



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



OUR VISION IS:

A THRIVING COMMUNITY ENERGY SECTOR INTEGRATED INTO AND TRULY POWERING A FAIR, ZERO-CARBON ENERGY SYSTEM.



OUR MISSION IS:

**TO CREATE THE
CONDITIONS WITHIN
WHICH COMMUNITY
ENERGY IS ABLE TO
THRIVE AND SCALE.**



IMAGE BY MARK SIMMONS: BRISTOL ENERGY NETWORK AT THE AMBITION COMMUNITY ENERGY TURBINE

a year's overview

WHERE WE ARE NOW



The year 2023 marked a pivotal period of transformation for Community Energy England, with significant changes in leadership, strategic direction, and member engagement. Led by our Chief Executive, Emma Bridge, who returned from maternity leave early in the year, CEE navigated through transitions and successes with resilience and dedication.

Phil Coventry and Duncan Law, who served as Acting Co-Chief Executives during Emma's absence, transitioned back to their roles as Head of Operations and Head of Policy & Advocacy, respectively. Their leadership ensured continuity and stability within the organisation throughout 2022.

In July, we welcomed Josh Barnes to our team as the new Policy & Advocacy Officer, enhancing our capacity to advocate effectively on behalf of our members and the broader community energy sector.

Throughout the year, CEE focused on expanding its network, fostering new connections, and providing support to our members. We are delighted to have welcomed a diverse range of new members, further enriching our community. Our commitment to knowledge sharing and collaboration was evident as over 1,000 individuals from across the sector participated collectively in our events, driving progress within the sector.

A central focus of our efforts in 2023 was the Community Energy Fund. Launched in October, this initiative became a cornerstone of our organisational priorities. We dedicated resources to raising awareness among our members, ensuring accessibility and maximising the benefits for community energy organisations. Our collaborative webinar with the Net Zero Hubs in October attracted over 300 participants, demonstrating the widespread interest and engagement in the fund.

Our dedicated Community Energy Fund webpage has been a vital resource, garnering significant traction with 5,500 views since its inception. We are proud to report that a number of our members have successfully secured funding, empowering them to drive impactful community energy projects and initiatives within their communities.

We were delighted to bring the sector together in person at our Summer Conference in London, repeating this with our Autumn Forum and Awards celebrating the inspiring and ambitious sector, in Manchester.

As well as our events we also held member working groups and forums on energy efficiency and retrofit, ethical sourcing and community heat. We hosted our community practitioners online forum for our members and launched a new all-member forum. We also launched a new portal for our State of the Sector research, which will be used to unlock new ways that we can use the data for the benefit of the sector.

As we reflect on the achievements and milestones of 2023, we remain steadfast in our commitment to supportive active community energy organisations and help them to grow and succeed. We exist for the benefit of our members and remain grateful for their support, engagement, guidance and membership fees, and continually inspired by the incredible determination of the sector and its outsized impact on our communities and the drive towards a fair, low carbon energy system.

With a strong team in place and a clear strategic vision, CEE will continue to represent the best interests of the sector and work with our members to ensure that the sector thrives.

Emma Bridge, Chief Executive

THE VOICE OF THE SECTOR

Our aim in 2023 was to make politicians, national and local government officials, network operators & regulators, aware of community energy benefits, needs, opportunities and policy obstacles, and lobby for supportive policy/regulations.

Activity



- Meetings with Ministers and Shadow Ministers.
- Regular meetings with senior staff at all major opposition parties in England on policy development and manifestos.
- Monthly meetings with Department of Energy Security and Net Zero to input into policy, such as the community energy fund.
- News pieces to keep our stakeholders informed on key policy developments impacting the sector.

In 2023 our policy work included 8 responses to consultations and calls for evidence and 2 representations to the Treasury.

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Working Groups



Representing the sector on a range of advisory and working groups, looking at:

Ethical Sourcing

Energy Efficiency
and Retrofit



Experienced
Practitioners

Community Heat

CEE's committees and working groups support the CEE team in its work.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SECTOR

In 2023 a key focus was to provide opportunities and mechanisms for active community energy practitioners in all parts of England to connect, learn, share business models and help each other overcome obstacles.

We launched



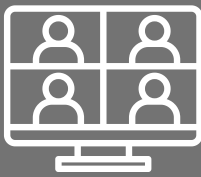
- New all-member online forum to create a space where all our members can interact.
- A programme of regional events for existing community energy groups to meet, connect and find ways to strengthen and expand their impact.
- Dedicated Community Energy Fund web page to keep our members updated on key fund developments and deadlines.
- State of the Sector portal to gather submissions of community energy data for 2022 and 2023.

CEE's new all-member online forum has had 25 active thread posts since its launch in February 2024.

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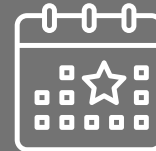
Members



9 Member Calls to help our members to connect and collaborate.



2 New Principal Supporters



4 CEE Events

In 2023, we welcomed 58 new members to our network, including 2 new principal supporters.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SECTOR

What our members say

CEE is the first point of call for all things community energy. CEE has a fantastic overview of all that is happening in the sector across the nation, with valuable insights and resources and a priceless network of community energy peers to call upon. A super helpful and insightful team and a truly invaluable network.

**Carlton Smith,
Bradford Community Energy**



For community energy organisations to gain the fastest momentum it helps to collaborate with similar groups – CEE is vital in supporting that to happen.

**Nicola Davidson,
Community Energy South**



OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SECTOR

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Communications



5,000+ Twitter/ X Followers



29,000+ Opened Newsletters



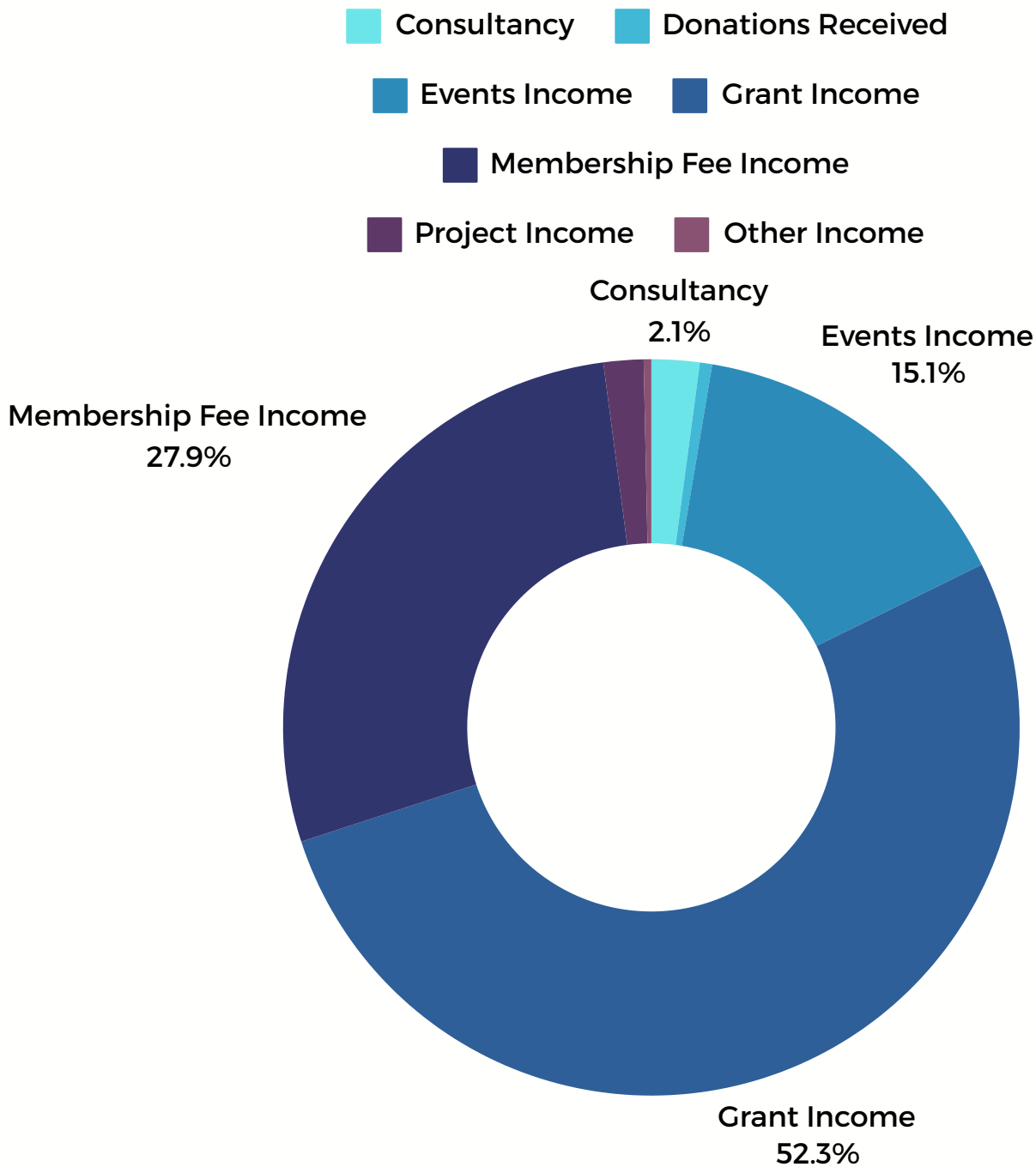
147,000 web page views



1,000+ downloads of State of the Sector Reports

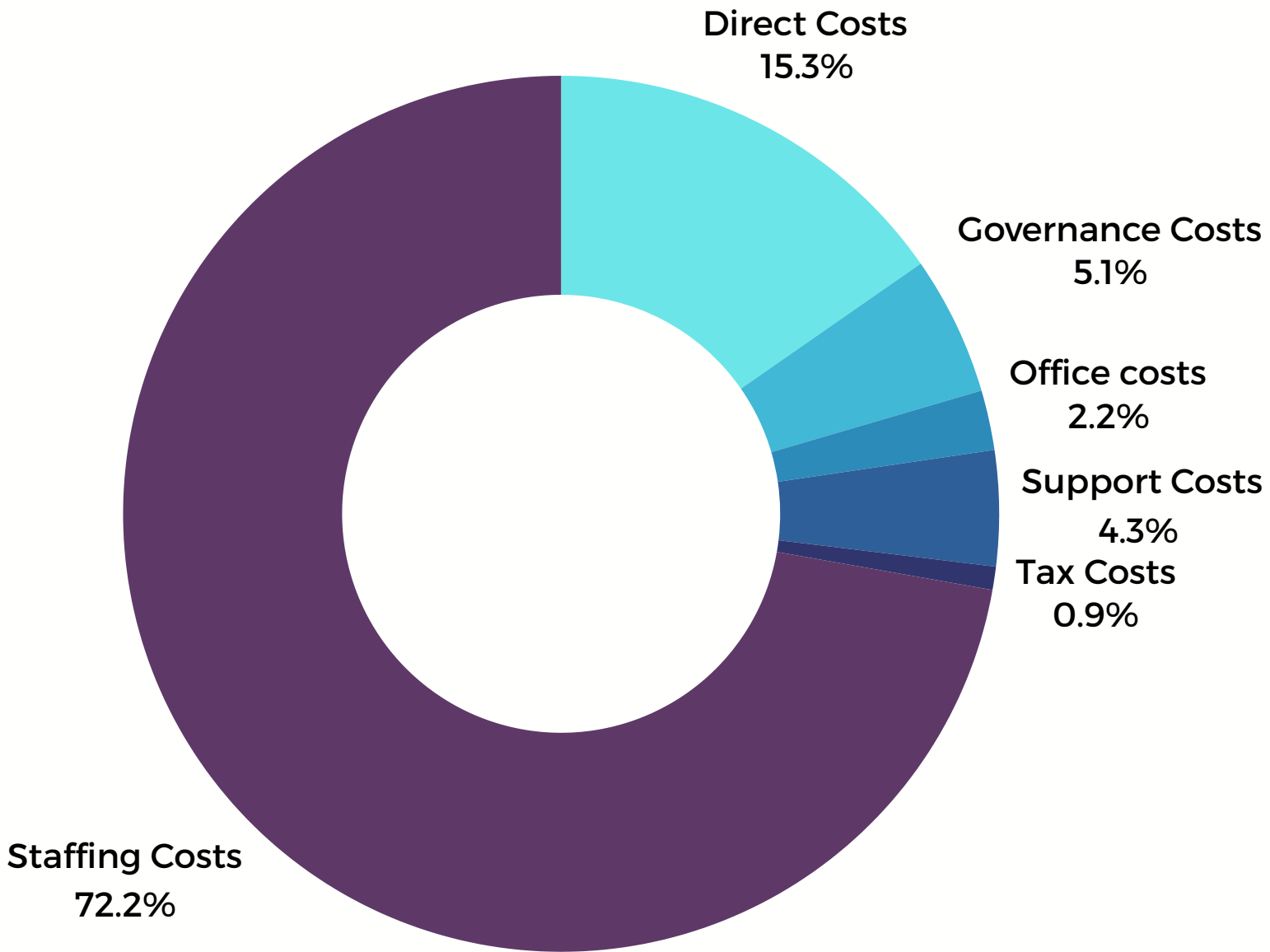
The funding opportunities page on CEE's website continues to be the most visited, with over 16,000 views.

Our main sources of income



In 2023/24, the total income for CEE was £294,719.

Our expenditure against areas of activity



Our biggest expense is staffing, at £210,662, which aligns with the increase in our activities and expansion of our team.

2024

LOOKING AHEAD



The community energy sector is poised for significant growth, driven by an unwavering commitment to tackle challenges head-on and create lasting impact. Despite facing hurdles, our members have repeatedly demonstrated innovation and determination, propelling the sector to new heights of activity and influence. As the scope and complexity of our activities expand, it is important for the CEE to evolve, ensuring we remain responsive and focussing our efforts where we will have the most impact.

And so, at the end of 2023, following extensive discussions with members and key stakeholders, our board agreed a new strategy for CEE which more accurately reflects what the sector needs us to focus on. Our new strategic objectives are set out over the next three pages.

As we start to implement CEE's new strategy, the support we offer to our members will grow and include a much greater emphasis on building capacity and growing the sector. Central to this will be a new UK Energy Learning Network which we will be reaching out to our members about very soon. We will also be evolving our working groups and facilitating greater knowledge sharing and collaboration among our members. Through the introduction of regional conferences, we aim to deepen our engagement with communities across all regions, amplifying the scale and impact of community energy projects.

Moreover, we are committed to nurturing our wide range of existing partnerships while forging new alliances to amplify our collective voice and attract crucial investment and funding. As the impending general election looms, we recognise the huge opportunities that this may present the sector. To this end, we are actively collaborating across all political parties and with other key enablers, such as finance institutes, Net Zero Hubs, Network Operators, and local authorities, to ensure the sector is primed for growth and equipped to fulfil its potential.

Community energy will be vital for the transition towards a fair, zero-carbon energy system. It is imperative that we unite in our efforts, leveraging our strengths to effect meaningful change. The CEE team is steadfast in its dedication to spearheading and supporting collaborative efforts across the sector, ushering in a new era of sustainable energy for all.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

Support a pipeline of community energy organisations across England to grow in scale and impact.

We will do this by:

- Ensuring that we have robust retrospective and live data on community energy activity, barriers, opportunities and future plans to focus our support in the most effective way
- Providing resources and tools and helping our members to learn from each other, network and share knowledge
- Developing new workstreams to increase capacity of our members, and build new skills and pathways for employment



OUR VALUES AND HOW WE WORK

We value diverse perspectives and believe that ideas and solutions are best achieved through collaboration

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

Advocate for a policy and regulatory environment that supports the growth of community energy

We will do this by:

- Building cross-political support for community energy in the run up to the Local, Mayoral and General Elections and beyond
- Strategically focusing our policy & advocacy activities to advocate for the unlocking of the most important barriers to sector growth
- Adding to our existing evidence base and narrative to clearly demonstrate the positive impacts of community energy and the need for a policy and regulatory programme that will enable the sector to grow.



OUR VALUES AND HOW WE WORK

Our work is informed by the insight and experience of our members and we aim to use our knowledge in the most effective way to enable the growth of community energy.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

Enable potential collaborators to work directly with and invest in community energy organisations

We will do this by:

- Refining and updating powerful narratives for the value and potential of community energy
- Creating connections, building relationships, and providing resources to help potential collaborators and investors
- Developing an investment strategy for the sector that will focus our efforts to bring new infrastructure funding and impact investment into the sector



OUR VALUES AND HOW WE WORK

We are committed to seeking new opportunities, to being bold, adaptable, and to leading the way.

We will be clear and transparent in how we will focus our activities in the pursuit of sector growth.

JOIN US

We encourage any practitioner or organisation that supports community energy to join us and make our collective voice for the sector stronger. Please feel free to contact us here with any queries, or find out more on our website.



www.communityenergyengland.org



info@communityenergyengland.org

THANK YOU

We are grateful to all of our members for their input, letters to MPs, speaking at our events and all other efforts supporting our work throughout 2023. We are also grateful for the membership fees paid by members, which form an important part of our income. Special thanks to our Principal Supporter members:

- Cornwall Insight
- Electricity North West
- Northern Powergrid
- OVO Energy
- Parity Projects
- Scottish & Southern Electricity Network
- SP Energy Networks
- Yunity

Additional thanks go to our grant funders, who provided us with essential income that enabled us to continue our work throughout 2023/24. We recognise their commitment to the growth of the community energy movement and we are grateful for their ongoing support.



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