

Home-based energy supply 'within reach'

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Forget the standard image of household energy coming from a central power station – the future is energy generated by your neighbour's solar-powered roof, where individual households can together keep a city's lights on.

That is the future within reach, says Juliet Davenport, the founder and CEO of leading renewable energy company, Good Energy.

Outlining growth in wind, solar and hydro power, she told an audience at the University of the West of England in Bristol: "Small changes have a big effect."

Climate change was the biggest issue facing mankind, she added, but people were scared of the phrase. Instead, Good Energy, the company she founded in 1999, took as its central message: "To power a greener, cleaner future together."

Recalling its beginning, she said: "Once upon a time there was a company who wanted to change the world by changing the way energy was supplied

to homes and businesses. We wanted customers to become part of the solution, not the problem."

Those were the days when energy directors said customers would never change, and would always use too much energy.

"But I did not believe that," said Ms Davenport. "I believed that the individual could become part of a fundamental change."

Not least was the man in his 80s who proudly showed how he had turned his one-bedroom bungalow over to solar power. Ms Davenport said: "This is a world that is built from the bottom up, not the top down. We all need to be part of the solution."

Developments in technology and software were driving change and disrupting the energy market, not least the growth of electric vehicles.

"We are moving to a world of inter-connectivity, where your neighbour might be generating your power – not a large power station – and a world where they may be sharing with you and you may be swapping power."



Juliet Davenport, main picture, believes the individual can be part of fundamental change; she is also pictured, left, with Professor James Longhurst, UWE assistant vice chancellor; Bimpe Areoyo and Shifrah Walker-Abido, of AfroCaribEats; UWE associate deans Fiona Jordan and Professor Nicholas O'Regan; and Vanessa Moon, director, Moon Consulting



Label launched as store joins the vinyl revival

Sainsbury's is to launch its own record label as the supermarket giant looks to capitalise on the resurgent popularity of vinyl.

The company will join forces with Universal and Warner Music to publish exclusive records under its Own Label imprint, which will be available in more than 160 Sainsbury's superstores.

Two vinyl compilation albums will kick off the launch: *Hi Fidelity – A Taste Of Stereo Sound*, and *Coming Into Los Angeles – A Taste Of West Coast*, featuring Cat Stevens and Sir Elton John.

The '60s and '70s compilations have been curated by Bob Stanley, of indie group Saint Etienne, and will cater "specifically to the tastes of Sainsbury's shoppers", the supermarket said.

Sales of physical music products have deteriorated sharply with the advent of

Sir Elton John is featured on one of the new Sainsbury's albums



online streaming, but there remains a niche market in the UK for vinyl.

The so-called UK vinyl revival has seen sales of the format jump 37.6 per cent in the first half of 2017 to £37.3 million.

Sainsbury's began stocking vinyl in March last year for the first time since the 1980s and claims to account for almost 70 per cent of the total grocery vinyl market.

The company's head of music and books, Pete Selby, said: "Our customers' love of vinyl shows no sign of abating so, alongside the classics albums, we want to offer our shoppers something they won't find anywhere else."

Sainsbury's has sold almost 300,000 vinyl albums to date. The retailer's best-selling album is Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours*, with more than 12,000 units sold.

Work-related illness static

The number of people suffering from work-related ill health has remained unchanged at 1.3 million over the past year, although fatal injuries are down and slightly fewer days were lost, new figures show. There were 137 fatalities in the year to March, four fewer than the previous 12 months, while 70,116 other injuries were reported, down by more than 2,500, said the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Workplace injuries and new cases of ill health cost the country £14.9 billion.

Martin Temple, HSE chairman, said: "These figures should act as a spur to reduce the impact of injury on Britain's workforce."

Pressure on Next as weather brings 'extremely volatile' trading

Retail giant Next has warned over "extremely volatile" trading ahead of the crucial Christmas season as online sales continue to offset tough conditions on the high street.

Shares fell as much as nine per cent at one stage before paring back losses after the chain's recent sales performance failed to meet City expectations, despite its second quarter in a row of rising total full-price sales.

The group notched up a 1.3 per cent sales rise in the three months to October 29 – but saw a 7.7 per cent plunge across its high street shops and said

trading was "highly dependent" on the weather.

A 13.2 per cent jump in sales at its directory arm helped push up overall sales. Including discounts, total sales rose 0.8 per cent in the quarter.

Chief executive, Lord Wolfson, said cautious consumers were only buying "as and when they need".

He added a note of caution ahead of the widely expected interest rate rise from 0.25 per cent to 0.5 per cent, which comes as households are being squeezed by surging inflation and paltry wage growth.

He said one quarter-point



Lord Wolfson, the chief executive of Next, says cautious consumers are only buying 'as and when they need'

rise would not make a "huge amount of difference". But he added: "If it's the beginning of a move towards significantly higher interest rates, then it won't be a good thing for the consumer."

Investors took fright over Next's cautious outlook as it said the weather was buffeting sales, with milder autumn weather putting sales under pressure after big demand for warm clothing in a cooler August and September.

Next said its sales performance had remained "extremely volatile and is highly dependent on the seasonality

of the weather". The group said this was making it hard to forecast sales ahead of key Christmas trading.

It believes a more "reliable guide" to the underlying trend is its year-to-date performance, which has seen full-price sales fall 0.3 per cent.

Neil Wilson, a senior market analyst at ETX Capital, said: "Next had better hope that British shoppers are a little less fickle than the weather, because sales performance is so volatile the firm has no idea what to expect over the vital Christmas trading period. This is a worry."