

Sunny outlook for Acorn**1.2.22**

130 solar panels have been installed at Acorn Enterprises in Trinity – and the project has already started making savings.

The social enterprise, as well as its parent charity the Jersey Employment Trust, has an ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030, in line with Government objectives. The use of renewable energy will go a long way towards this.

Acorn general manager Steve Pearce said: 'Our primary objective was to cover our energy use in the main building and the Woodshack. SunWorks CI Ltd drew up plans for the 48kw Solar PV system on the building which houses the café, to generate enough electricity to fully cover our usage during the summer months and a variable amount during the winter.

'We are very grateful to the Roy Overland Charitable Trust for covering the installation costs, which means that we can make savings straight away.'

The solar panels will allow Acorn to save up to £6,000 per year on electricity. Additionally, SunWorks have estimated that Acorn will save 20.67 tonnes of CO2 every year, which is equivalent to 949 trees planted – every year.

SunWorks managing director Mark Brandon said: 'SunWorks are very pleased to be supporting vital social enterprises like Acorn through the provision of locally generated power. The investment in the solar equipment will be paid back in around six or seven years. However, over the system life of more than 25 years, the total savings for Acorn will be over £150,000, far surpassing the original investment. So not only will the initial investment be worth a lot more over time, but also the initiative is fully supportive of the Government of Jersey's plans for carbon neutrality.'

Acorn provides work and training opportunities for people who have a disability or long-term health condition.

A trustee of the Roy Overland Charitable Trust said: 'We are delighted to sponsor this initiative as it has an immediate positive environmental benefit, it is consistent with our continuing support for Acorn as a reuse facility and its important community objectives. It is also in the parish where our founder lived.'