CEE Winter Conference, 24 November: Community Energy Conversation Programme

Round 1 - starts 1.40pm

	Topic	Conversation overview	Host & organisation	Venue space
1.	Flexibility and local energy systems	Join the SP Energy Networks DSO Flexibility team for an interactive session exploring how community energy projects can benefit from flexibility services. We'll provide a short introduction to what flexibility is, how different energy assets can participate, and the potential revenue opportunities available through flexibility markets. Attendees will also have the opportunity to ask questions and learn more about getting involved. The session will then move into a hands-on group activity, **"Build Your Community Energy Project"**, where participants will work through real-world community energy scenarios and explore how flexibility could help improve project viability, generate additional income, and support local energy ambitions. Groups will discuss opportunities, challenges, and the support needed to unlock flexibility potential before sharing their ideas with the room. This workshop is suitable for community energy groups, project developers, and anyone interested in learning how flexibility can create new opportunities for community-led energy projects.	George Fournarakis, Leonard Baraclough, and Colette Clements (SP Energy Networks)	Space Nine
2.	Second life solar in community energy projects	Solar panels are discarded before their design life for a variety of reasons - could this offer an opportunity for community energy groups, now or in the future?	Richard Lane (Big Solar Co-op)	Space Two
3.	How do we collaborate	We'll present a short case study, then discuss examples of what others have done, what they want, and how they might get there.	Mike Hayden (Repowering)	Space One

	around developing software?		& Ben Cannell (Sharenergy)	
4.	Shared ownership	With the Government looking to mandate community ownership, it is important that the communities benefit from this opportunity. We will discuss how community groups can make the most of shared ownership	Paul Phare (Energy4All)	Space Eleven
5.	Alternative community energy funding models	How can we bring Funders together with Community Energy Projects and retain some margin for community benefits?	Neil Burston (Evesham Vale Energy Renewables)	Space Seven
6.	Growing community energy organisations	A joint session which will discuss: how organisations have been scaling up from an established organisation with several projects to a more professionalised and financially sustainable business. And, exploring why the industry is expected to be run a lot by volunteers, as it is very difficult to get funding to pay people to run projects. How can we progress if we can't pay people? Why isn't community expertise valued?	Charlotte Martin (MaidEnergy) & Lucy Meredith (Clean Energy Leeds)	Space Eight
7.	Warm Homes Plan: what's the role for community organisations?	New area-based retrofit schemes are expected to be announced in the next few months, but we know trust is limiting resident take up. Building on work Ashden is doing with SELCE and Repowering London, we'll explore the role of community organisations in supporting residents.	Cara Jenkinson (Ashden)	Space Ten

8.	What legal support does community energy really need?	Exploring recurring legal challenges, gaps in current provisions, barriers to access, and what types of support could help reduce costs, retain knowledge and strengthen place-based energy partnerships.	Paul Gilligan / Lee Barker (Pure Leapfrog)	Space Six

Round 2 - starts 3.30pm

	Topic	Conversation blurb	Host & organisation	Venue space
1.	Community energy and networks: breaking down the barriers	An open conversation bringing together community energy groups and network operators to explore the practical barriers communities experience when engaging with the electricity network. From accessing the right information and technical expertise to connections, communication and navigating network processes, the session will share experiences, identify common challenges and explore how DNOs and communities can work together to make the journey clearer and more collaborative.	Hosted by Louise Taylor & Grace McGovern and DNO colleagues (SPEN & DNOs (SP Electricity North West, SSE, NGED and	Space Nine

			Northern Powergrid)	
2.	Best options for the community ownership part of shared ownership	Looking to form The Great Wind Coop as an enduring and highly professional community owned body to hold share ownership of large (wind) projects, help develop smaller (1 MW to 15 MW) ones, build rapport with large project developers, and avoid each community needing to form a coop etc from scratch. What are the strengths and weaknesses of such a move? What is best?	Mike Blanch (Westmill Sustainable Energy Trust)	Space Eleven
3.	Community energy: reflecting, reimagining and support	This conversation will bring together stakeholders from across the community energy sector to reflect on the role and effectiveness of support services for community energy groups. We will share unique insights, lessons learned and data gathered through the Community Energy Go project to explore what has worked well, identify ongoing challenges and gaps in provision, and discuss how future support services could better meet the needs of groups. Together, we will consider the priorities and approaches needed to strengthen support for the community energy sector going forward.	Steve Coonick (CSE)	Space Eight
4.	How can community partnerships deliver for every resident?	A co-hosted session which will discuss the three topics below: • Increasing take-up of heat pumps: *How can community-led initiatives boost the take-up of air source heat pumps?* • What will the neighbours say? The challenges of heat decarbonisation: *Renewable electricity is easy. Renewable heat is a whole different ball game. We'd like to explore the specific challenges and opportunities of heat decarbonisation, particularly community and communal approaches.* • How can local energy projects deliver benefits to uninterested residents, what barriers are preventing local partnership approaches?: *Exploring barriers and approaches to engaging local residents in community energy partnerships and creating local partnerships to deliver community engaging energy projects between councils, grid operators, strategic / private sector partners and community organisations.*	Neil Harrison (Reheat), Livvy Hanks (Our Power Community Energy) and Annie Merry (Energy Projects Plus)	Space Ten

5.	Roadmap to investment: unlocking private capital for local energy	How have local energy projects combined funding sources and what worked? What other funding sources are available, what are their respective priorities?	Fred Carter (Minnow) & Ben Sharpe (Ethex)	Space Seven
6.	Developing site owner relationships from cold	One of the hardest challenges for new community energy groups is starting those very first conversations with site owners. Networking, introductions, marketing, cold outreach: how can this process be better understood?	Noel Peatford (Middleton Community Energy)	Space Two
7.	Community capacity	How do we build capacity in deprived communities to enable them to act on energy related issues	Clare Black (TSL Kirklees)	Space One
8.	National community energy capacity building: commercialisation templates	With funding from DESNZ, the Net Zero Hubs have commissioned Regen, Carbon Coop and Spencer West LLP to deliver the 'Community Energy Commercialisation Standards' project. The project aims to provide community energy groups across the UK with guidance and template legal documents to help break down the barriers to commercialisation in the sector. Following the closure of a national survey last month to inform the prioritisation of resources as part of the programme, this breakout will present the views provided from community energy groups and sector stakeholders and explain how this has informed the proposed focus and design of the new resources. This discussion will allow community energy groups to ask questions and share their feedback which can further inform the development of new template documents and guidance.	Alex Robertson (Regen), & Rhianna Weston, (North West Net Zero Hub)	Space Six