



GM #CLEANSPIRATION

SHOWCASING CLEAN ENERGY LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION
IN GREATER MANCHESTER

Oldham Community Power

What is it?

A community-owned project in Oldham that generates clean energy by putting solar panels¹ on schools and other local buildings. So far, they've installed solar systems on five schools across the borough, as well as a hub for community networking. Much of the money to fund the project has been raised by selling shares to local residents.

What are its clean credentials?

The first phase of the project installed 220 kilowatts² (kW) of generating capacity at six sites, making Oldham Community Power the largest community energy organisation in Greater Manchester. Operational for just over a year, the panels have generated over 150 MWh of clean electricity, which in terms of greenhouse gases is about the same as taking 32 cars off the road for a year.

What makes it special?

Clean energy education

Because the majority of the solar panels have been installed on schools, the project is an opportunity to educate and inspire pupils about clean energy. Members of the Oldham Community Power team visit the schools to give talks on renewable energy and the need to move away from fossil fuels.

Local authority support

Installing solar panels at six sites required considerable capital investment. At the same time, changes to government subsidies for renewable energy meant the project needed to be completed to a tight timetable to remain viable. Oldham Council ensured the scheme could go ahead by providing a bridging loan. A second share offer is now underway to repay the loan, so if you like the idea of investing in community renewables, get in touch using the details below.

How can I find out more?

Visit: www.oldhamcommunitypower.org.uk

Email: info@oldhamcommunitypower.org.uk

- ¹ 'Solar power' is sometimes used to refer to systems that heat water for use in homes (known as 'solar thermal' systems), and sometimes to refer to systems that convert light energy into electricity (known as 'photovoltaic' systems, or PV). In this document, we're referring to PV systems throughout.
- ² Watts (W), kilowatts (kW) and megawatts (MW) are units of 'power'. Power describes the energy a solar panel can produce per second, just as the *speed* of a car describes the *distance* that the car will travel per second. A kilowatt-hour (kWh), on the other hand, is a measure of the energy actually generated over time. We know that a car travelling at 60 miles per hour will travel 60 miles in an hour. In the same way, a 220kW solar plant will generate 220kWh of energy in an hour (assuming the sun's shining). In reality, the power of a solar panel varies depending on how much sunlight it receives. If a 220kW plant operates at 220kW for an hour and 110kW for an hour, it will generate 330 kWh of electricity.

About this series

The GM Cleanspiration series is produced for the GMCA by the Greater Manchester Big Clean Switch campaign, which helps residents save money by switching to clean electricity. To find out more, or to compare clean energy prices for your home, visit www.bigcleanswitch.org/gm.



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