Following my article in January, I was delighted to hear from many of you and it was great to have the chance to connect and explore further at the recent Neighbourhood plan open events in March.

**Recap:**

As a reminder and for anyone who missed January’s article, we have mobilised a project team of Nassington residents to explore **cleaner, more financially predictable and secure options** for our heat and power.  We are still at early stages, exploring what may be possible. The idea is to mobilise a collective response, that includes and benefits everyone in the village regardless of income or house type, removing the barriers that prevent individual homes from making a change. This could include, and we will explore the feasibility of, a renewable power source for the village powering a community heating network, enabling us to remove and reduce our dependence on oil, gas and expensive unpredictable energy costs.

**Update:**

It has been a busy and productive couple of months. Key highlights have included:

1. **A treasure trove of talent and passion on our doorstep!** I have been blown away by the enthusiasm, talent and energy of our fellow Nassington residents. Our newly named, ‘NEAT’ (Nassington Energy and Thermal) project team is now 10 strong with diverse and highly relevant skillsets in fields such as renewables, energy transition, circular economy battery technologies, construction, with specialism in ground works and flood defences, finance, project management, business administration and engineering from every discipline!

1. **Visit to Swaffham Prior**. Four of the team visited the village of Swaffham Prior in Cambridgeshire, which is the UK’s first village to develop a rural heat network. This was a great chance to see their solution in real life, speak to residents and meet one of their project founders. We left with a renewed sense of purpose and plenty of photos, ideas and lessons learned.

1. **Applying for a Community Energy Fund (CEF) Grant**. We are currently working towards a funding application to run a feasibility study and do more formal community engagement. This has involved lots of learning, conversations with the Greater South East Net Zero Hub and other villages. The Parish Council discussed at the March meeting and decided to form a Committee to oversee this stage of the project.  We are delighted that three members of the Parish Council are directly involved in the project team.

**What’s next?**

Looking ahead, our short term focus will be on the CEF grant application, deciding which partners we want to work with and managing the feasibility study. The next stage will also involve lots more community engagement and communication, so keep an eye out for updates.

This will be a long-term project for the long-term benefit of our community.

**Learn more and get involved:**

We are still very much open for new volunteers, so please don’t hesitate to be in touch if you would like to learn more.

To be successful, we will need a team effort and diverse skills and involvement. There are still lots of skills we need – from community engagement, communications, website, engaging with the local council and many more. Above all, we will need curiosity, passion and persistence, and the support and involvement of the whole village. So, whether you are an expert or novice, excited or sceptical, whether you have lots of time or very little, we would love to hear from you.

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