

Article from the front page of the Darlington & Stockton Times on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2013.

# Village's green power helps raise cash for good causes

A COMMUNITY project developed and run by residents of a Darlington village to generate solar power has proved a success, with local good causes benefiting from the profits.

The village of Sadberge has one of the highest concentrations of private houses with the energy-generating panels in the country, thanks to Sadberge Renewable Energy.

The company was founded in 2011 as part of the village's commitment to tackling climate change and led to the bulk purchase of solar panel systems to encourage residents to get involved, paid for by investors and loans. The income from the electricity generated

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by the scheme is passed on to shareholders but, due to the company's community roots, part of any profits must be ploughed back into local projects.

Despite a wet summer reducing the hours of sunshine, the company made a profit in its first full year of trading and company directors voted unanimously to donate £1,000, or 15 per cent, to village causes.

Among the donations is £500 to Sadberge Village Hall to fund the installation of secondary double glazing

in some of its windows, while the Locos-in-Motion Border Morris group will receive £200 to pay for new kit.

The Sadberge Older Aged Persons group has been awarded £200 towards its Christmas party, while the remaining £100 will go to the Sadberge Young Citizens Group to buy litter-picking equipment for use around the village.

Managing director Alastair Mackenzie said: "I'm delighted that the company's shareholders have decided to make these donations, which amount to over 15 per cent of the profits from the company's first full year of operation. It was always the

intention that the company would support Sadberge community organisations as well as giving shareholders a reasonable return on their investments, and I hope that we'll be able to do so for many years to come."

Representatives from each of the four groups have thanked the company for the donations.

Councillor Brian Jones, ward councillor for Sadberge and Whessoe, said: "This is an excellent local initiative in energy saving with the added bonus of donations to local worthy causes. Srel are to be congratulated."