



**Community Energy England and Community Energy Wales
proudly present 2017 Community Energy Champion
Sonya Bedford**

Award sponsored by



Sonya Bedford

Sonya's commitment, drive and passion for community energy is inspiring. She believes that community energy can take the UK to energy independence and will do whatever she can to make sure projects continue to come forward and progress, both in her role at Stephen Scown and in her personal life.

Sonya leads the Energy Team at Stephens Scown, whilst being involved in various projects outside of her work commitments. From roof top solar to community wind farms, she has amassed thousands of hours of free community energy support, volunteering her time for Exeter Community Energy, Brendon Energy, Exe Valley hydro, Illogan Green Ripple Project, Peter Tavy Community Hydropower Ltd, South Dartmoor Community Energy, Low Carbon Gordano Ltd, Green Wedmore – Zero Carbon Project, Avalon Community and Bath & West Community Energy.

Although heavily engaged with groups across the sector and currently studying for an MSc in Renewable Energy, she still finds time to arrange and attend events advising on renewable energy and sustainable living. In conjunction with the charity 10:10, Sonya raised awareness of climate change by decorating her local green area in Exeter with mini windmills. She is trained to perform high altitude rescue of maintenance personnel from wind turbines, with the idea of being able to assist communities who need an extra person to attend wind turbines with the engineer. Sonya is also part of a community energy alliance in Somerset, looking at ways in which further generation projects could be made available to communities, to ensure resilience in the long term.

Sonya's achievements have significantly advanced community energy in the UK. Her work within the community energy sector is varied and includes, but is not limited to the following; she has been responsible for over 500MW of renewable energy generation and pioneered grid consortium agreements and local supply. Sonya has produced documents for community energy groups to access with Devon County Council, negotiated on behalf of a community group in respect of a proposed National Grid Easement running through a 5MW community owned solar park and she has assisted communities through constantly changing policy and support, by finding ways to ensure projects come forward even without subsidy.

Sonya is a passionate, tireless and driving force behind community energy in both her local area and nationally, her personal and professional lives. Her commitment to low carbon living, community-based renewables and local engagement make her a worthy winner of this award. We congratulate Sonya on being the Community Energy Champion for 2017, which puts her into the [Community Energy Hall of Fame](#).

Community Energy England and Community Energy Wales teamed up to deliver the Community Energy Awards 2017 to honour the organisations and individuals that have done the most to advance the sector over the last year and to celebrate their achievements. The ceremony took place on 1st November At City Hall in London.

About Community Energy England

Community Energy England (CEE) was established in 2014 to provide a voice for the community energy sector primarily in England. Membership totals over 200 organisations. The majority of the member organisations are from the community energy sector but the membership extends across a wide range of organisations which works with and supports the community energy sector.

Further details can be found on the CEE website www.communityenergyengland.org

About Community Energy Wales

Community Energy Wales (CEW) wants to put sustainable energy schemes at the heart of communities in Wales. Communities can become stronger, more resilient, and self-reliant by generating their own energy, using it efficiently, and directing the net income to regenerate their communities. CEW help to bring about this change by inspiring, empowering, and influencing people, policies and practices across Wales. They bring together a network of practitioners who work with and within the communities of Wales to develop renewable energy generation and energy efficiency schemes.

Further details can be found on the CEW website www.communityenergywales.org.uk

About Scottish and Southern Energy

We are immensely grateful for SSE generously sponsoring this award. SSE believes that community energy has an increasingly important role in the UK's future energy system alongside large energy projects. Community level energy brings a deep connection between consumption - an important aspect when seeking to increase awareness of climate change mitigation. SSE is committed to supporting communities in their aspirations.

www.sse.com/beingresponsible/responsiblecommunitymember/communityenergy/