

A Community Fund, administered by carbon reduction charity Nottingham Energy Partnership, supporting Nottinghamshire communities and voluntary groups to take initiatives in the reduction of carbon emissions, promotion of sustainable lifestyles and the adoption of renewable technologies.



Improvement required:
Solar powered lighting in strawbale building



Grant awarded:
£2,000

Ecworks - Background

Established for 25 years, Ecworks is a small but dynamic community organisation based on St Anns Allotments, providing environmental activities to help enrich the health and well being of local communities.

In particular, they work with a range of disadvantaged and socially excluded participants, including those experiencing mental health issues, young people, long-term unemployed, refugees and asylum seekers, and those living in the most deprived areas of Nottingham city.

Their large strawbale building provides a hub for many of their activities including 'Dig and Dinner', 'Light Bulb Studio' and basket weaving.

Spanning over ten large allotment plots Ecworks is also home to a poly tunnel, Victorian outbuildings, a glass house, mature orchard, willow arches and willow growing, raised growing areas, wildlife habitats, outdoor eco-compost toilet with green roof, lawns and view points, and pathways and trails.

It is a green escape high above the city - everyone is welcome at Ecworks.





The Project

Ecoworks are always keen to make the most of what they have - and this is very much the case for their strawbale building, and in particular their kitchen. In winter it has always been difficult, as in the afternoons the natural light passes to the other end of the building and the kitchen gets too dark to use safely and easily. This means their usual activities are cut short, impacting on productivity and limiting the time they have with their participants.

When they heard about the NCE fund and how it could fund renewable technology they set to work on applying for an off-grid lighting system that would extend the utility of the building. They decided solar powered LED lighting paired with battery storage (so they can use the stored solar energy once it's dark) would be ideal.

What benefits does the new technology bring?

It extends the organisation's time in the building, and increases the comfort and involvement for many of their participants.

“ Let's hear from Ecoworks

We've had one winter with our solar powered lights, and they have made a huge difference. We've spent more time in the kitchen, producing more jams and jellies. More importantly, our regular sessions are no longer restricted by the dark in winter.

We also really like talking to our participants about the lights and the technology behind them - because it is such a simple system, it makes renewable technology more real and easy to understand, and they can see the benefits for themselves.

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Solar panel on strawbale building 'green' roof



Solar powered LED lights



Solar powered LED lights



Could your organisation be eligible for a Nottinghamshire Community Energy (NCE) grant?

What's the aim of NCE?

To encourage and support local communities and voluntary groups within Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to take initiatives and to establish projects in the reduction of carbon emissions, promotion of sustainable lifestyles and responsible use of finite resources.

Who is eligible?

Applications are invited from registered charities, schools, not for profit organisations and community benefit societies. Individuals, companies and councils are not eligible.

What projects are NCE looking to fund?

Initiatives and projects that mitigate climate change through:

- **the direct application of**
 - a) renewable technology
 - b) energy efficiency technologies
- **a reduction in the use of fossil fuels through actions around transport and waste products**
- **reducing Fuel Poverty or encouraging wildlife conservation and sustainable living**

What grant amounts are available?

NCE issue grants of a minimum of £2,000 and a maximum of £10,000.

They have a pot of £20,000 per year, and look fondly on projects that are also willing to secure match funding.

Request an application form

To request an application form please email philip.angus@nottenergy.com.

Find out more or connect with Nottinghamshire Community Energy

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