



CEE and CEW proudly present 2017 Highly Commended Community Renewable Energy Project – Energy Local



Award sponsored by



Energy Local are trialling an incredibly innovative project in Bethesda, North Wales, where 104 local households and a hydro have come together to form an 'Energy Local Club'. Energy Local CIC has worked with Co-operative Energy to pair the households with a local hydroelectric generator owned by the National Trust. Using smart meters and an online live 'Energy Dashboard', households can match their electricity use to when the hydro is generating and pay an agreed price for that power. Household electricity bills are reduced and the National Trust has more money to spend on conserving the beautiful local area. Since January 2017, over half of the project participants' electricity has been matched by the local hydro, with the peak of 75% being seen in February 2017. 80% of households surveyed reporting a drop in their electricity bills, meaning that more money stays within the community and can be spent locally.



Hydro Power in Bethesda

This project is, at its core, about community – helping Bethesda realise its collective strength and shared resource in terms of both people and energy. Local champions have guided participants through the pilot

for a wide variety of different motivations. Some champions want to see their hometown at the forefront of innovation in the UK, others are avid conservationists. Local resident Carwyn Edwards said of the project -

“I was on a fairly standard tariff, and largely accepted any bill that came. After being part of the project, I’m much more aware of what I use and the importance of it because there’s something I can do about it. Now, I have a direct influence on how much it costs to use my electricity, much more so than before”.

The local champions keep in touch with participants through project updates, opportunities, energy saving and demand shifting tips, as well as inspiring stories of other community and energy projects from across the country, giving the community a sense of being part of a bigger move towards sustainability in the UK. The champions also run energy focussed events that bring the community together, and provide simple, practical tips for the community on how they can save energy and money.

This community driven approach has seen over half of those surveyed report that a main benefit of the project has been a strengthening of relationships in the local community. Local support has been a strong aspect of the project and has been an important element in helping the community engage with wider energy issues. Local resident Tom Simone commented;

“Bethesda has often been seen as a small insignificant place, a back water. The quarry is declining. But seeing us at the cutting edge gives me a real sense of pride”.

A crucially important aspect of the trial has been its ability to bring members of the community together. 72% of participants surveyed say they’ve met new people in their community because of the project, with 38% of those getting to know 4 or more new people in their area. Ensuring maximum community benefit has always been at the heart of the project but the efforts of the team, particularly the local volunteer champions, has been above and beyond in supporting their community ensure the project is as successful as it can be.

Communicating the benefits to the community has been integral to the project. Various tools have been utilised to communicate with local people, including how-to guides, web tools and videos, ensuring that the community had a good understanding of the project from its inception, as well as how to get the most out of it in their homes. It also served to build support and understanding for local renewable energy, with 93% in a survey recently listing 'supporting local renewable energy' as a key benefit of the project.

Energy Local is an innovative local energy business model that gets communities working together to reduce their bills and increase the income for local renewable energy generators, providing them with much needed stability in an unpredictable policy environment. At its heart is the desire, shared by so many in the community energy world, to use renewable energy to directly benefit the lives of communities.



Mary Gillie of Energy Local with Nina Skorupska - CEO at REA and Leonie Cooper Chair of the London Assembly Environment Committee

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 Award Sponsor Renewable Energy Association

The REA was established in 2001 as a not-for-profit trade association, representing British renewable energy producers and promoting the use of renewable energy in the UK. The REA helps its members build commercially and environmentally sustainable businesses whilst increasing the contribution of renewable energy to the UK's electricity, heat, transport and green gas needs.