Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy

ANNUAL REPORT 2026



• LESS CARBON, MORE WILDLIFE •



Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy

Celebrating a successful first year for WWCE's Solar for Silverwood School project

Image: Willmot Dixon (2024)



ANNUAL REPORT 2026



CONTENTS

Note from the Chair 4

Finance Report 8

Silverwood School 9

Community Fund 10

Delivering Awards 12

Land Management 16

Lower Moor Farm 17

Carbon Reduction 18



Our board met at Lower Moor Farm in May

Page 17

NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

It is my pleasure to introduce the 2026 Annual Report from Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy.

Looking back over the past year, I'm enormously proud of what we have achieved. Our mission has always been to do more than simply generate renewable energy; it has been to promote wildlife, cut carbon and create lasting benefits for our communities and the wider natural environment. This report is proof of the ways we continue to deliver on those ambitions, thanks to the dedication of our hundreds of members, our committed board and our experienced staff.

One of the highlights has been marking the first full year of operation for our newest rooftop solar array at Silverwood School. Seeing this project through from fundraising to delivering clean, renewable electricity for hundreds of students with special educational needs, while simultaneously generating an income to support the creation of their own environmental initiatives has been a significant milestone. As a keen beekeeper myself, I know the hive scheme devised by the school has the potential to provide a wonderful opportunity to improve the biodiversity of the local area, as well as enhancing their learning.

One of our core aims is to support our community by helping them save on energy bills whilst also reducing carbon. Therefore supporting vulnerable people through challenging times is still a key part of our work. Our Keeping Warm This Winter initiative once again made a hugely positive impact in the 2025/26 season, providing information and practical support to 460 people across the county. As energy costs continue to affect many households and another winter looms large, the importance of initiatives like this cannot be overstated. The positive feedback we have received is a reminder that community energy is about people as much as it is about power.

In the furtherance of our promotion of nature, encouraging progress has also been made with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust's (WWT) Lower Moor Farm project, supported by WWCE's most generous single grant to date. While there is still much work ahead, board members were impressed by the advances that had been made when we visited the reserve earlier this year. As with any complex restoration programme, there is a lot to do behind the scenes to get this scheme off the ground, and we look forward to seeing things take off as we move into its second year.

£50K

COMMITTED TO OUR COMMUNITY FUND



"Community Energy is about people as much as it is about power."



Julian Barlow, Chair of Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy being interviewed for ITV news' *'Action on Energy'* series, helping to shine a light on the role local communities can play in building a more sustainable future.



£1.2M

IN CASH, FORECASTED TO BE AVAILABLE FOR INVESTMENT INTO LARGER NATURE & CARBON REDUCTION PROJECTS BY THE CLOSE OF 2026

WWCE is now in a very different position from being loss-making when I became chair five years ago. We have around £1.2m in cash reserves, kept members' interest at the maximum 7% for a third year, and boosted community gifting. Success through solar.

WWCE is now in a very different position to being loss-making when I became chair five years ago. We now have around £1.2 million in cash reserves, have kept members' interest to the maximum 7% for a third year, and have boosted community gifting. That is success through solar. Careful stewardship of our resources, alongside the solid performance of our renewable energy assets means we have been able to continue supporting a multitude of projects that deliver both environmental and social value. This financial resilience gives us confidence as we look ahead and has spurred us on to create CASS, our capital allocation sub-group from our board, to appropriately steward funds.

This strategic outreach will run in tandem to our Community Fund, which remains one of the most inspiring aspects of our offering. It's incredibly rewarding to see such a broad range of projects benefiting from these grants, and the Fund's reach only continues to grow, as does its funding. This year alone we welcomed a new panel member to work under long-established chair, Jon Bateman, and have been able to help numerous organisations across Wiltshire deliver projects that improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and create wildlife-friendly spaces for people and pollinators to enjoy. It is a powerful demonstration of how the income generated through community-owned renewable energy can be reinvested to the advantage of local people and places.

Of course, none of these achievements would have been possible without the commitment of our members, board and partner organisations. Their continued support, expertise and enthusiasm are what make Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy such a successful and distinctive organisation and I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank all of you for being with us. I particularly want to acknowledge the work of my fellow directors, including the excellent Tim Gilson, who this year joined Sylvia Wyatt as one of the two Wiltshire Wildlife Trust delegated board members.

Looking to the future, we remain just as ambitious. There will undoubtedly be challenges, but there are also significant opportunities to expand renewable energy generation in Wiltshire, tackle fuel poverty, support nature recovery and ultimately strengthen our communities. Together, we are proving that community energy can deliver meaningful, lasting change and I hope we begin to see that

Julian Barlow MA, Chair of Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE BOARD

All of the directors at WWCE work entirely pro-bono and it is with great thanks that we would like to recognise their outstanding and continuing contribution:

JULIAN BARLOW
Chair

JONATHAN BATEMAN
Community Fund Committee Lead

ROB GILLIES
Land Management Lead

TIM GILSON
Non-Executive Director and WWT Trustee

DAVID LEWIN
Finance Lead

LUCY NORMINGTON
Non-Executive Director and Community Fund Panellist

SYLVIA WYATT
Non-Executive Director and WWT Trustee



FINANCIAL REPORTING

WWCE is pleased to report good financial performance, for the year ending 31st March, 2026 for the group which is now in its tenth full year of operation.

For the year ending 31st March 2026:

- **The combined group revenue of £1,809k** (2025: £1,806k) is a 0.1% increase on last year.
- **Cost of sales decreased by £11k to £15k**
- **Administrative costs are 6.7% up at £712k** (2025: £667k).
- **The profit before tax of £755k** (2025: £768k) is a decrease of £13k on the prior year.
- **Interest charges across the group at £333k** (2025: £348k), are 4.3% down due to reducing capital balances.

The average value of electricity sold to the grid by Braydon, Chelworth and Silverwood in the 2025/26 financial year was c.£180/MWh versus £255/MWh achieved on average across the group in the previous year. Power prices have now fallen back closer to expected long term averages of c.£80/MWh. The exceptional prices achieved through 2024 to 2026 have created a windfall for WWCE and the long term business plan remains strong.

With continued strong financial performance, the group's focus strongly remains on its mission of 'less carbon, more wildlife' through contributions to the Community Fund and driving new suitably aligned initiatives. These contributions and new initiatives allow the positive financial performance of the group to be felt in the wider community, benefiting people and nature alike. Alongside this we hope to maintain the 7% interest payment to members going forwards.



MAXIMUM RETURN FOR INVESTORS MAINTAINED
(FOR 3 YEARS RUNNING)



SILVERWOOD SCHOOL

TECHNICAL PERFORMANCE

In the period covering 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026, Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy's pioneering rooftop array at Silverwood School's Rowde campus generated 432.36 MWh of clean green energy. Of that, 148.30 MWh was directly supplied to and used by Silverwood School to power everything from lightbulbs and laptops to its swimming pool and sensory spaces.

Technically, the array performed as expected and overall generation over the same period came in just below initial projections by around 1%. The recorded irradiance across the period was 1,175.45 kWh/m2, that's almost 9% above projections. A solid start for Silverwood.

SILVERWOOD COMMUNITY FUND

As well as benefitting from its renewable rooftop, Silverwood School also has access to a ring-fenced Community Fund of £5,000 per year which is designed to help it deliver its own wildlife and environmental initiatives.

With its first grant now in place, the outdoor learning team at Silverwood has been busy developing plans for its inaugural project and we are delighted to hear that they're hoping to create a new bee colony across at least five top bar hives at its Rowde site.

The ambitious project will improve local biodiversity and engage some of the school's 500 students in a hands-on enterprise scheme. Once in place, the hives will help to increase the population of local pollinators, benefiting local arable, agricultural and domestic biodiversity as well as delivering social, educative and wellbeing benefits for students. It is hoped that the human impact will extend beyond the campus gates, with pupils from other local mainstream schools also invited to get involved.

Initially, the team hopes to establish the hives and build a self-sustaining colony that will become naturally resilient and healthy. Staff will be trained in beekeeping and will work with local apiarists and societies as the project develops. It is hoped that in the following years, sustainable amounts of jelly, honey and wax will be harvested – with students becoming instrumental in the development and maintenance of the hives. We think this scheme is the bee's knees!

432.36 MWH

OF CLEAN GREEN ENERGY GENERATED IN ONE YEAR!

COMMUNITY FUND

Over the past three years, WWCE's board has delivered a fourfold increase in the annual donation it makes to its Community Fund. This considerable boost was deemed necessary in response to an uplift in applications and allowed us to significantly extend the Fund's reach. WWCE's total donation to its Community Fund has now topped £220,000, further bolstered by the generosity of members who have chosen to donate their interest payments back to the Fund.

As a result, in the 2025/26 year we have been able to commit to making a whopping 14 awards that will support a range of community projects which align with our goals of reducing carbon emissions or encouraging wildlife.



Equinox Explorer Scouts previously benefitted from a Community Fund grant

Projects 2025/2026

This year we are supporting:

- **Wiltshire West District Scout Association** - funding for a solar powered lighting system and battery storage
- **Friends of Monkton Park School –** a sizeable contribution to the provision of solar panels and battery storage for this primary school
- **People of Dauntsey Academy Primary School –** contribution towards a pond dipping platform, outdoor seating area and improved accessibility
- **Bishops Canning Village Hall** – grant for rainwater management in the local community wildlife garden

WWCE HAS NOW DONATED

£220K

IN TOTAL TO ITS COMMUNITY FUND



- **GUL (Shrewton)** – funding to support new solar panels and associated battery storage
- **Derry Hill United Football Club** – solar energy generation, heating and lighting at pitches to extend youth sports facilities
- **Warminster Community Orchard** – small grant to fund a battery powered strimmer to create a habitat mosaic
- **Corsley War Memorial Playing Field** – support for 'The Knowledge Trees' project and ongoing maintenance of a community orchard
- **Ogbourne St. George Village Hall** – funding to replace single glazed windows and install LED lighting to improve energy efficiency
- **Rise:61** – small grant to provide shrubs and trees to liven up a community garden
- **Afghanistan & Central Asian Association** – energy awareness and action to empower fuel poor communities in Salisbury
- **Washpool Area Restoration Project (WARP)** – funding for the creation of a wildflower space
- **The Mind Tree Café** – provision of a grant to enable the installation of solar panels and a battery storage system
- **Salisbury Transition City** – repeat sponsorship of 'People in the Park' sustainability event

DELIVERING AWARDS

Before approving any applications, the panel carefully consider proposals against its scoring matrix and review plans in person during regular meetings. This year, that panel has evolved, with founding member Emma Sambrook retiring from her position and Richard Death, Warden of the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust's Devenish Reserve, joining the fold.

Emma's expertise and generosity made a huge contribution to establishing the Community Fund and we were disappointed to see her step down; however, Richard brings with him his own skillset and extends our reach into the south of the county. He has already begun linking in with a variety of projects and we are delighted to have him on board.

It is always a joy to see how projects develop, from receipt of the initial application form all the way through to delivery and beyond. Each project brings its own benefits for local communities in Wiltshire, and a defining feature of the Community Fund has been the way in which we encourage similar projects to connect and share learning. This has been particularly successful for cycle groups like Cycle Chippenham and Royal Wootton Bassett Environmental Trust, who have been able to learn from one another to expedite the process of developing and installing active travel paths.

We very much look forward to seeing the results of this year's fabulous projects as they come to fruition.

EMMA SAMBROOK IS LEAVING THE COMMUNITY FUND PANEL AFTER 10 YEARS





THROUGH THE COMMUNITY FUND, CYCLE CHIPPENHAM HAS LINKED UP WITH SIMILAR LOCAL GROUPS TO SHARE KNOWLEDGE

£4,700

AWARDED TO:
DERRY HILL UNITED FC
STATUS: COMPLETE

£5,000

AWARDED TO:
FRIENDS OF MONKTON PARK SCHOOL
STATUS: IN PROGRESS

£1,800

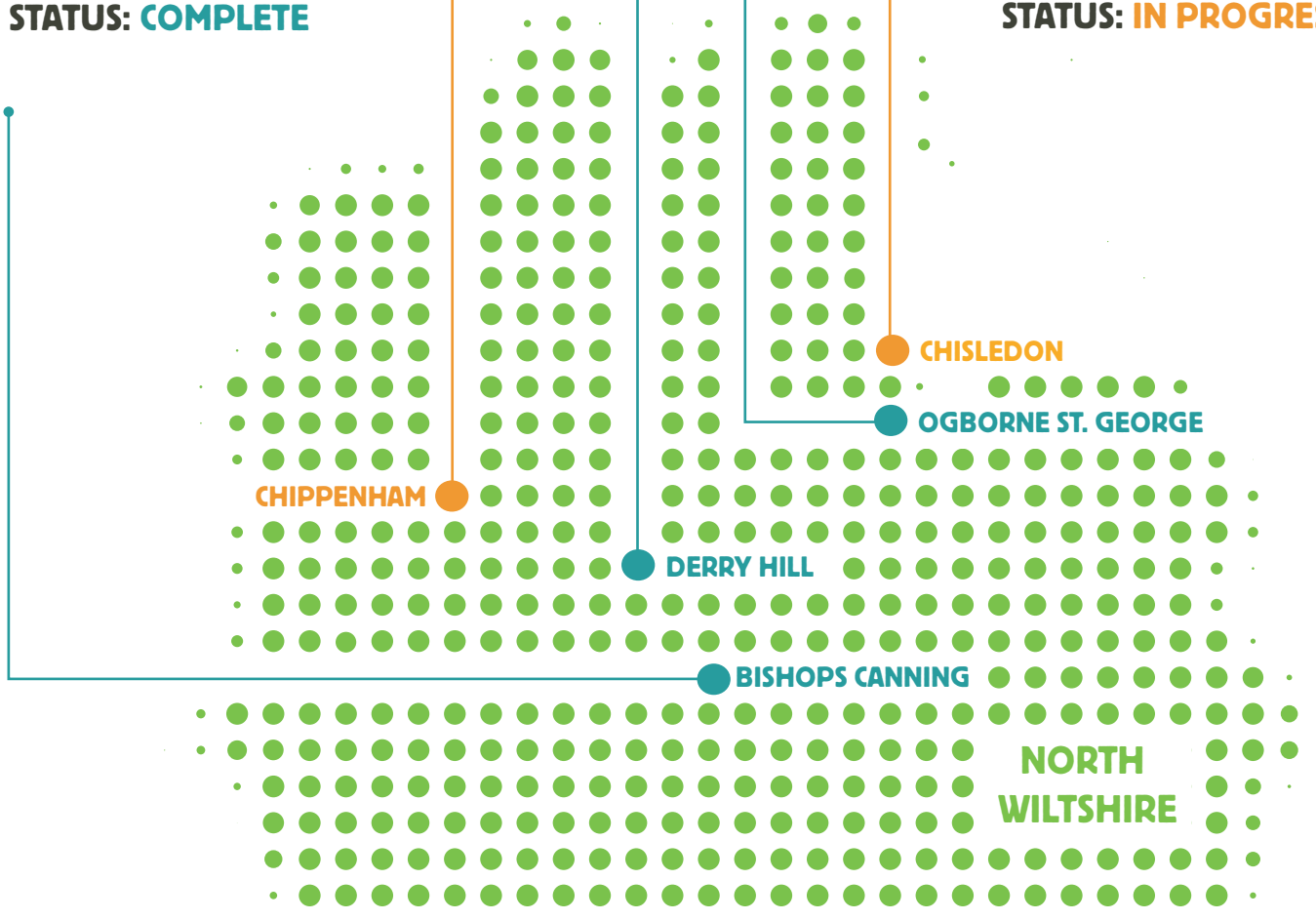
AWARDED TO:
OGBOURNE ST. GEORGE VILLAGE HALL
STATUS: COMPLETE

£3,904

AWARDED TO:
BISHOPS CANNING VILLAGE HALL
STATUS: COMPLETE

£400

AWARDED TO:
WASHPOOL AREA RESTORATION PROJECT (WARP)
STATUS: IN PROGRESS





WARMINSTER

SOUTH WILTSHIRE

SALISBURY

£545

AWARDED TO:
WARMINSTER COMMUNITY ORCHARD
STATUS: COMPLETE

£5,000

AWARDED TO:
AFGHANISTAN & CENTRAL ASIAN ASSOC.
STATUS: IN PROGRESS

£1,000

AWARDED TO:
SALISBURY TRANSITION CITY
STATUS: COMPLETE

£500

AWARDED TO:
RISE:61
STATUS: COMPLETE



£5,000

AWARDED TO:
THE MIND TREE CAFE
STATUS: IN PROGRESS

£2,620

AWARDED TO:
WILTS WEST DISTRICT SCOUT ASSOC.
STATUS: COMPLETE

£4,800

AWARDED TO:
PEOPLE OF DAUNTSEY ACADEMY PRIMARY SCHOOL
STATUS: COMPLETE

ROWDE
WEST ASHTON
WEST LAVINGTON
CORSLEY
MID-WILTSHIRE
SHREWTON



£3,000

AWARDED TO:
CORSLEY WAR MEMORIAL PLAYING FIELD
STATUS: IN PROGRESS

£5,000

AWARDED TO:
GUL (SHREWTON)
STATUS: IN PROGRESS



LAND MANAGEMENT

We have long advocated for the fact that solar parks can deliver significant biodiversity benefits when managed with nature in mind, and over the course of this year we have seen the publication of an increasing number of academic studies which come to the very same conclusion.

Having contributed to this field of study ourselves, WWCE remains fully committed to playing its part in helping biodiversity to thrive on our solar parks.

CHELWORTH

At Chelworth, we have continued to work with the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust to create favourable conditions for plants, insects, birdlife and mammals. While 2025 brought with it some challenging weather conditions - a wet winter followed by a very dry and hot spring and summer - minimal grass growth (for the second year in a row) had a positive effect on the proliferation of some of the finer herbs we are trying to encourage. Probably the best of these is Pepper Saxifrage, a good indicator of unimproved grassland. In 2016, Pepper Saxifrage was found in 5% of the areas sampled. By 2026 this had doubled to 10%.

Last winter, we planted new hedging in a bid to replace that which had been lost due to redevelopment on neighbouring land. No fewer than 150 native hedging plants were planted along the southern and western pond area boundary, with a predominance of Blackthorn that we hope will provide favourable habitat for Brown Hairstreak egg laying.

BRAYDON

At our Braydon site, wildflower seed sowing using seed sourced from WWT's Avis Meadows reserve has been undertaken, with further maintenance planned to support their establishment. Our species monitoring report from Wychwood Ecology showed some promising results, with significant pollinator numbers across the site in both the margins and interior of the solar array. We were delighted to find that several endangered and at-risk bird species were also observed, including Skylarks and Little and Brown Owls. A brilliant year for biodiversity across the board.



Pictures: Wildflower seed sowing (above) and Marbled White butterfly* (right) – at Braydon. *By Wychwood Ecology 2026



WWCE Board: Hands on at Lower Moor Farm. Our dedicated board members assess progress so far and discuss future measures to improve the site

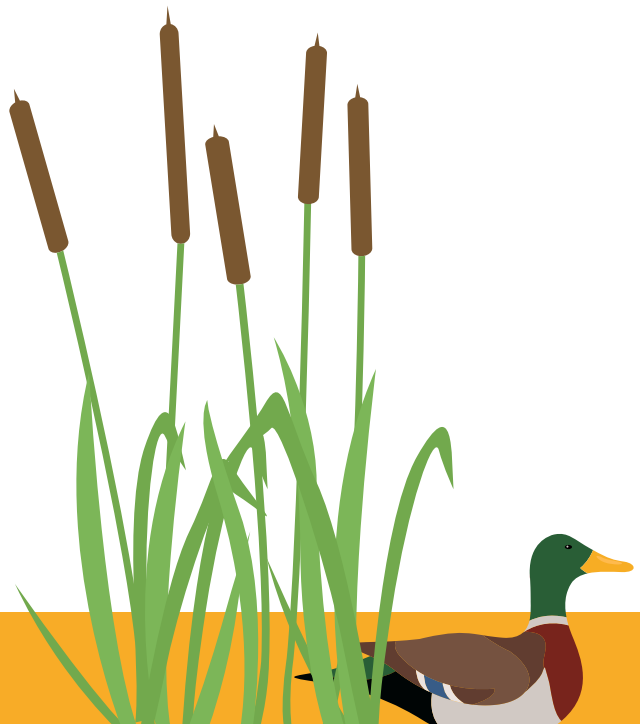
Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

£100K PARTNERSHIP YEAR 1

LOWER MOOR FARM

Last year, WWCE announced that it had agreed a first of its kind grant of £100,000 to the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, to be split over two years. This significant donation is part-funding transformational biodiversity and nature restoration enhancements on over 48-hectares of the Trust's 129-hectare Lower Moor Farm nature reserve.

During the first year of the scheme, we're pleased to share that the Trust has made good progress, with environmental reports evidencing good opportunities for interventions such as fixing leaky dams and ditch filling, which will significantly improve the habitat quality and climate resilience of the meadows to the west of the site. Work on these interventions is planned to start this autumn, while planning is also well underway for the building of a new bird hide and access footpath.



CARBON REDUCTION CHAMPION

WE'VE REACHED

1400+ PEOPLE

SINCE WE BEGAN IN DEC. '22

During the 2025/26 year, our Carbon Reduction Champion continued to raise awareness of Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy and its wide-ranging community benefits.

Jessica Thimbleby represented WWCE at events across the county, promoting the Community Fund and developing links with organisations who share its aims, including the likes of the Wiltshire & Swindon Community Foundation, Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire College & University Centre, while continuing to work closely with our partners at the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust.

We were also pleased to be able to facilitate the return of our Keeping Warm This Winter project for a fourth year, helping vulnerable and low-income households in Wiltshire and Swindon to cut carbon and reduce their energy costs. Designed to raise awareness and provide face-to-face, practical energy efficiency information to householders who need it most, this community-based project had its most successful year yet.

Delivering on WWCE's commitment to reduce carbon emissions and generate local benefits, this winter the project reached an impressive 460 people during 17 events.

Partnering with the Diocese of Bristol and other faith groups, such as Gorse Hill Baptist Church and the Pattern Church, as well as Swindon Borough Council, the project reached the heart of some of Wiltshire's most vulnerable communities. We were also pleased to welcome representatives from Wiltshire Wildlife Trust who joined us in running a number of practical draught excluder workshops.

For the first time, more conversations were had with working age people than pensioners (62% and 38% respectively). WWCE room thermometer cards and LED light bulbs were once again distributed during each session, with the most common topics of interest being efficient use of heating and hot water systems, draught-proofing and reducing damp, condensation and mould.

Learnings from the project have also proved valuable to external audiences, with Jessica presenting a summary of the scheme and its output to an audience at the 2025 Wiltshire Climate Summit.



90+ PEOPLE TOOK ENERGY EFFICIENCY ACTION

AFTER SPEAKING TO US THIS WINTER





KEEPING WARM INITIATIVE
St Andrews Chippenham
Coffee morning

THANK YOU...

Everyone seemed really impressed with the range of solutions on offer.... It was very interesting to present the session in different formats to different church audiences... Thank you for this brilliant opportunity to engage for carbon reduction

■ **Belinda Martin** - Environment and Sustainability Parish Officer, Diocese of Bristol

[It] was very helpful. Everyone enjoyed the time you spent with us and learnt a lot. They talked about putting things they learnt into place.... The information was clear and there were good resources to help people. Thank you

■ **Julie –** St John's Parks & Walcot, Swindon

Our families really appreciate being able to speak to people directly for advice instead of using online tools and phone calls. Anything that can help and support them is a blessing to our service...Really appreciate you giving the time to engage with our families

■ **Gill -** Growbaby, Pattern Church, Swindon

back //BACK TO TOP

Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy

©2026. WWCE Annual Report
Edited by Samantha Moore. Design by Rae Shirley

▪ LESS CARBON, MORE WILDLIFE ▪