

Funds *for the* community

The Sheringham Shoal Wind Farm has brought community benefits beyond those expected as part of general business activity. It is part of the company's ethos to ensure it does not operate in isolation but becomes an integral and valued member of the local community.

As an early step, in 2010, the organisation established the Sheringham Shoal Community Fund. The aim was to facilitate the implementation of relevant projects and initiatives that will benefit stakeholders, primarily in Wells-next-the-Sea and the surrounding villages, but also in the wider North Norfolk region. Not only was there a general expectation that the organisation, as one of the largest employers in the area, would contribute to the sustainability of the wider community, there was a desire from within to be a responsible corporate citizen and an industry leader in terms of local engagement.

Coordinated by the Norfolk Community Foundation, the Fund provides grants to charities, community groups, parish and town councils and educational institutions in the North Norfolk area that apply for financial assistance for community projects or initiatives which meet one or more of the fund criteria.

The criteria were designed to be in keeping with, and relevant to, the nature of the business, namely the sustainable production of

green energy. The project should be able to meet one or more of the following criteria:

- contribute to reducing climate change
- assist the sustainability of North Norfolk communities by stimulating their own ability to solve issues and create opportunities, for example by providing educational or community business facilities
- have a marine environment or marine safety focus
- promote environmental sensitivity, sustainability or the benefits of renewable energy
- contribute to education or employment in the renewable energy industry or related arenas through access to courses and community activities

Since its establishment the Fund has made grant awards of around £200,000 to various local organisations. Groups that feel they have a relevant initiative or concept that needs funding are encouraged to apply. Applications can be made throughout the year by submitting an outline proposal to Norfolk Community Foundation.

Outline proposals are assessed and selected applicants invited to submit a full proposal for consideration by the grant panel. Full applications are normally considered at meetings twice a year - around May and November.

To find out more about the Sheringham Shoal Community Fund, or to submit an outline proposal form, you can visit www.norfolkfoundation.com/Sheringham-Shoal-Community-Fund.htm for details 

“Who is eligible to receive grants?”

A wide range of organisations have successfully applied for grants from the Sheringham Shoal Community Fund. The case studies give an insight into just two of the numerous projects which have been able to proceed due to contributions from the Fund.



The Maltings in the heart of Wells-next-the-Sea, previous recipient of a grant from the Sheringham Shoal Community Fund

Case studies

Case Study: Grant gives rise to junior crew for Sea Palling Voluntary Lifeboat

In May 2013, the Sheringham Shoal Community Fund panel awarded the Palling Volunteer Rescue Service funding to provide a junior crew for the Sea Palling Voluntary Lifeboat.

The service is entirely independent of the RNLI, and reliant wholly on public donations. Its patch stretches from Eccles on Sea to Winterton in the south of the county, and in 2013 alone, the lifeboat was called out 11 times to help sailors who had got into difficulties.

Paul Dale, Sea Palling Lifeboat Coxwain said: *"Receiving the support from the Sheringham Shoal Community Fund has been fantastic because it has enabled us to do something that we have planned for a few years but haven't been able to put in place because of lack of funding. The grant of just under £10,000 has kick-started the scheme and helped to make our Junior Crew a reality; the next generation of lifeboat men and women are being prepared for life at sea by means of our innovative training scheme."*



Sea Palling Lifeboat Junior Crew – photo by Becky Ingham, Sea Palling Lifeboat

So far, five young people have been trained and given the chance to learn new skills, take part in lifeboat activities and give something back to their local community.

Case Study: Sheringham Shoal Community Fund grant helps sustain village store

A grant of £15,000 from Sheringham Shoal Offshore Wind Farm's Community Fund has helped to ensure the viability of the Village Shop and Post Office in Great Ryburgh, North Norfolk.

What is now an attractive, well-stocked shop has had a chequered history. In 2007, the original store was failing, and was due to close within the next eighteen months. The local church, pub and school had already ceased to function, so this closure would rob the village of its remaining amenity. It so alarmed local resident, Andrew Purdy, that he rallied the village and began the fight back.

"It wasn't easy," explained Andrew. "I was not living in the village full-time, but nevertheless, I was asked to head up the rescue operation. We did our market research, issued shares which raised £26,000, applied for a grant from The Co-operative Society and



The solar panels blend into the roof at the Village Shop and Post Office in Great Ryburgh

a loan from the Plunkett Foundation. We finally raised sufficient monies to fund the project, and formed ourselves into a Community Interest Company (CIC)."

The CIC took over the existing shop premises, and gratifyingly, trade increased. Finally, in March 2009, the shop moved to its present location. The Great Ryburgh Village Shop and Post Office was in business!

"It wasn't plain sailing," Andrew explained. "Overheads were high. Wages accounted for the majority of our expenditure, followed closely by electricity costs of £5,000 per annum. While we couldn't function without staff, we could cut our power bills.

"I'm a big proponent of solar panels. I've installed them at home and as they have dramatically reduced our fuel costs, I began to seek grants to install them on the shop roof."

With the help of Clive Rayner from the Norfolk Community Foundation, Andrew found the Sheringham Shoal Community Fund (SSCF). "This seemed to fit us exactly," said Andrew, "and we were awarded £15,000 to install the panels."

On a recent visit to Great Ryburgh Clive Rayner said: *"I think this is an excellent example of how the Sheringham Shoal Community Fund can help sustain community life in rural North Norfolk."*

16 panels were installed on each side of the building's east-west facing roof, each with a micro-inverter to convert the DC current produced by the panels, into AC current that feeds into the grid.

During the shop's first full year of operation with the panels, Andrew monitored the output closely. From 26th January 2013 to 28th January 2014, 6941 units were generated, which translated into a saving of £1,838.66 for the shop. Andrew says, *"It constituted the difference between carrying on and closing. The whole community is grateful to SSCF. After pulling the village together to save the shop we got a new rector, a butcher opened a shop and the pub re-opened. Village vibrancy returned, leading to us winning an EDP Pride in Norfolk Award for the best village community."*

Contact details and more information:

Sheringham Shoal is owned by Statoil, Statkraft and the Green Investment Bank through Scira Offshore Energy Ltd. Statoil is the operator for the Sheringham Shoal Offshore Wind Farm. Scira Offshore Energy Ltd. is the legal entity.

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