



Oban Lorne look to the sun

OBAN Lorne Rugby Club has turned to solar power to cut its hot water bills.

When you have upwards of 30 people needing a shower after a match you need a lot of hot water and the gas bills were starting to climb worryingly higher.

Now the clubhouse has solar panels on the roof thanks to the Scottish Community and Householder Renewables Initiative.

This new system heats up the water for use in the clubhouse showers at Glencruitten. There are four panels mounted onto the gable end of the building to catch the afternoon and evening sun.

Dave Sturrock, club treasurer, said that the panels would have to be monitored over the next six-month and 12 month periods to see just how much they have saved the club.

'We only had them installed in March but we are very pleased with the installation and performance to date,' he said.

Club president Lachie Beaton has been similarly impressed.

'We are delighted at the way ALLenergy got the

panels put in for us and the early results show water temperature is significantly improved but we have to have had a whole season to see what the bills do,' he said.

'A lots of visitors to the club are noticing them and they are interested in what we've done.'

Paul Phare, energy development officer at ALLenergy, based in Oban managed the installation grant for the club. He said: 'Every time the rugby teams are having a hot shower they'll know that some of the energy comes free - straight from the sun.

It's good for the club and the environment. Perhaps some visiting teams will see these panels and want a system for their own clubhouses.'

The work was done by a firm called Monaghan and Hornal, based in Dunblane, using a Sunharvester system, already proven in homes, community buildings and businesses throughout Scotland.

'Across the Highlands and islands we can show many examples where small wind turbines, heat pumps, solar panels and woodfuel boilers are reducing our dependence on fossil fuels,' said Nicholas Gubbins chief executive of the highlands and Islands community Energy Company, Inverness.