



LAVCH Members Meeting

Saturday 10 October 2026, 11am, held at Knowle Green Village Hall

Attendees : Simon Kirkman (LAVCH Chairman & Catterall VH) Paul Hunt (LAVCH Trustee & Chipping VH), Sian Middlebrough (LAVCH Trustee & Grimsargh VH), Eileen Murray (LAVCH Trustee), Teresa Taylor (LAVCH Treasurer & Trustee)

Andy & Jean McLaughlin, Siobhan Kiernan (Knowle Green VH), Sue Monaghan (Heapey & Wheelton VH), Helen Heslop (Longton WI Hall), John Evans (Mellor Brook CC), Alan Tomlinson (Ribchester VH), Audrey Pickup (Salesbury MH), Trish Craig (Staining VH), John Greaves (Samlesbury WMH), Steph Hornby-Anyon & Andy Hall (Warton VH), Barbara & Peter Higham (Whittle-le-Woods VH)

Apologies ; Received from Anne Huson (LAVCH Trustee & Grindleton Pavilion), Brian & Anne Chiverton (Barton VH), Andy Hazeldine (Croston Old School), David Whitaker (Ellel & District VH), Ann Boocock (Trawden Forest VH), Niall McFarlane (Hurst Green MH), Sandra Pinder & Diane Parker (Newton VH), Bernard Kershaw (New Longton VH), Sue Halton (Parbold VH), Barbara Buller & Morag Nuttall (Hutton VH), David Meredith (Whalley VH), Claire Eccles (Longridge CH)

Chairman welcomed all, introduced Trustees then reminded all that the meeting was being recorded, purely for minute taking, trying out software. There were no objections.

Andy McLaughlin gave an overview of the Hall. Built in 1923 on land donated by farmers, it was in two halves.

2000 – major development started, creating one large room, utilising £130,000 Lottery Grant. Car park enlarged on land again donated by local farmer.

2010 – 2020 Major kitchen alterations, now can serve 120 diners. Numerous repairs & upgrades, details to follow during the afternoon session with slides attached to minutes. Toilet upgrade to very high spec, costing £35,000.

Solar energy & battery storage – noted batteries located inside the building and believes legislation no longer permits this. *Post meeting note – Eileen believes they can still be installed inside, there are regulations governing a range of aspects, which installers should be fully aware of, but also insurance companies can insist on additional measures for fire prevention and protection.*

Air Conditioning units used efficiently for heating / cooling

Audio Visual System which can show 4K video and play music via Bluetooth from phone or other device.

Details of grants given in afternoon session & on slides.

Open Forum –

Food Storage & Waste recycling was discussed at length. *Post meeting note:* Members aware that new regulations are coming in however both South Ribble & Ribble Valley Borough Councils are not ready for this. Charges for any additional bins depend on supplier; noted that, after haggling Suez charge Catterall VH £10 / fortnightly collection & they sort ALL waste downstream (paper, glass, food etc). Warton VH waste is collected by Fylde BC, without charge. Longridge CH used to use orange Commercial Waste Bags (charged per bag to users). *Members noted on a recent visit to LCC Recycling Centre that all waste is sorted there by various processes & therefore there may be minimal requirement for additional recycling by Halls, but each Hall must clarify their own needs.* Several VHs have parties when there may be considerable food waste mixed in with general waste.

Post meeting note: Siobhan Kiernan shared some views on this, which are incorporated into the following:

- [Link to relevant Government Guidance](#)
- *Regulations apply to all businesses, but are postponed for microbusinesses (fewer than 10 equivalent full time employees) until March 27*
- *Registered Waste Carriers should know and comply with the legislation – hall committees should check they do.*
- *Will require separation of waste, as described in above link and documentation of waste collections/contracts*
- *If a hall has any construction work carried out the relevant sections for construction will apply*
- *LAVCH will contact ACRE to see if they will be issuing any Guidance for Village Halls on the new regulations.*

Policies & Legal Requirements It was suggested LAVCH develop a series of policy templates, however every hall is different, in terms of usage & hire. Catterall VH have all their policies on their website and are happy for them to be shared & adapted for use. [Policies - Catterall Village Hall](#).

Safeguarding was a particular concern for Trustees, noting that Trustees themselves may be vulnerable (not all Safeguarding applies to Under 16s) & Action for Communities in Rural England (ACRE) has guidance on this & many other issues [Information-Sheet-5-Safeguarding-April-2021-Final.pdf](#) Members noted that some Funding Bodies expect to see evidence of certain policies.

Deposits held / breakages Members discussed different deposits schemes. Most held a deposit against damage/additional cleaning dependent on type of hire e.g. £150 held for a function which may be partially or wholly retained due to extra work needed after the hire. Some aggressive pushback was noted, however this was generally resolved by having appropriate clauses in a signed hire agreement. Halls had differing views on parties, e.g. 18th Birthdays were considered to have potential issues, & members noted that occasionally parties may be booked incorrectly (e.g. Booking for an 80th Party turned out to be indoor rave) Salesbury MH vets hirers when showing them round, shows photos of types of misuse which would incur deposit retention. If a charge was made for clear up, this should be shown on invoice. Numerous examples were given when deposits had been retained, in some cases the damage was greater than the deposit left.

Bouncy Castles policies were discussed. Many do not allow due to insurance & risk concerns. Whittle-le-Woods only allows one company to be used, Grimsargh make it clear hirers are liable and should have their own insurance.

Demolition & Asbestos Surveys Warton VH had a contractor who requested an asbestos survey prior to demolishing a former commercial building. Any building pre 2000 may need to have an asbestos survey. Grimsargh VH has had 2 surveys carried out in relation to 2 different sets of works – the contractor on the second project not accepting the previous survey.

Siobhan Kiernan very kindly shared her thoughts & experience: With my Health & Safety head on I can highly recommend a company called Roken Environmental Limited, my contact is Ross and please feel free to drop my name (Siobhan @Kiernan's) into a conversation as he has done a lot of survey work for me over the years at reasonable cost.

Ross's number is telephone 07825 041412 his website for those interested is :-

[Home | Roken Environmental | Asbestos Testing Lancashire | Asbestos Surveys Preston | Preston PR2 1XF](#)

Catterall used Roken in 2024 and the resultant report is also available in the policies section of their website.

Technology Heapey & Wheelton VH asked about grants as they are new Trustees. Website is needed. The [Voice Online Communities](#) platform was recommended as being free charity users and relatively intuitive. [Krystal Hosting](#) offers free WordPress based websites for charities Costs varied, some are free. Booking & Accounting software – Hall Booking Online £120 / year (slightly cheaper than Hall Master) will generate website within. Catterall VH has bespoke system (details S Kirkman) but uses [FreeAgent](#) to link

this to Natwest Bank (Free Agent is free for Natwest customers, £150 / year approximately but other banks may have similar deals. Free Agent will match up payments to invoices, generate Credit Notes for deposits refunded, generate reports.

Banking - this gave rise to varying comments, including differing charges whilst some e.g. Natwest seem to no longer offer new charity accounts, Co-op was generally praised, Santander reports varied

Xero was noted as another Accounting software used by some VH's [Xero Accounting Software | Xero UK](#)

Simon Kirkman gave a brief demonstration on Catterall's system.

Members were reminded that previous Meetings had included booking software demonstrations, & these can be found on LAVCH website [lavch-agm-members-meeting-25](#)

It was noted that software increased booking efficiency, however set up time (approximately a week) was needed. Hallmaster (Salesbury MH) has good backup, lots of demos & helpline. Hall Booking Online also reported by Chipping VH to be very good. Catterall uses "Appointedd" Booking System, which they find good.

An excellent Lunch was provided by Time at Ribble Valley Catering, much appreciated

tims catering@hotmail.co.uk

LAVCH Trustees update: following AGM April 2026 there have been changes to Trustees: Eileen Murray has agreed to continue her Trusteeship remotely for the foreseeable future, following her move to Scotland & two Trustees (Anne Huson & Sian Middlebrough) wish to stand down. The remaining Trustees would welcome potential new Working Trustees. If any have skills you may feel of use, please speak to existing Trustees about this. There were several offers of assistance which Trustees will follow up, as appropriate.

Andy McLaughlin then gave all a detailed talk on Knowle Green's "Pathway To Net Zero" Please see Andy's slides attached to the end of these Minutes.

Much discussion followed Andy's comprehensive explanations, including export & import rates, the need for greater battery storage. It was noted that whilst a particular supplier may be used to import electricity when needed, it may be better pricewise to export to a different provider. Andy strongly emphasised the need to understand your Hall & its users, then plan the work in phases, attracting different funders. Examples of efficiency included a small separate 15 litre hot water tank for the toilet block alone & the use of electric radiators in kitchen, hallway & cloakroom to conserve energy usage. When it came to the heating system replacement, they wanted a system that would be responsive to the needs of the hall and arrived at the use of air to air heat pumps – which are also air conditioning units. The contractor used (Cool Solutions Air Conditioning Ltd, based in Leyland) were very helpful, advising to go just below the theoretical heat input requirements, to ensure optimum operating efficiency of the system. Note - 4 people generate 1kw of heat & therefore the number of units required need to factor this in. The units were installed on one wall only, but the hot air circulates the whole room. Andy explained in his slides how the 3 phases were funded, but noted that applications to Bowland Trust & Harold & Alice Bridges Trust were both turned down. The Hall has made a surplus over the last year. Good feedback was needed with funders: good stories help with further applications. Next steps, to review all usage & bookings against energy use in order to improve efficiency. Members noted that all costs included VAT, which was payable at the time the work was carried out. It is presently possible to reclaim VAT on renewable energy and energy conservation projects – current until March 2027. Knowle Green has EV charging points, however these are under used, though they are indicated on "Zap Maps", but not Google Maps.

Members had varied experience of energy providers, Octopus was considered good for residents, but less so, generally for commercial use. Chipping gains a cheaper overnight rate (midnight to 7am) which can be used to import to cover the period of peak charges, 4pm to 7pm. System can be controlled via a phone app.

Banking arrangements, interest rates on accounts, card readers, banking charges have all been queried lately. Bank comparison website link [Best Charity and Club Savings Accounts: Compare Rates](#) A number of Halls as well as LAVCH use Saffron Building Society for savings account [Welcome to Saffron Building Society](#) Card readers; Sum Up [SumUp | Fast payments. Low fees. Swift payouts.](#) Square or Zettle were mentioned, particular needs will alter [Card Machines, Card Terminals & Merchant Services Comparison Pinnacle Base | tech.co](#)

Suggestions for topics for future sessions – online or physical?: What do Members want?

Trustee Training has been requested. It was pointed out that this would need to be carried out by a qualified person. Currently Community Futures hopes to gain funding for a Village Halls Advisor but this may be some time off. “Charge my Street” and what it can offer village halls, in terms of EV charging was mentioned, however this depends on a need in a community who cannot have cables across pavements. Further session on AI skills & how Members could use AI e.g. for marketing would be appreciated, which could be given online in an evening session

The Village Halls Podcast was recommended listening for all [The Village Halls Podcast - Your Listening Community](#)

Visit to Whalley Hydro in late January / mid February. If you would like to attend (numbers may be limited) ***Please register your interest by email : Eileen@lavch.org.uk***

There are grants for Community Groups in Ribble Valley Area. From Whalley Hydro Project [Community Benefit Fund - Whalley Hydro](#)

Martyn’s Law Update is still an ongoing topic, but we await the next stage of legislation. Members were reminded of the useful guide recently shared in our Facebook Group: [Martyn's Law for village halls: a trustee's guide](#). It is hoped to arrange an online session when legislation is finalised – which should be Spring 27.

Next Meeting: Warton VH has agreed to host the **2027 AGM meeting** (24th April 2027) & will update all on their progress

3.40 pm Members were thanked for their attendance & Chairman closed the Meeting.

Our journey to net zero

From oil-fired heating to solar electricity,
battery storage and flexible heating and cooling

Andy McLaughlin | Chair of Trustees

Knowle Green Village Hall

Our journey began with an oil tank

- Oil-fired heating was our starting point
- The hall is occupied intermittently
- Comfort and flexibility matter to our users
- We chose to improve the hall in manageable phases

Three phases, one direction

01

Generate and store

02

Improve facilities

03

Replace oil heating

Build capability → improve the building → change the heating

Generate and store our own electricity

30

Solar panels

15 kWh

Nominal battery storage

10.5 kW

Combined inverter rating

Two 22 kW EV charging points

Main installation: £23,199 | EV installation: £2,784.67

The original annual estimates

8,000 kWh

Estimated annual use

9,400 kWh

Estimated generation

1,400 kWh

Estimated annual surplus

**An annual surplus does not guarantee electricity
at the time of a booking.**

Better facilities and local heating

£30,413

Total refurbishment cost

- Toilets refurbished
- Electric radiators installed in toilets and kitchen
- Local heating for these areas

Choosing heating around the hall's use

- Heating and cooling around bookings
- A flexible response to intermittent occupancy
- Reversible air conditioning selected
- Normally described as an air-to-air heat pump

Choose a system for the way your hall is actually used.

Removing oil-fired heating

£18,376

Including VAT

- Old radiators and oil boiler removed
- Electrical works and air conditioning installed
- Making good and decorating included

Investment and grant support

Project	Expenditure	Funding supplied
Phase One + EV installation	£25,983.67	£20,000 Environment Fund + £5,000 Duchy of Lancaster Benevolent Fund
Phase Two	£30,413.00	£20,000 Lottery + £5,000 RVBC + £250 Parish Council
Phase Three	£18,376.00	£18,376.00 RVBC Shared Prosperity & Jubilee Fund
Total	£74,772.67	£68,686 grants

What the meter tells us

5,475.878

kWh imported

5,376.403

kWh exported

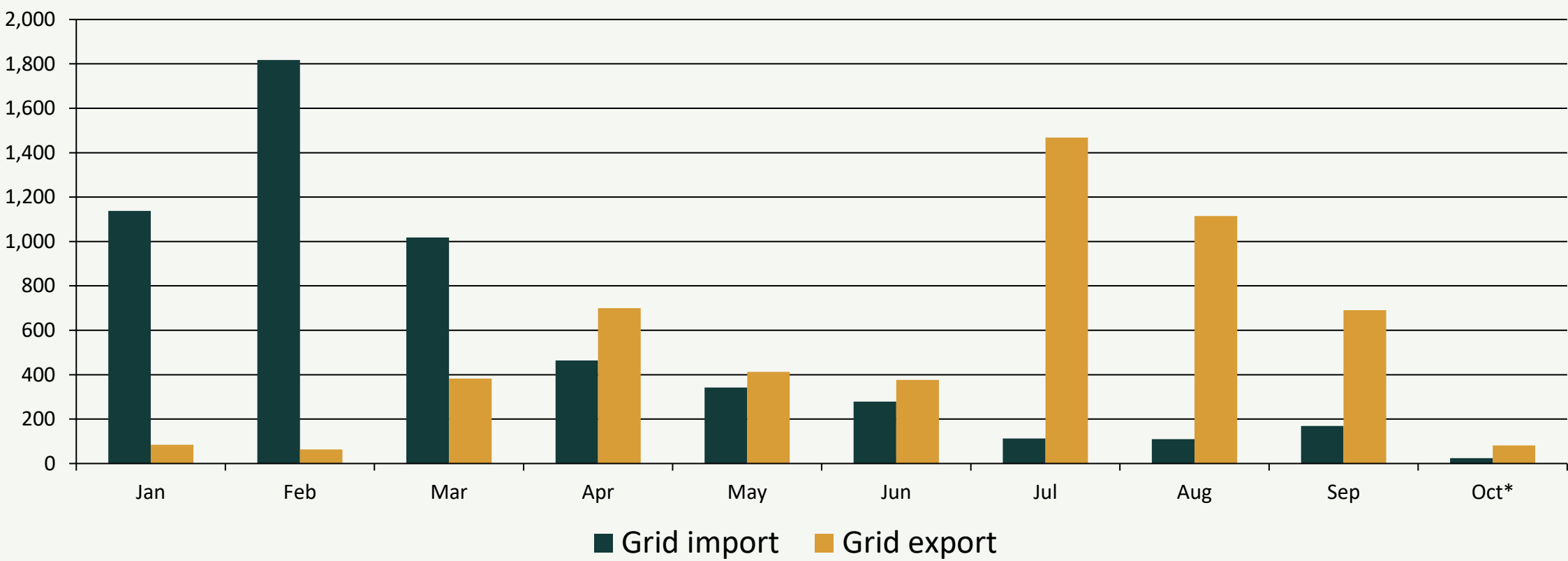
99.475

kWh net imported

Exports equal 98.2% of imports by volume.

This is a grid balance, not a self-sufficiency percentage.

Winter imports, summer exports



2026 • kWh • *October is partial month; November and December are not yet reported.

February and July tell the story

Measure	February	July
Imported electricity	1,817.398 kWh	112.728 kWh
Exported electricity	63.106 kWh	1,468.458 kWh
Net grid position	1,754.292 kWh imported	1,355.730 kWh exported
Import bill / export income	£447.51 / £2.59	£43.53 / £60.21

The electricity bill after export income

£1,451.29

Import bill

£220.45

Export income

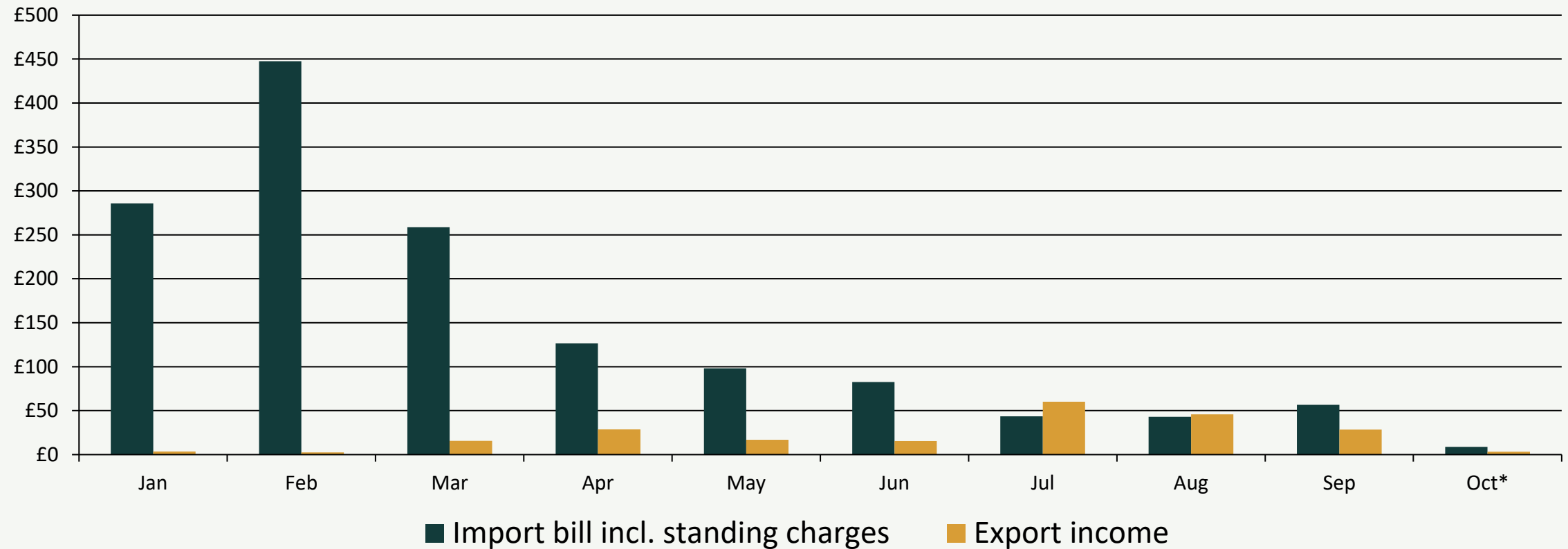
£1,230.84

Bill less export income

Import bill includes standing charges.

No historic oil-cost comparison has yet been supplied.

The financial pattern follows the seasons



2026 • £ • *October is partial month; November and December are not yet reported.

What we have achieved — and what remains to measure

- Oil-fired space heating removed
- Renewable electricity and battery storage installed
- Facilities improved and EV charging added
- Next: measure total generation, total demand and battery performance

“Journey to net zero” describes our ambition and progress.

Lessons for other village halls

- Understand your booking pattern and building
- Plan generation, storage, heating and controls together
- Use phases with clear purposes and costs
- Seek grants and keep the evidence organised
- Measure the timing of demand as well as annual totals

Our next step: use more of what we generate

- Collect matched generation, load and battery readings
- Review heating schedules around bookings
- Shift suitable electricity use into solar hours
- Review import and export arrangements
- Use the monitoring evidence before investing further

One project at a time

**From an oil tank to a more sustainable
community hall.**

What would the first practical step be for your hall?

Monthly electricity readings

2026 month	Import kWh	Export kWh	Import – export kWh
Jan	1,138.110	85.030	1,053.080
Feb	1,817.398	63.106	1,754.292
Mar	1,017.574	383.086	634.488
Apr	464.412	700.160	-235.748
May	342.600	412.738	-70.138
Jun	279.065	376.840	-97.775
Jul	112.728	1,468.458	-1,355.730
Aug	110.219	1,114.419	-1,004.200
Sep	169.533	690.961	-521.428
Oct*	24.239	81.605	-57.366
Total	5,475.878	5,376.403	99.475

*October partial. Future November/December placeholders excluded.

Monthly electricity finances

2026 month	Import bill	Export income	Net electricity cost
Jan	£285.80	£3.49	£282.31
Feb	£447.51	£2.59	£444.92
Mar	£258.80	£15.71	£243.09
Apr	£126.67	£28.71	£97.96
May	£98.23	£16.92	£81.31
Jun	£82.57	£15.45	£67.12
Jul	£43.53	£60.21	£-16.68
Aug	£42.94	£45.69	£-2.75
Sep	£56.51	£28.33	£28.18
Oct*	£8.73	£3.35	£5.38
Total	£1,451.29	£220.45	£1,230.84

Final checks before presenting

- Confirm October cutoff, bill headings and VAT basis
- Add generation / demand readings if available

Technical reference: energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/air-to-air-heat-pumps/