuel suppliers is of vital importance to the economic viability of any wood fuel scheme and the closer to the end user the better.

As more projects are developed in the region more fuel suppliers will be required. The links generated with organisations such as the Chiltern Woodland Project and the Woodland Trust will be vital.

For more information about the grant scheme currently available visit the Clear Skies web site at www.clear-skies.org or telephone Charlotte Bruton at TV Energy on 01635 817420.

More details are available on the website www.tvenergy.org or email charlotte.bruton@tvenergy.org



New wood fired boiler