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## Newsletter of the Wadebridge Renewable Energy Network

Promoting local renewable energy and supporting local people since 2011

March 2022

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## WREN Community Fund - for environmental and sustainability projects.

£19000 is available in 2022 available to support environmental and sustainability projects. Clean Earth Energy Ltd, who are based in Wadebridge, generously provide the money for the fund.

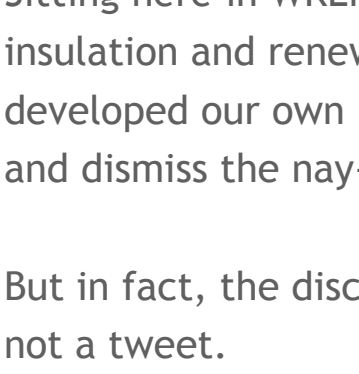
The fund is there to support environmental & sustainability projects, or projects that aim to inform and educate on environmental and sustainability issues. We have defined this as broadly as possible to include projects about energy, water, soil, river and ocean, biodiversity, pollution, transport, climate change, food, recycling, the natural environment, wildlife, rewilding .... etc

The fund is for not-for-profit (i.e. non-commercial) organisations and groups operating in the Padstow and Wadebridge Community Network area.

For an application form and further details visit [www.wren.uk.com/community/apply-to-the-fund](http://www.wren.uk.com/community/apply-to-the-fund) or email [communityfunds@wren.uk.com](mailto:communityfunds@wren.uk.com)

**The closing date for completed applications is 5pm Friday 27th May 2022.** Decisions on applications will be made by the end of June 2022.

## Gary Lineker and Net Zero



Some days ago, the former England International footballer and current sports presenter Gary Lineker tweeted something in support of achieving Net Zero carbon emissions. There was an immediate pile-on, which split into two groups. One group said, more or less, "Well said, Gary". The other said, "You're a rich man who can afford all this net zero stuff like heat pumps. Most of us can't."

Sitting here in WREN, which for over ten years has made the case for home insulation and renewable energy, facilitated take up in the Wadebridge area and developed our own 100kW solar PV array, it would be easy to "Like" Gary's tweet and dismiss the nay-sayers.

But in fact, the discussion has to be more nuanced than that, which is why this is not a tweet.

And why I say: "You are both right." Net zero is necessary and lots of people can't afford it.

The case for net zero is unarguable, agreed internationally at COP26 in Glasgow. So support for net zero has to be right. But those people saying that they cannot afford to pay for heat pumps, electric cars and other low carbon measures have an argument that cannot be ignored either. Not to mention those in rented accommodation reliant on landlords to take action.

There are four million people in fuel poverty in the UK. With the coming increases in electricity and gas prices, that number is expected to rise to over six million (ref <https://www.nea.org.uk/energy-crisis/>). Correspondingly more will move closer to the edge, where the higher costs are affordable - just - but there is no excess cash for a heat pump.

There are a couple of factors at play here. The first is that the narrative over the last few years has been largely about personal responsibility. Yes, the Government has introduced 'green' schemes (underfunded, over-bureaucratic and too short in timescale), but it has always been the individual's responsibility to get something done within whichever scheme it happened to be.

The second is the time frame for reaching net zero. It will take time to get there; the target date is 2050. Not everyone has to buy a heat pump or an electric car right now. We just all need to have done it by 2050. The longer we do little or nothing, the more like falling off a cliff the transition will be.

So we need the Gary Linekers and those of us who can afford it to start making the transition now, catching up with our net zero heroes who have already moved quite some way along the path (see later in this newsletter).

Where does that leave those of us who cannot afford it now? Is there any reason to think that they will be able to afford it by 2050? Costs will likely come down. We saw it with solar PV panels and are now seeing it with electric cars. But that won't necessarily, or even probably, make them easily affordable for everyone.

This is where we return to the first factor, the individual responsibility bias. There is no intrinsic reason why net zero has to be an individual responsibility; it is a political choice. Some things are structural and are best done at a national level. I think back to the 1960s and 70s, when town gas was replaced by natural gas. Gas appliances in homes had to be modified for the new gas and it was just done, over a period of ten years (1967-77) with no explicit charge to the household.

Since there seems to be no sign of this Government doing anything similar for net zero, what else can we do?

WREN's Net Zero Community project (NZCom) is aimed at finding something else. The project's subtitle is 'Leaving no one behind' because we recognise the need to bring those on or near the edge of fuel poverty along with us in the transition. If we do nothing, then everyone who hasn't been able to install a heat pump will, eventually, find their gas heating stopping, and their only option will be cheap electric heaters. Cheap to buy, that is, not cheap to run. An electric fire could cost 4 - 6 times as much as a heat pump to run for the same heat output. As in many areas of life, the well-off can afford things that save them money in the long run; the poor cannot.

In NZCom, we are stressing the 'community' aspect. What can we as a community in the Wadebridge and Padstow area do to help everyone make the transition to net zero, over time.

We are looking at future scenarios for energy, how we can track and account for carbon dioxide emissions, what technical solutions there might be, and how we can make a viable business model for community energy that achieves net zero whilst leaving no one behind.

It won't help people with the energy cost pain right now, but it will move us towards a future where we are not reliant on fossil fuels and their wildly fluctuating prices and their origins in unreliable countries.

It turns out that low cost energy, secure energy supply and reaching net zero emissions are all aspects of the same thing: renewable energy. Well actually, WREN and other renewable energy groups have been saying this for some time. It's taken the tragic war in Ukraine to bring it to the surface of mainstream discourse.

## Net Zero Heroes - 1

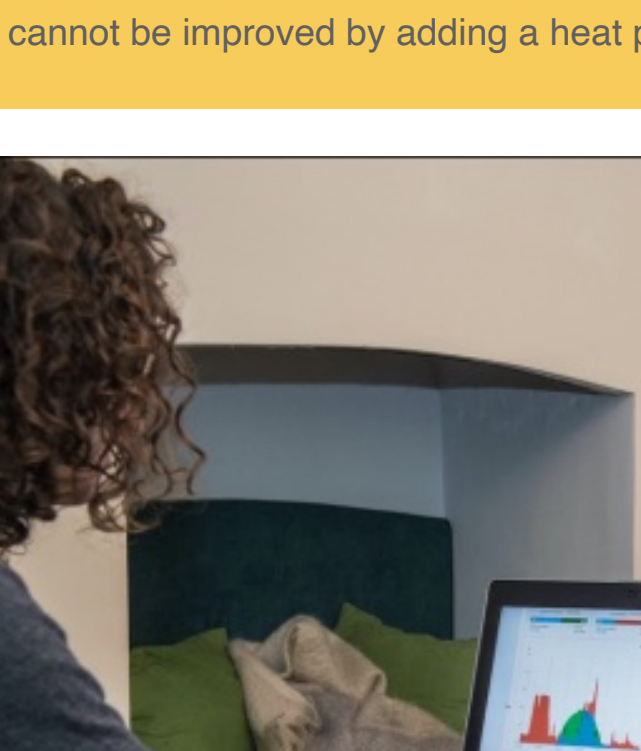
### Marcus & Kate

Marcus & Kate live in a standard Victorian terrace house in Wadebridge. Over the past two years they have made changes to both their home and their lifestyles to reduce their carbon emissions. We've nominated them as our first of 10 Net Zero heroes.

In addition to reducing their CO2 emissions, adding renewable technology has given them a warmer home and significantly reduced energy bills, although this was not Marcus and Kate's primary aim.

Their route to decarbonising their home (a standard Victorian terrace, we remind you) comprised:

- Rooftop Solar PV installed with an approximate cost of £5,000.
- Purchased a used electric car for £5,000, which paid for itself in just two years of use.
- Air source heat pump installed, including new pipes and radiators, for £15,000 – reduced to £8,000 by a Green Homes Grant and RHI deduction (though these grants are to be replaced by Boiler Upgrade Grant from 1st April 2022).
- Solar i-boost to divert surplus energy from the solar panels to the hot water tanks (included in the heat pump installation).

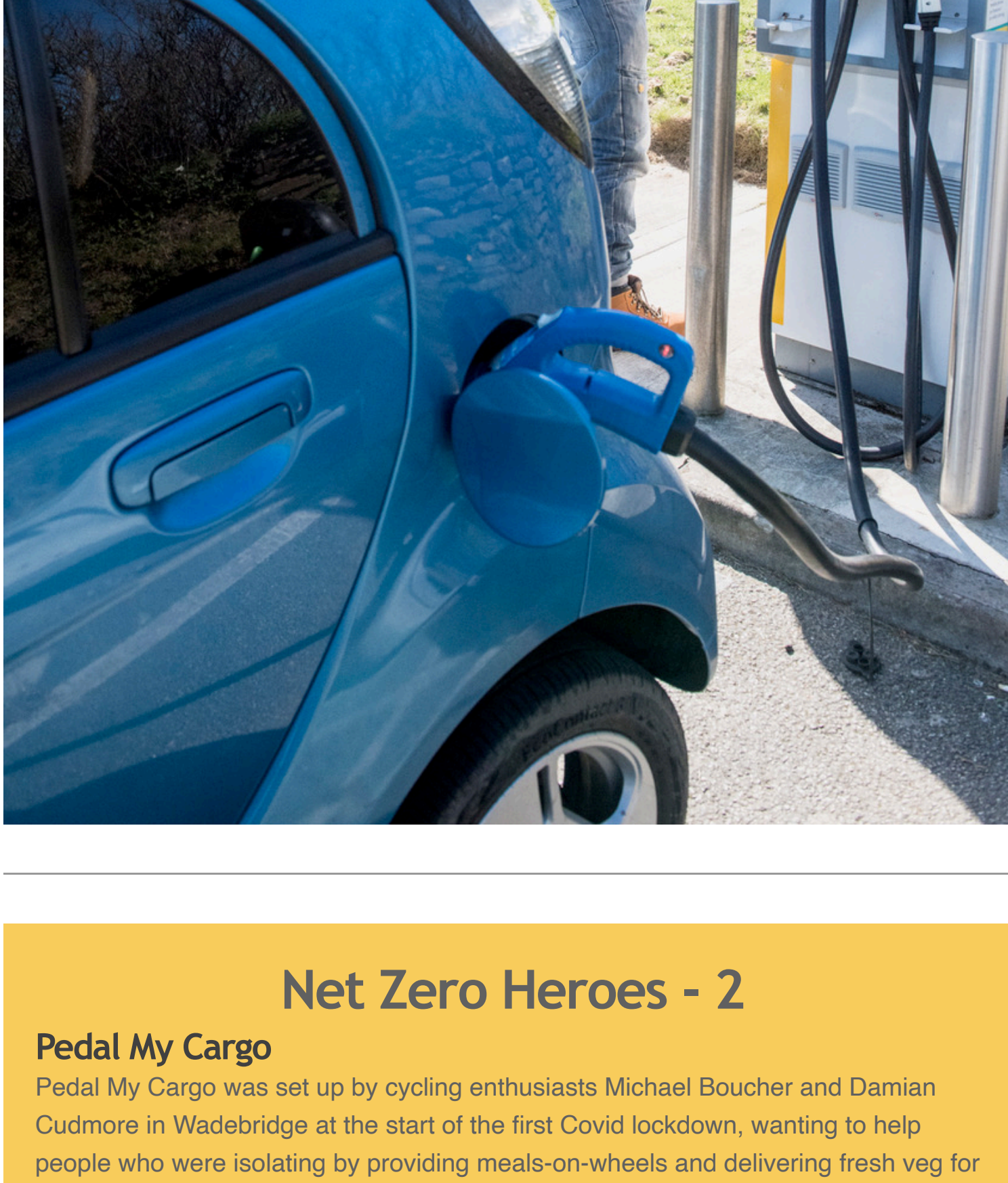


Marcus went on to say that solar panels were the best investment that he made: "Better than putting money into a saving account". He also used a heat loss camera to identify where he could make further insulation improvements. You can see clearly where two insulation panels were missing behind the plasterboard in the loft conversion completed prior to Marcus and Kate buying their house. These are not skylights!

Other lifestyle choices? "We try to buy locally produced food where possible. We use the train when travelling longer distances."

Any negatives? "When having a heat pump installed, be prepared for a fairly invasive process. It might be worth moving out for a couple of days!"

Any other words of encouragement? "Don't let anyone tell you that an older home cannot be improved by adding a heat pump."



## Net Zero Heroes - 2

### Pedal My Cargo

Pedal My Cargo was set up by cycling enthusiasts Michael Boucher and Damian Cudmore in Wadebridge at the start of the first Covid lockdown, wanting to help people who were isolating by providing meals-on-wheels and delivering fresh veg for Camel CSA. They did this on a part time basis initially, but quickly found their services in demand with other businesses in town for regular courier work.

They only ever saw themselves as providing a temporary community service, but have since recognised that there is potential to build Pedal My Cargo as a business. However, both have other jobs and have decided to keep Pedal my Cargo as a part time service for the time being.

Mike and Damian were already environmentally minded with Mike travelling by train or bicycle for most of his work and social journeys, recently investing in a new Dutch-style cargo ebike, and Damian enjoying the benefits of solar PV for almost 10 years. Damian's family has also become expert at composting their food waste, whilst with good recycling habits they have limited their non-recyclable waste to less than one black bin liner per fortnight.

Other lifestyle choices: Both are long term members of Wadebridge Coasters Cycling Club and as can be expected, cycle as often as they can get away with including low impact cycle holidays to France via ferry crossing, leaving the car at home.

Words of encouragement  
Both of them said that they would like to see more people travelling by bike and leaving the car at home.  
Damian also said:  
"Get into a good recycling habit but also consider carefully the products you purchase in the first place."

"Look at the easy stuff first. We have a south facing roof so it was blindingly obvious that we should put solar PV on it".

"We also have large water butts collecting rain water which we use to water the garden and wash our bikes".



## Exhibiting at Royal Cornwall Show 9th-11th June

WREN is excited to announce that we'll be exhibiting at this year's Royal Cornwall Show! We will be showcasing our Net Zero Community project and highlighting ways for you to get involved.

If you have any queries relating to renewables, energy bills, electric vehicles, low carbon technologies, Government help, or you have questions on how to transition your home, business or lifestyle to a net zero carbon future, we'll be pleased to talk to you. Come and find us on the Wadebridge Chamber of Commerce "Wadebridge Street".

We'll also have a schedule of presentations, films and discussions from leading experts, experienced renewables installers and trusted project partners from the WREN Net Zero Community team running throughout the 3 days. More details to follow.

All our focus is on the Wadebridge & Padstow community network area and creating a picture of what a net zero low carbon community looks like to you. Let us know what you think the future should look like.

## In The News

Is it cheaper to have a bath or a shower? Your energy questions answered (The Guardian)

Let's start with an article about saving energy. It gives answers in terms of both cost and kWh usage, so you can decide which factor is most important to you, e.g. when gas uses more kWh but costs less because of a much lower unit price. [Click here.](#)

A day in the life  
What will the electricity supply look like in 2035? A National Grid and Regen report uses an example of a cold winter's day with little sun or wind, the nightmare scenario for renewables, to show how it could work. [Click here.](#)

Why does the price of gas drive electricity prices, including renewables? (Good Energy)

This is a question you might well have been asking yourself if you have a renewable electricity supplier, but your prices are still going up. The UK electricity market is even more complicated, counter-intuitive and (some might say) dysfunctional than you might have imagined. [Click here.](#)

How the UK can cut carbon emissions and reduce household energy bills (The Guardian) [Click here.](#)

Green energy measures saving households £1,000 a year - analysis (The Guardian) [Click here.](#)

Electric car prices could be about to plummet - here's why (Sky News) [Click here.](#)

## Help Wanted

Got a smart meter? Want to help a parallel project to NZCom? Here's how you can.

If you have a Smart Meter, you may be able to contribute to a project that could make a real impact to your community and the Net Zero transition. Our partners, Western Power Distribution and Frazer-Nash, are keen to obtain permission to access a sample set of smart meter data. They are exploring whether smart meter data can be used to identify energy customers who may require and be eligible for additional support from their local Distribution Network Operator.

To take part you would simply need to provide permission to access your Smart Meter data and provide responses to several simple questions about your household in the survey attached. They are particularly interested in receiving data from households that might be struggling with bills, or are over 65, or are living with some form of disability, but anyone who has a modern smart meter is invited to join in.

If you or friends and family would be interested in getting involved please fill in the simple form on [this link](#).

You will only need your MPAN number which can be found on your bill and on your meter.

