

CASE STUDY

ST ANNE'S, HIGHGATE, DIOCESE OF LONDON, COFE

www.highgateneighbourhoodforum.org.uk/community-energy-project-in-highgate

www.saintanneshighgate.co.uk

www.powerupnorthlondon.org

Population: 11,632 (2011 census for Highgate)

A Grade II listed church in Highgate, St Anne's teamed up with a community group and won planning permission to install solar panels on the slope of its roof.

Designed and built by builder architect William Cubitt in 1853 on commission by Anne Barnett, St Anne's is a lively parish with a mixed congregation of all ages, a strong children's church and feeds into St Michael's Church of England School in Highgate.

Reverend Andrew Meldrum, vicar of St Anne's on Highgate West Hill since 1999, worked with Power Up North London (PUNL), backing their plans to place 60 solar panels on the slope of its roof. He was keen that savings generated by the panels would help to fund community lunches, a youth project and more daytime activities at the church where poet Sir John Betjeman was baptised.

PUNL is a community energy company formed in 2014 by three local Transition Town groups, to develop renewable energy installations supporting the local community and help the fight against climate change.

PUNL raised £30K through a Community Share offer - and St Anne's will benefit from discounted energy through a power purchase agreement with PUNL. Parishioners and members of the local community also benefit from a small return on their investment and it was felt the

scheme was a positive mechanism for developing new relationships between the church and local inhabitants who were given the opportunity to invest for social and environmental benefit.

The St Anne's installation will provide an estimated 16,500 kWh of clean energy per year, equating to 8,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions – twice the energy consumption of the church. Any surplus funds will go into a Community Energy Fund, for the use of local community projects.

While there were some concerns the panels would spoil the view of the 1850s church from Hampstead Heath, local officials granted permission after recognising the scheme's social and environmental benefits.

More than 100 people wrote in to support the project, including Highgate's Green Cllr Sian Berry. She said: *"By allowing the church to set an example of generating green energy for the community, the overall benefit to the borough, which has large numbers of buildings suitable for solar panels... could be very large."*

The church hosts a busy social calendar and also has its own shop in Swain's Lane, selling bric-a-brac, books, jewellery and antiques. All proceeds go towards the work and upkeep of St Anne's church and it's manned by volunteers.