

Good for your wallet and good for the climate

Do U3A members realise that it is now cheaper to get your electricity and gas from a renewable energy provider than from the Big Six¹? Switching to one of the more recently established renewable energy companies can save you between £20 and £200 per year. These are: Bulb Energy, Tonic, Octopus Energy, iSupplyEnergy and a few others. Good Energy and Ecotricity are priced similarly to the Big Six. However, if you are on a fixed tariff with some of the Big Six, you may have to pay an 'exit fee'. The renewable energy companies do not request 'exit fees', when you go on a fixed tariff. In fact you may find that the renewable energy company you switch to, pays some of the exit fee back to you.



We are lucky here in the West Midlands as we are part of the West Midlands Clean Energy Community, which guarantees continuation of the service were your green supplier to get into difficulties.

All renewable energy generate their own electricity, and between 6 and 10% of the gas they provide, by anaerobic digestion from farm waste or energy crops (willow and/or grass), apart from Ecotricity, which manages 12%. Switching is quite easy: you do so online at www.bigcleanswitch.org/west-midlands – If you don't use the Internet, ring 0800 249 4770: you will be talked through on how to do it. It is helpful to have your last electricity and gas bills at hand, when switching as the savings are different for large, medium or small users. It is, however, useful if you have an email address a company can send news to you.



If you want to have a bit more time to think things through, you should know that there is **no obligation to switch** when you go on the clean energy switch site – or when you ring up. We went on the site several times to check out how much switching from different Big Six companies saved customers`

1. The Big Six are British Gas, EDF **Energy**, E.ON, Npower, Scottish Power and SSE. They are still mostly delivering energy from fossil fuels. They hold a combined market share of 81% for **electricity** supply and 80% for gas supply in Great Britain. Of these Scottish Power generates clean electricity for about 1/5th of their customers. Both Eon and Npower offer a 'Green tariff'; matching between 15 and 100 % (E.ON's tariff provides 100% matching for both electricity and gas), purchasing clean electricity from other suppliers (but we don't know whether it is more expensive than its usual rate).