

## Monday 22nd June Supper Meeting Talk St Swithun's



Our clubs' ongoing international Initiative supports Solar Aid, raising funds to provide clean affordable solar lighting for hard-to-reach, off-grid communities in Sub-Saharan Africa

As a prelude to our July Garden Tea fundraising event, we were delighted to welcome Amy Moss, Project Ambassador for Solar Aid, to our supper meeting at St Swithun's School. A colleague of Project director Richard Turner, who has visited us previously; Amy shared the latest exciting developments :Over recent years, Solar Aid's work has progressed from small personal solar lights to systems capable of illuminating whole rooms and clinics, and now emerging, , solar Energy as-a-service model

Amy's presentation was both deeply moving and wonderfully informative.

**Beginning by reminding us of the scale of the challenge: almost 600 million people in sub-Saharan Africa have no access to electricity** . When the sun sets, daily life effectively stops. She shared powerful testimonies from women like Fridah, who described walking home in "pitch-black" darkness and feeling frightened because she could not see what was ahead of her . Another woman spoke of her mother's vulnerability at night, unable to see dangers in the home without light.

From there, Amy showed how **solar light transforms lives**—improving safety, enabling children to study, and reducing reliance on kerosene and candles. Amy celebrated Solar Aid's 20-year milestone: **2.5 million solar lights distributed, reaching 13.3 million people** .

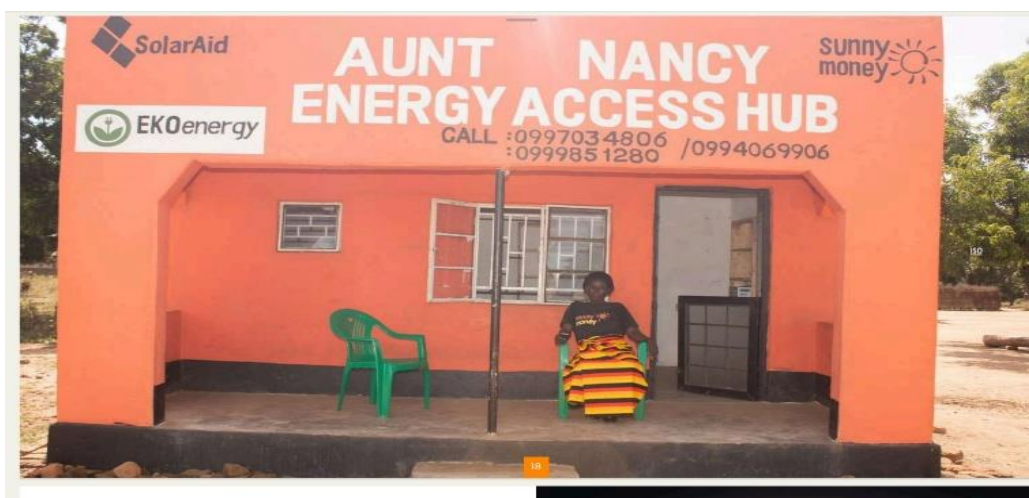
**Energy Businesses & Mayi Wala Groups** Amy explained SolarAid's innovative model of **locally-owned Energy Businesses**, now established in 46 locations across Malawi and Zambia. These hubs make solar products affordable and accessible, especially in remote areas where commercial companies simply do not reach.



A particularly inspiring part of the talk was the **Mayi Wala women's groups**—179 groups with over 4,200 members, trained in business management, financial planning and literacy.

Last year alone, they sold **9,437 solar products**. Amy emphasised that women are often best placed to bring solar to their communities, and that group enterprise helps overcome the barriers they face.

Amy shared a particularly moving story about one of the Mayi Wala women entrepreneurs 'Aunt Nancy' whose small shop selling solar lamps was completely destroyed when a tornado swept through her town. Despite this devastating setback, she showed remarkable persistence and resilience.



With support from her group, she rebuilt her business and is once again helping to distribute affordable solar lights to her community.

Amy also drew attention to **Project Switch**, supported by **Lend With Care** which enables groups to begin selling higher-value **Solar Home Systems** through crowdfunded loans — an



**'PROJECT SWITCH'**  
WITH THE SUPPORT OF LEND WITH CARE,  
BY CARE INTERNATIONAL

- 21 groups currently selling more expensive products, such as Solar Home Systems
- Through 2026 - 2027, we aim to graduate three MayiWala groups per month
- Lend With Care will crowdfund loans for one MayiWala group per month

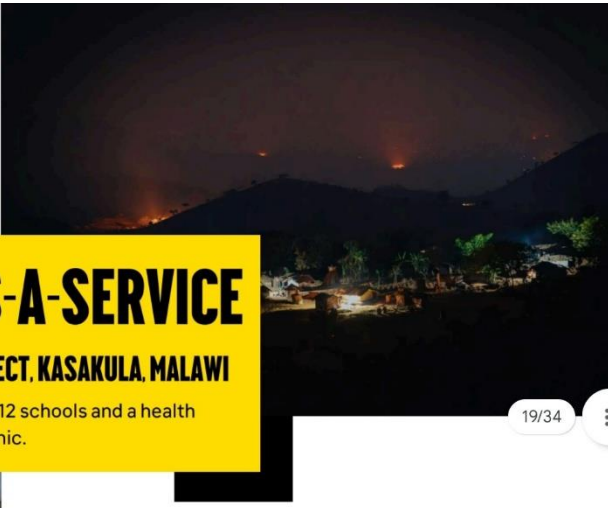
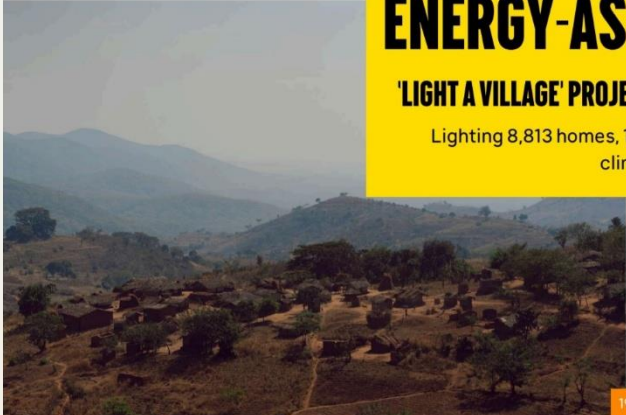
**LEND WITH CARE**  
Lend Grant

The Annual Appeal is over 97% funded. Please help

**Zokoma zili Mtsogolo Group**  
Malawi



initiative our Club is keen to understand better and potentially support. We currently also back 'Lend With Care' through several non Solar projects.



**ENERGY-AS-A-SERVICE**  
**'LIGHT A VILLAGE' PROJECT, KASAKULA, MALAWI**  
Lighting 8,813 homes, 12 schools and a health clinic.

19/34

19



## SUSTAINED ACCESS

Multi-light Solar Home Systems are installed for free. Families pay a small flexible fee for ongoing use, maintenance and repair.

This also creates local jobs.

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Amy then mentioned Solar Aid's ground-breaking Energy-as-a-Service model which project director Richard Turner had introduced to us when it first started. .

In the *Light a Village* project in Kasakula, Malawi, 8,813 homes, 12 schools and a health clinic have been equipped with multi-light solar systems installed for free, with families paying a small flexible fee for ongoing maintenance and repair. This approach ensures long-term sustainability and creates local jobs.

She also shared early results from the Namanongo project in Zambia, where the first 450 installations have already enabled **2,545 people** to light their homes, helped families save **£50,602 per year**, and allowed **445 more children** to study after dark. .

### Innovation & What's Next

Amy closed by looking ahead. Solar Aid is expanding into areas such as **solar irrigation pumps**, and collaborating with partners across Africa through initiatives like the **REAL Programme Catalyst** and **Solar United Madagascar**. She also described the new **Off-Grid Solar Repair Lab**, which aims to increase access to spare parts and establish sector-wide repair standards—crucial, as *90% of solar products are repairable* but local repair options are limited. .

For a full viewing of Amy's Slides and the short video that she Shared please click on the following Links

[June 22nd Amy Solar Aid](#)

[The Journey To Namanongo](#)