

# Community Energy State of the Sector 2024



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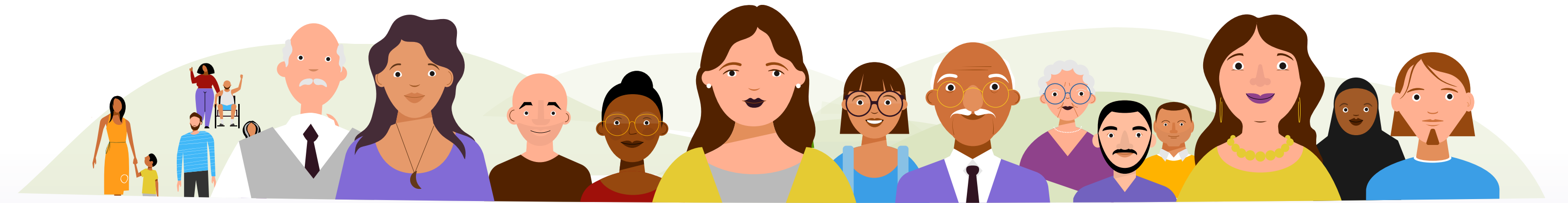


# About the research



The Community Energy State of the Sector research has provided insight into the UK community energy sector since 2017. This sector overview focuses on progress made in both 2022 and 2023, because we paused the UK research last year to enable us to create a new online portal for capturing data from community energy organisations (Community Energy Wales published a Welsh State of the Sector report in 2023). We intend this overview to provide readers with an understanding of the scale and impact of the community energy sector across the UK through a range of statistics and numbers. Later in 2024, we will publish a more detailed infographic telling the story of community energy and offering more detail on the sector's progress, opportunities and challenges.

Published in early July 2024 at an important moment for the community energy sector, the overview shows that the community energy sector continues to both grow and diversify, with new organisations starting up, jobs being created and contributions to local economies growing. Community energy generates more renewable electricity than ever, is engaging more and more people with energy efficiency retrofit and continues to reduce consumers' bills through energy advice and fuel poverty alleviation. Looking to the future, the sector has a healthy pipeline of new projects, services, investment, innovation and startup organisations, but even more could be unlocked if a range of barriers causing projects to stall were removed.



Data collection, analysis and reporting was carried out by Community Energy England, Scotland and Wales between April and May 2024, and we are indebted to the community energy organisations that took the time to complete the survey, and whose responses provide the basis for this report. The dataset is supplemented by data gathered from other organisations via previous State of the Sector surveys and desk-based research.

The State of the Sector 2024 UK overview is sponsored by SP Energy Networks and has been developed alongside additional regional community energy research reports on behalf of SP Energy Networks, Electricity North West, Northern Powergrid and Scottish and Southern Energy Networks. The views in this report are based on findings from the State of the Sector survey and feedback from members of Community Energy England, Community Energy Wales and Community Energy Scotland, and do not necessarily represent the views of the report sponsors.

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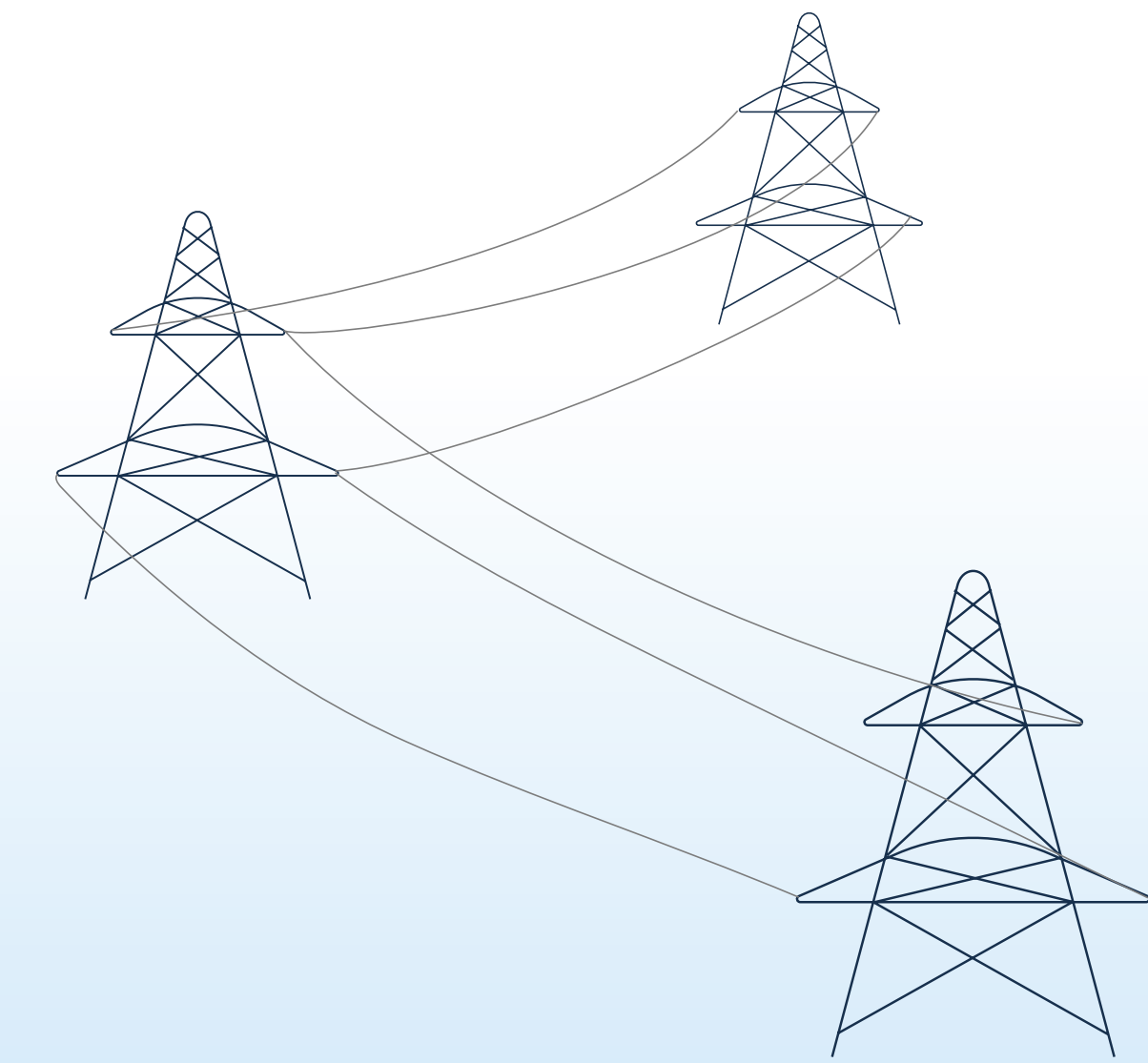
# Sponsor foreword

SP Energy Networks are proud to be sponsoring the 'Community Energy: State of the Sector' report for the third year running. Over the past three years there has been significant growth and innovation within the community energy sector as is evident in this report.

Despite challenges posed by the current socio-economic landscape as well as the removal of support mechanisms, the sector has continued to develop and install community-owned renewable electricity, including solar PV, wind and hydro projects. The addition of these projects has helped to contribute significant amounts of energy and benefits to communities across the UK.

As an electricity network owner and operator our electricity network provides the backbone of the UK's electricity system, connecting renewable energy generators and their clean, green electricity into the grid and transporting all the way on to power homes and businesses every single day. These networks are vital to the country's climate change ambition, a future that can only be achieved if we are able to work together to change the way we use electricity, both at an individual and community level.

In championing community energy, we are able to help communities take a proactive role in their energy system, delivering projects ranging from local generation of renewable power to energy efficiency improvements to low carbon community transport and EV charging. All of which will provide direct social, economic and environmental benefits to the people who live in our communities.



Liam Cantwell  
Community Energy Manager  
SP Distribution



Louise Taylor  
Community Energy Manager  
SP Manweb

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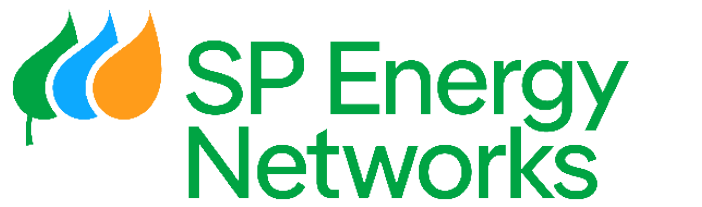




# Community energy in the UK 2023



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## RENEWABLE ENERGY GENERATION

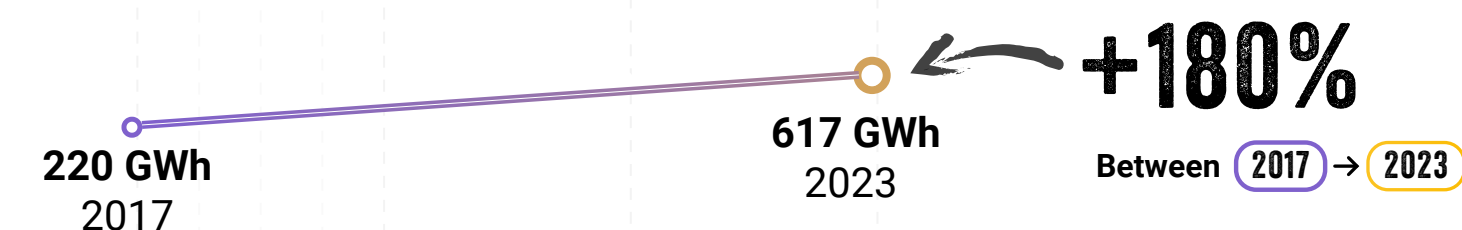
TOTAL RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY CAPACITY

**398** MW capacity

TOTAL RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY GENERATION

**617** GWh produced in 2023

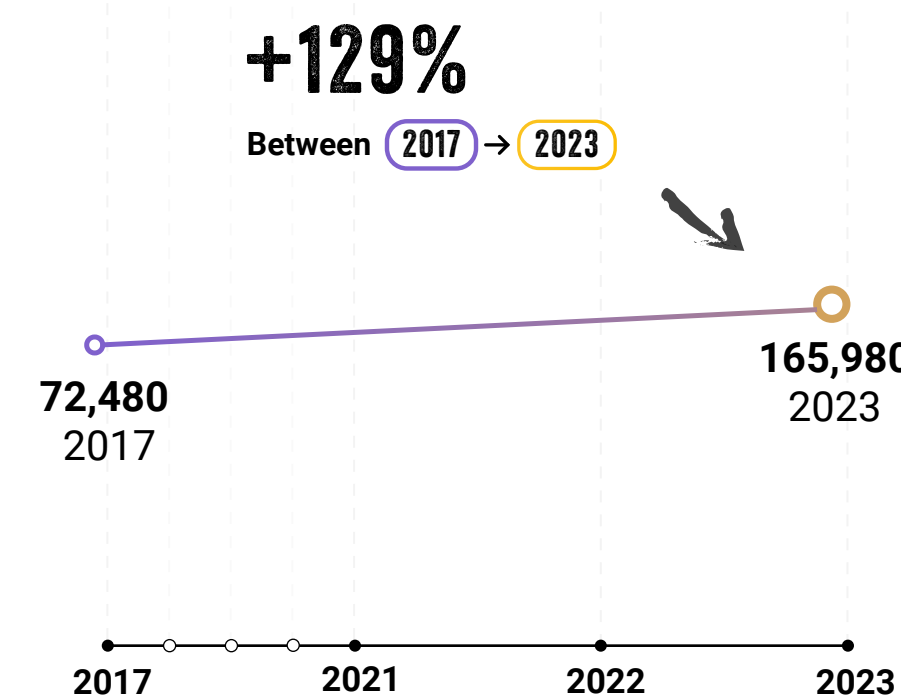
Equivalent to powering **228,530** domestic households



TOTAL TONNES OF CARBON EMISSIONS SAVED

**165,980** tCO<sub>2</sub> saved in 2023

equivalent emissions to 209,570 passenger round trips from London to New York\*  
On average, a round-trip flight from London to New York emits approximately 792 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> per passenger.



Our survey has evolved over time so not all the statistics were gathered in earlier years

## FINANCE & INVESTMENT

TOTAL ORGANISATIONAL TURNOVER

**£43.2** million turnover

TOTAL INVESTMENT SECURED

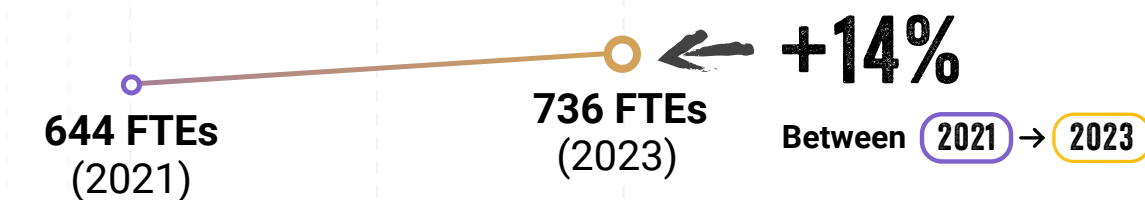
**£24** million investment secured in 2023

**£225** million investment secured since 2017

## EMPLOYEES & VOLUNTEERS

TOTAL NUMBER OF JOBS IN THE SECTOR

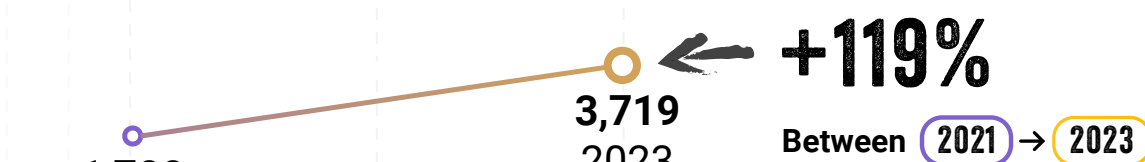
**796** currently employed



**102** new jobs created in 2023

TOTAL NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS IN THE SECTOR

**3,719** volunteers



## LOCAL ECONOMY

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO LOCAL ECONOMY

**£12.9** million contributed

to local economies from organisational expenditure and community benefit funds

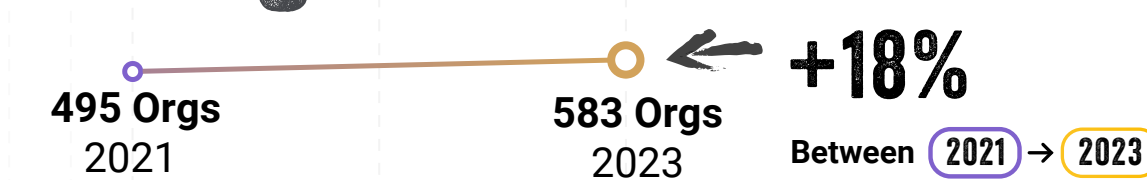
INVESTMENT RAISED FROM LOCAL COMMUNITIES

**£6.4** million investment raised from communities in 2023

## ORGANISATIONS

COMMUNITY ENERGY ORGANISATIONS IN THE SECTOR

**583** organisations



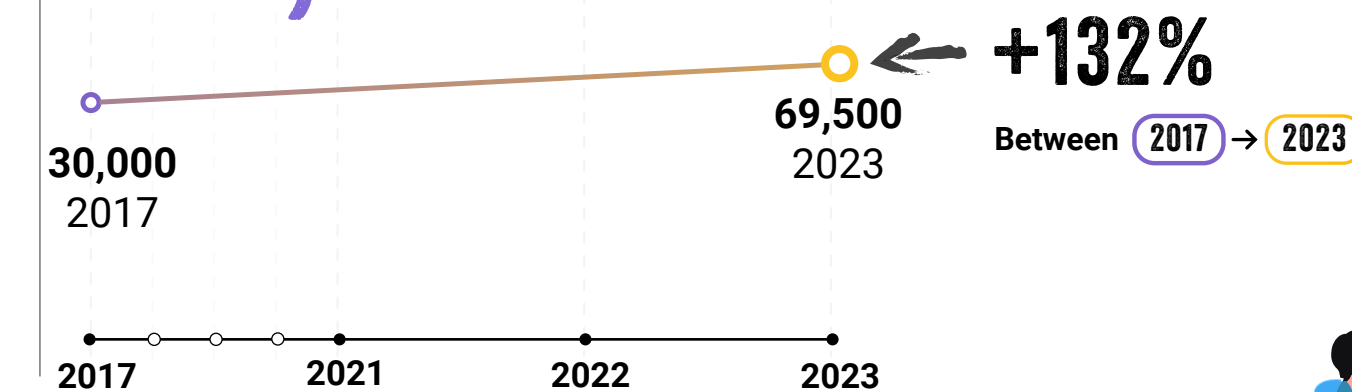
**123** organisations providing energy advice

**111** organisations providing low carbon transport

**319** organisations providing energy efficiency retrofit

TOTAL MEMBERS OF COMMUNITY ENERGY ORGANISATIONS

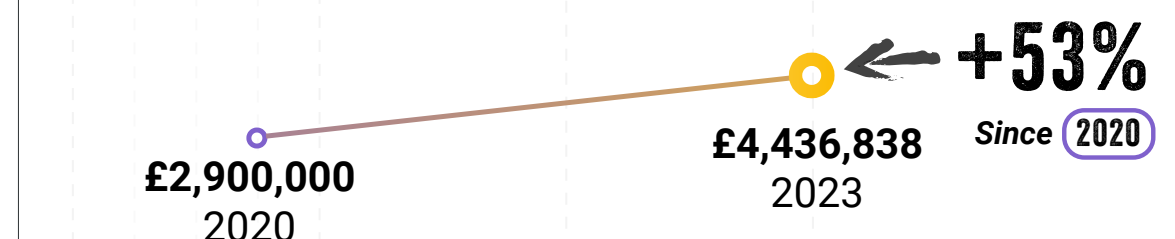
**69,500** members



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY & FUEL POVERTY

BILL SAVINGS FROM ENERGY EFFICIENCY & ADVICE

**£4.4** million bill savings



2017 2021 2022 2023

**£13.8** million saved since 2020

## PIPELINE

CONTINUED SECTOR DIVERSIFICATION IN 2024

**72** new energy advice and energy efficiency services

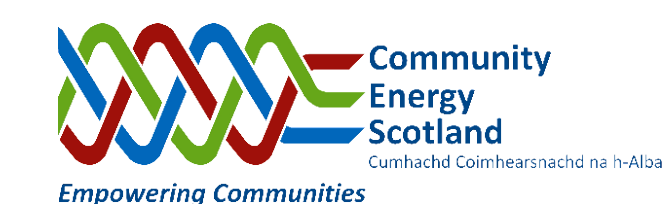
FORECAST FINANCES IN 2024

**£157** million planned investment to be secured for renewable energy

STALLED RENEWABLE ENERGY

**79** stalled projects with **270** MW capacity that communities want to deliver

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# The current policy landscape

Community energy harnesses the determination, ingenuity and money of the community to install community-owned renewable generation and storage, provide energy efficiency and fuel poverty services, deliver education, training and green jobs, low-carbon transport projects and more. This report shows that the sector can do amazing work for communities across the UK even under the most challenging of circumstances. If properly supported, community energy can rapidly scale up its capacity to drive the energy transformation to net zero.

The numbers in this report, covering 2022 and 2023, reflect a period during which the previous UK government did little to support and quite a lot to thwart community energy. Different funding regimes, particularly CARES funding in Scotland, gave different, often greater, opportunities for the sector in Scotland and Wales. In England, the Rural Community Energy Fund closed to applications in March 2022. There was no access to development funding for urban projects in England except where local governments such as the GLA and some London boroughs ran Community Energy Funds.

Despite this, the UK sector showed healthy growth measured in installed renewable energy capacity. In 2021, 7.6 MW were installed, representing growth of 2.4% over 2020. In the last two years, 61 MW were installed, representing annual growth of more than 9%. Jobs grew by 7% a year. The number of community energy organisations, volunteers and members is up. The amount saved on energy bills as a result of energy efficiency and fuel poverty work is up. Investment is up. The sector's planned pipeline is strong.

Community energy is resilient, entrepreneurial and growing. This growth could be boosted further by changes to regulations, grid connections and other barriers that could unlock 79 stalled projects, representing 270 MW of capacity.

Through its skill and determination, the sector has grown during an era of limited public funds, high interest rates and policy barriers. Now, we are delighted to welcome a 'new dawn' for community energy. Labour's ambitious and practical commitment to net zero is reflected in targets like 'clean power by 2030', and a doubling of onshore wind (enabled by the early scrapping of the Conservatives' ban in England), a quadrupling of solar and the Local Power Plan. This commits to putting people at the heart of the energy transformation with up to £1bn a year for local climate action with £400m in low interest loans for communities and £600m in grants for local authorities.

In 2023, the Conservative government put in place a national Community Energy Fund with £10m over two years to find and develop new projects in England. This has allowed the sector to ramp up activity. The opportunity presented by Labour is of a different order of magnitude. The community energy sector doubled in size every year between 2014 and 2017. It is set to grow exponentially again.

Community Energy England, Community Energy Wales and Community Energy Scotland look forward to working with the new UK government to achieve its climate ambitions.

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# About us

We invite all organisations working on or supporting community energy to join us, to strengthen our collective voice and enable us to represent you in our work to develop and support the sector. Details of how to join us can be found below.



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## Community Energy Scotland

Community Energy Scotland is a community energy specialist dedicated to providing communities across Scotland with independent and ongoing support to develop their own energy projects.

Our membership is free for all Scottish community energy organisations and individual supporters, and provides opportunities for organisations to consult with our team, network with other member organisations and receive regular community energy-related information.

Contact us for more information:




-  07920 182308
-  [info@communityenergyscotland.org.uk](mailto:info@communityenergyscotland.org.uk)
-  @CES\_Tweet
-  [www.communityenergyscotland.org.uk/membership](http://www.communityenergyscotland.org.uk/membership)

## Community Energy England

Community Energy England is the voice of the community energy sector in England, helping to create a supportive policy landscape for community energy. We also help active community energy organisations to connect, collaborate, share expertise and overcome obstacles, and facilitate new collaborations and investment into the sector.

Join us to demonstrate your support for the broader interests of the sector and our work to create the conditions within which community energy is able to thrive and scale.

Contact us for more information:





-  033 3303 4126
-  [info@communityenergyengland.org](mailto:info@communityenergyengland.org)
-  @Comm1nrg
-  [www.communityenergyengland.org/pages/membership](http://www.communityenergyengland.org/pages/membership)

## Ynni Cymunedol Cymru Community Energy Wales

Community Energy Wales is a not-for-profit membership organisation that provides assistance and a voice to community groups working on energy projects in Wales. We want to help create the conditions in Wales that allow community energy projects to flourish, and communities to prosper.

Our vision: people should be at the heart of the energy system.  
Our mission: to support and accelerate the transition to a fair, low carbon and community-led energy system.

Contact us for more information:

-  02920 190260
-  [info@communityenergywales.org.uk](mailto:info@communityenergywales.org.uk)
-  @CommEnergyWales
-  [www.communityenergy.wales/register](http://www.communityenergy.wales/register)