

# Annual Report 2025

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# Introduction

Welcome to the Annual Report of Community Energy England, covering January–December 2025.

We are the only organisation dedicated to supporting the growth of community energy across England and advocating nationally on behalf of the sector. Our work exists to serve our members - now more than 330 strong, with 275 community energy organisations at the heart of that network. Guided by a board drawn directly from member organisations, we act strategically to create the conditions in which community energy can thrive, scale, and deliver real value to local places and people.

In this report we explain how our work is organised around four strategic pillars - **Influence, Enable, Engage and Thrive** and explore the impact of our initiatives under each of them. From policy advocacy to capacity building and sector collaboration, our mission remains focused on empowering communities to play a leading role in the energy transition.

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# Foreword

Community energy is entering 2026 with real momentum and a clear opportunity to grow its impact. We are seeing stronger recognition in policy, rising public interest and an increasingly capable and connected network of organisations. Together, these foundations mean we are now ready to move from steady progress to faster delivery.

This feels like a pivotal moment. Community energy has already shown what it can achieve - now the opportunity is to deliver at scale, bringing more locally owned renewable energy, stronger energy resilience and wider social and economic benefits to communities across England.

This year also marks a personal milestone for me. After 11 years as Chief Executive, I will be stepping down. It has been a genuine privilege to work alongside such a committed team at CEE and to be part of a movement that has grown so significantly over that time.

I am incredibly proud of what has been achieved together, and confident that Community Energy England is well placed for the future. With strong foundations in place and new leadership, the organisation can continue to grow its impact and support the sector to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead.

**Emma Bridge**  
**Chief Executive (Departing)**



# Our members



## The value of our membership

Membership is at the core of everything we do. It is more than a transaction or a list of benefits - it is a shared commitment to building a cleaner, fairer energy future.

When organisations join, they become part of a vibrant network of people who believe in the power of community and the potential of local energy. Together we are stronger, smarter, and louder.

In this report we will share how we create spaces, through events, working groups and collaborative initiatives, where members can connect, learn and shape our collective direction.

Membership is not just about CEE providing support to our members - it is about participation in a shared purpose and the ongoing development of a movement that benefits all of us.

Our four strategic pillars guide how we work to grow the community energy movement.

We hope you enjoy reading about 2025 and the impact of our national support and advocacy. Together, we continue to build a stronger community energy sector and a more sustainable future.

## What our members say

“  
We at CEE really appreciate the wide range of sterling work that CEE does for the community energy sector in the UK.”

Phil Harper  
**Community Energy Warwickshire**

# What our members say

“

CEE are the first point of call for all things community energy. CEE have 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 Davison  
**Community Energy Pathways**



# Influence

Advocating for a policy and regulatory environment that supports significant growth of community energy



## The impact of our national voice

Having successfully persuaded the Labour Party to back community energy going into the general election, CEE's challenge in 2025 was to start translating a broad manifesto commitment to support our sector into a concrete policy programme.

We also had to support community energy organisations to grow while this policy programme, the Local Power Plan, was in development. It remains a challenging environment for the sector to operate in with limited central government funding available. The Community Energy Fund was extended shortly before it expired in March 2024. However, the additional £5m made available was not sufficient to support the rapid growth the sector was ready to deliver.

Given the shortage of central government funding, we worked on supporting community energy through other means. We were successful in achieving a long-term aim when community energy organisations were allowed to apply for main and small grants through the Energy Redress Scheme. And, over the course of the year we responded to **13 consultations and government calls for input**,

We also worked to solve new problems as they arose. After the Treasury reinterpreted its rules to re-classify solar PPA partnerships between schools and community energy organisations as debt, a freeze was put in place on these types of projects. Solar PPA partnership projects have been highly successful for the community energy sector and have helped schools across the country to cut their energy bills. By mobilising allies within and outside government, we persuaded DfE to allow the critical summer installs to happen and to accept applications for these projects again while the Treasury conducts a review. We continue to work with partners to find a permanent solution to the issue this year.

The sector came under threat when the Law Commission proposed to retrospectively change the definitions of Cooperatives and Community Benefit Societies (CBSs) with highly restrictive criteria for what they could do in the energy sector. This had the potential to force some cooperatives to demutualise and some CBSs to dissolve and distribute their assets. With support from leading figures within the sector, we warned the government of the potentially disastrous impact of these proposals on their clean energy agenda and persuaded the Law Commission to revisit them. The process is ongoing, but the current proposals represent far less of a risk to community energy.

# Influence



## Resources and insight

Our long-running **State of the Sector research** captures the breadth, growth and impact of our sector and the challenges holding community energy organisations back.

Produced in collaboration with our colleagues in Wales and Scotland, it is the most complete and inclusive research on community energy in the UK. We use the data you provide to design our events and capacity building resources and provide statistics and documents that help you put our members' local work and impact in the context of a national movement with a long and successful track record.

## KEY RESPONSES

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- [CEE response to ESNZ Committee call for evidence: Unlocking community energy at scale \[January 2025\]](#)
  - [Community Benefit and Shared Ownership Consultation response \[July 2025\] \(with Scotland and Wales\)](#)
  - [CEE response to Elexon P441 'Creation of Complex Sites' Consultation \[November 2025\]](#)
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## Looking forward

Our main priority is to work with GB Energy, the government, our partner organisations and our members to make a success of the Local Power Plan.

The Plan represents an opportunity to bring about meaningful system change and put community energy on a much stronger footing to become one of the major players in the UK's energy system (this vision is best expressed in **Kate Gilmartin's keynote speech** at the 2025 Community Energy Awards).

We look forward to 2026 as a milestone year for the community energy sector.

“

Trust is one of the rarest commodities in the energy sector today. Community energy is one of the very few places where people feel genuine integrity, genuine connection, and genuine confidence that value will flow back into the community rather than away from it.

Kate Gilmartin

# Enable

Ensuring community energy organisations across England have access to the resources, support and skills needed to grow in capacity, scale and impact



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Community Energy England exists to help community energy organisations succeed. We do this by providing the tools, knowledge and support groups need to develop projects, overcome barriers and grow their impact.

Through learning programmes, resources, peer networks and practical project support, we help communities across England turn ideas into real projects that generate clean energy and local benefits.

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## Supporting learning across the sector

One of the most important ways we support our members is by creating opportunities to learn from one another.

Through webinars, events, peer networks and working groups, community energy practitioners share experience, discuss challenges and develop solutions together. These spaces allow organisations to benefit from the knowledge and experience already present across the sector.

In 2025 we ran a wide range of events designed to support project development, explore new business models and help organisations strengthen their skills.



# Enable



The Energy Learning Network (ELN) has become a key part of how we support community energy organisations.

The ELN brings together learning resources, practical guides and events to help both new and established groups develop successful projects.

## Practical tools and resources

We continue to develop tools that make it easier for community energy organisations to plan and deliver projects.

Alongside tools like this, our website provides a wide range of resources, including funding opportunities, guidance documents and project examples.

Our State of the Sector research provides a valuable evidence base for members, with the data we collect supporting their work, strengthening their impact, and enabling them to contribute their own projects to our national map as part of telling the wider story of community energy in England.



## Supporting innovation, funding and project development

At CEE we help organisations turn ideas into real projects by combining shared learning, practical support and access to funding.

We share learning from innovative projects across the sector, so groups can build on what works and move forward with confidence. Alongside this, we support organisations directly as they develop new projects.

In 2025, we helped launch Community Energy GO with the Centre for Sustainable Energy and Ashden (see page 3 for more details).

We also help members find funding and connect with partners through our website and communications, making it easier to access the support they need.

Together, this helps community energy organisations overcome common challenges, move faster, and bring more projects to life.

# Enable

## The Energy Learning Network

### 2025 impact and activity

In 2025, the Energy Learning Network (ELN) moved from launch to delivery.

Over the past year, the ELN has grown into a space where both new and established community energy organisations can access peer learning, events, how-to guides and a range of resources to support their work.

- We ran **3 ELN webinars** in 2025, on how to maximise income from your project, PPAs and community energy with supermarkets and warehouses. Our key collaborators were Younity and Ethex.
- Developed with funding from the ELN, and launched in 2025, **VoteWind** is our new open-source community wind planning map. Bringing together multiple planning constraints and wind speed data into a single visual map, it is designed to make it easier for our members and the wider public to identify sites in their local areas that are most suitable for a community wind turbine.
- We have worked with experts in the community energy sector to develop a range of how-to guides and resources. This includes guides by Saskya Huggins about the social value of community energy and a series of guides developed by Ethex on obtaining funding.



**Energy Learning Network**  
**Rhwydwaith Addysg Ynni**

Insights that we gathered through the ELN also informed our engagement with policymakers and funders, ensuring that the lived experience of community energy organisations shaped national conversations about the energy transition.

Together with our members, partners and supporters, we are building a more resilient, visible and confident community energy sector, and we are very excited about the future of the ELN over the coming two years.

### QUICK LINKS

- [Community Energy Connect Showcase with Younity](#)
- [Maximising income from your community energy project with Younity](#)
- [The next phase of community energy: Supermarkets and warehouses with Ethex](#)
- [The social value of community energy](#)
- [Ethex: Raising finance for your community energy project](#)
- [Ethex: A friendly guide to community shares, IFISAs & ethical bonds](#)
- [Ethex: How to attract investors and maximise your raise](#)

# Enable

## Driving innovation through strategic projects

Working on a range of projects in 2025 helped us show what's possible when community energy leads the way. We want to make sure that innovative ideas and tested business models are spread across the sector and our position as the national network for community energy means we are uniquely able to share and disseminate this information widely.

A number of projects in 2025 demonstrated the potential for new approaches:

### Net Zero Terrace Streets (NZTS)

This project explores how older terraced homes can be decarbonised using retrofit, solar power, shared ground loops and smart energy systems. Community Energy England's role is to share learning from the project and help other organisations adopt the model in their own areas.

### Seeing is Believing (North East and Yorkshire)

Seeing is Believing (North East and Yorkshire) is a programme delivered in partnership with the North East and Yorkshire Net Zero Hub, Ashden and the Centre for Sustainable Energy.

The programme brings together community energy organisations, local authorities, anchor institutions and regional stakeholders to explore the opportunities for community energy in the region.



To help enhance our funding bids and support our role enabling sector growth, we urge our members to include us in more projects like this.

### Community Heat Development Unit (CHDU)

Working with partners including Sharenergy, this project explores opportunities for community-owned heat networks. Community Energy England helped connect local groups interested in developing heat projects and shared insights across the sector.

### Community Energy Go

In 2025 we began developing Community Energy GO, a new programme delivered in partnership with the Centre for Sustainable Energy and Ashden.

Community Energy GO provides community groups with direct, hands-on support to develop renewable energy projects. For eligible organisations, the programme offers a clear and supported pathway from an initial idea through to a fully developed and funded project.

# Enable



In 2025, working groups focused on areas including:

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## Ethical sourcing

Raising awareness of forced labour in solar supply chains, contributed to national consultations, and shaped policy in collaboration with leading experts and organisations like Anti-Slavery International.

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## Community energy heat

Decarbonising heat is a huge challenge, but our members are stepping up. This group explored low-carbon heating, shared models for community heat networks, and supported collaboration with local authorities and national projects.

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## Energy Efficiency

Focusing on retrofit and energy advice. Members of this group attend and feed into the National Retrofit Hub's Community Retrofit Cross-Cutting Theme meetings to share funding tips, discuss policy changes, and explore how to scale up local projects like Warm Homes Plans and retrofit partners

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Our working groups create spaces where members can come together, share their experience and tackle challenges collectively. By bringing together expertise from across the sector, these groups help turn ideas into practical solutions and ensure knowledge is shared widely.

John Taylor  
Head of Strategic Development and Capacity Building

# Enable



## Visibility and recognition

Broadcasting the work and impact of community energy organisations is a key role of CEE. Members can share news, jobs, events, community share offers and projects through our newsletter, social media, and website - giving their work national reach.

They are also featured on our interactive [member map](#), making it easier for local people, politicians and potential partners to find your organisation and support your projects.

And when it comes to recognition, members are eligible for the [Community Energy Awards](#), a chance to celebrate our members' impact on a national stage and promote their excellence.

## IMPACT SUMMARY

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**13,000**

views on funding opportunities page

**6,100**

people accessed our community energy fund resources

**1,100**

downloads of 2025 State of the Sector report

## A hub for learning and connection

In November 2025 we launched our new website to make it easier for people to find information, share knowledge and discover opportunities in community energy. Since then, the site has had more than 60,000 visits, showing how valuable it has already become as a go-to hub for the sector.

Our [funding & opportunities page](#) has been the most visited page on the site, with more than 13,000 views in 2025. It plays an important role in helping community energy organisations find the funding and support they need to develop and grow their projects.

Our [Community Energy Fund webpage](#) and resources were accessed by more than 6,100 people, helping community energy organisations understand how the fund works and how they can apply. [Our members page](#) is also one of the most popular areas of the site, with 8,500 visits, reflecting strong interest in connecting with organisations across our network.

Alongside this, our [State of the Sector](#) report was downloaded more than 1,100 times. The report provides important insights and data that help community energy organisations plan their work, demonstrate their impact and strengthen their advocacy.

# Enable

## Our unique national network

At Community Energy England, we're proud to be the only organisation solely dedicated to supporting and representing the community energy sector in England. We represent over 330 community energy organisations and partners.

These organisations are doing incredible work to bring clean, local energy to their communities. And it's not just about generating renewable energy - many are also helping local people save energy, stay warm, and reduce their bills through energy efficiency and fuel poverty projects. Whether it's installing solar panels, running home insulation schemes, or offering trusted local energy advice, our members are finding practical, people-powered ways to tackle the energy and climate crises - and making a real difference in their communities.

Together, we are a powerful national movement.



## A space where community energy connects

Whether you're in a city or a small rural village, if you're part of community energy, you're part of this network. No one else brings together community energy organisations from across the whole country like we do.

Our online forums are spaces built just for you. With over 168 active discussion threads and more than 800 comments in the past year, members have been connecting, troubleshooting, sharing advice, and learning from one another in real time - no matter where they're based.

Our national events and conferences give members the chance to meet face-to-face, form partnerships, and spark ideas that lead to real change. These aren't just events - they're where connections are made, solutions are shared, and the future of community energy is shaped.

# Thrive

Ensuring Community Energy England is a strong and sustainable organisation that can serve the community energy sector into the future

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For community energy to grow and succeed, it needs a strong national organisation behind it. In 2025, we continued building Community Energy England's strength, resilience and sustainability so that we can support the sector now and long into the future.

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## A growing and active membership

Our membership community continues to grow, with an impressive 92% member retention rate in 2025. We welcomed 48 new members, bringing our network to **334 organisations** and individuals, including 269 community energy organisations at the heart of the movement. This growth also included a new Principal Supporter, Ethex, strengthening the support available across our network.

Our members shape everything we do. Through our AGM, consultation responses and regular engagement, members help guide our priorities and ensure our work reflects the real needs of organisations delivering projects on the ground.

The strength of our network is what gives Community Energy England its voice. By bringing together community organisations, supporters and partners from across the country, we are able to represent the sector with confidence and credibility.



## Improving how we support our members

This year we launched a new Community Energy England website, designed to make it easier for members and partners to find the information and support they need.

We are continuing to develop the site so that resources are better organised and easier to navigate. Our aim is to create a clear and accessible hub where community energy organisations can quickly find guidance, tools and opportunities to support their work.

Alongside the website, our digital platforms continue to play an important role in connecting the sector. Our online forums allow members to share knowledge, ask questions and collaborate with peers across the country.

## MEMBERSHIP BREAKDOWN

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269

community members

26

public/ third sector

9

local authorities

2

individuals

# Thrive

## Governance and leadership

Community Energy England is governed by a board drawn directly from our member organisations. This ensures that our strategy and decisions are rooted in the real experiences of practitioners working in community energy.

Members can vote at our AGM, stand for election as directors and contribute to shaping the direction of the organisation. This democratic structure keeps our work accountable to the sector we serve.

After 11 years, Emma Bridge will step down as Chief Executive in 2026. In late 2025, the board led a recruitment process to appoint a successor, with Matt Vickers confirmed as the next Chief Executive.

Matthew joins from the National Energy System Operator, where he led the UK's grid connections reform programme, unlocking significant investment in clean energy infrastructure and accelerating renewable deployment. He previously served as CEO and Chief Ombudsman at Ombudsman Services, bringing a strong track record in energy market reform, consumer protection and building public trust.



Emma Bridge, Chief Executive  
(2014 - March 2026)



Peter Capener, Chair



Matthew Vickers, new Chief Executive

# Thrive

## Financial stability and partnerships

Our work is made possible through the support of our members, principal supporters and grant funders. In 2025 we continued to secure funding for key programmes and projects, helping ensure the organisation remains financially stable.

We are grateful to our funders and partners who support initiatives such as the Energy Learning Network, Net Zero Terrace Streets, Community Energy GO and Seeing is Believing. Their support enables us to provide practical programmes that benefit the wider sector.



## Measuring our impact

Our work reaches thousands of people each year. In 2025:

- Our national community energy map was viewed more than 158,000 times
- Our 2024 State of the Sector report was downloaded more than 1,100 times
- 1,500 people attended our online and in-person events
- Over 60,000 people visited our new website



## Building resilience for the future

The community energy sector is growing quickly, and we are continuing to strengthen Community Energy England so we can grow alongside it.

By expanding our membership, strengthening our partnerships, improving our digital platforms and securing funding for key programmes, we are building an organisation that is resilient, responsive and ready for the future.

Our goal is simple: to ensure that Community Energy England remains a strong, trusted organisation that can champion, support and represent the community energy movement for many years to come.

# Engage

Working with a range of partners to increase demand for collaborating with and investing in community energy



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**Community energy grows when organisations, institutions and communities work together. One of Community Energy England's key roles is bringing people together - connecting our members with partners, investors, local authorities and national organisations who want to work with community energy.**

**Through events, partnerships and communications, we create the relationships and opportunities that enable projects to move forward and the sector to grow.**

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## Bringing the sector together

In 2025, around 1,000 people took part in our in-person and online events, creating valuable opportunities for members, partners and supporters to meet, learn and collaborate.

Our national and summer conferences remain key moments for the sector, with over 500 attendees coming together for networking, workshops and member-led discussions. Alongside these, our wider programme of webinars, forums and peer networks enables practitioners to exchange knowledge, explore new ideas and develop solutions to shared challenges.

These spaces do more than share information - they build relationships, spark collaboration and strengthen the sector's collective capacity.

As a result, organisations are better connected, more confident in developing projects, and more able to form the partnerships needed to deliver them.

## Connecting partners with community energy

We work with a wide range of organisations to open up new opportunities for the sector, connecting community energy groups with expertise, funding and routes to market.

In 2025, we collaborated with partners including **Younity, Ethex, Sharenergy, the Church of England** and the **Music Venues Trust**. These partnerships demonstrate how community energy can work across diverse settings - from public buildings and cultural venues to faith organisations and businesses - and help unlock new project models.

# Engage



## Building relationships with local authorities

Strong collaboration with local authorities is essential for delivering projects at scale.

Through initiatives such as Seeing is Believing, we brought councils and community energy organisations together to explore practical models for partnership. By showcasing real-world examples and building understanding of delivery models such as rooftop solar and power purchase agreements (PPAs), we are helping to create the conditions for more projects to move forward.

## Raising the profile of community energy

We also play a key role in increasing visibility and understanding of community energy.

Through our website, newsletters and social media, we promote the achievements of our members and share opportunities with national audiences. In 2025, we expanded our reach by launching new channels, including Instagram, and growing our [Up the Energy](#) campaign onto platforms such as TikTok.

Our [national community energy map](#), viewed more than 158,000 times in 2025, further helps people discover projects and organisations across the country.

## Celebrating success

Recognising success is an important part of building a strong and visible movement.

The Community Energy Awards provide a national platform to showcase the achievements of community energy organisations and highlight their impact in local communities.

## The impact of engagement

This work drives real change. By connecting organisations, raising visibility and building partnerships, we help create demand for community energy - from funders, local authorities, businesses and the public.

This increased demand leads to more collaborations, more investment and more projects being developed. In turn, this enables community energy organisations to scale their impact, bringing more locally owned renewable energy, lower energy costs and wider social benefits to communities across England.

# Engage



**Up the Energy** aims to unlock the full potential of community energy and ensure everyone can play a part in delivering the UK's Clean Power mission.

In November 2025, Community Energy England joined forces with partners, businesses, and community energy organisations to launch a campaign calling on the Government to take urgent action and help community energy reach its full potential.

The campaign has two core aims:

## **Influence**

The Government's Local Power Plan is a historic first step - committing £1 billion to community energy. Now it's time to finish the job and remove the barriers still holding communities back.

## **Raise awareness**

To increase public awareness of what community energy is and why it is so vital to communities across the country.

## **Let's unleash community power**

The Local Power Plan addresses some of our asks - and we welcome that. But critical barriers remain.

We're calling on the UK Government to build on this momentum and deliver the changes still needed to unlock local power and ensure every community can share in the benefits of clean, affordable energy.

- Deliver on the Local Power Plan and Warm Homes Plan
- Guarantee a fair export price for community-generated electricity
- Prioritise community projects in grid connection queues
- Support local supply models, public sector purchasing and shared ownership
- Provide access to public land and rooftop for community energy

Over 250 organisations signed the letter which was delivered to the Government on 4 March 2026 at a special event in Parliament Square.



# UP THE ENERGY

# Looking ahead



## A new chapter for Community Energy England

Community energy enters 2026 with strong momentum and a real opportunity to grow. Building on what's been achieved so far, our focus now is on turning that momentum into practical outcomes for communities across England.

I'm excited to be stepping into this role at such an important moment. Community Energy England is, and will continue to be, the voice of the sector - a trusted convener, supporter and advocate for community energy. We are here to help the sector grow and thrive, and to lead and empower people to be part of a fair and resilient energy system.

What makes us different is that we are genuinely member-led and of the sector. We represent the whole community energy movement - from established organisations to those just getting started - and everything we do is grounded in community energy values. We are collaborative, inclusive and focused on the outcomes that matter most to our members.

Our role is to bring the sector together and enable collective impact. Through our peer-to-peer network, our advocacy, and our relationships with government and partners, we work to ensure community energy is heard at the top table and has the support it needs to succeed.

Over the coming year, we will focus on helping our members go further, faster - supporting them to develop and scale projects in ways that work for them. We will strengthen partnerships with government, GB Energy and local authorities, and continue to make the case for community energy as a central part of the transition to net zero and the delivery of the Local Power Plan.

We will also keep investing in what matters most to our members: practical support, strong connections, and better access to funding and opportunities. At the same time, we will grow awareness and understanding of community energy, so more people can get involved and benefit.

Our members are at the heart of everything we do - from small, local organisations to more established groups - as well as the wider sector and decision-makers who rely on our knowledge and insight.

As we look ahead, our priority is simple: to strengthen the sector, scale impact, and make sure community energy has the voice, support and recognition it deserves.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognise and thank Emma Bridge for her outstanding leadership and the strong foundations she has built over the past 11 years.

I look forward to meeting members across the country, amplifying their voices, growing the movement together, and ensuring Community Energy England continues to champion and elevate the sector.

**Matt Vickers, Chief Executive**

# Our year in numbers

4



strategic pillars to strengthen our impact

334



members



158,000

views of our national map

168



active discussions on our forums with over 800 comments made

650

attendees (in person events)



3 ELN online events

60K

Website views since launch in November 2025



1,100

1,100 downloads of State of the Sector reports

3 in-person events

4



new member introduction calls

13



Consultations and government calls for input

8



Principal Supporters

900

attendees (online events)

# Our funders and partners

Thank you to our grant funders, who have provided us with essential income that enables us to continue our work. We recognise their commitment to the growth of the community energy movement and we are grateful for their ongoing support.

## Funders



## Partners





**Community  
Energy  
England**



The Workstation, 15 Paternoster Row, Sheffield, S1 2BX



033 3303 4126



[communityenergyengland.org](https://communityenergyengland.org)

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