



Community energy is great, but...

Challenging the stereotypes

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About Regen

Regen provides independent, evidence-led insight and advice in support of our mission to transform the UK's energy system for a net zero future.

We focus on analysing the systemic challenges of decarbonising power, heat and transport.

We know that a transformation of this scale will require engaging the whole of society in a just transition.



Experts



Pioneers



Convenors

**“Community energy is great for middle-class luvvies
in leafy villages with money and retired engineers.”**

**“Community energy is great but it’s mostly
for people in affluent, rural villages.”**

The reality

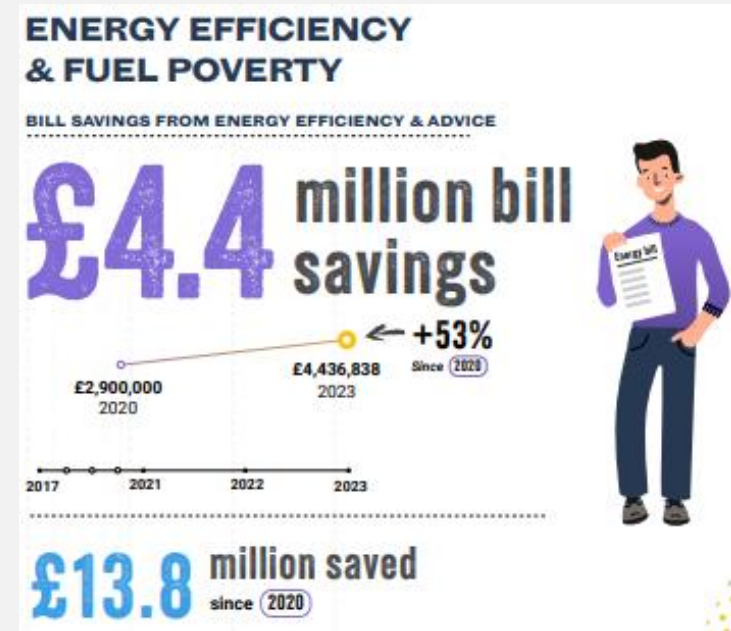
- **Community energy is supporting a just transition in lots of different places.**
 - Deliberately located more often in lower-income areas (Stewart 2022)
 - Includes wind turbines in the highlands and islands to solar/storage in council estates to retrofit in cities and local energy schemes
 - Enabled diverse groups, geographies and communities to participate (+ more to come!)



**“Community energy is great but it’s mostly
for fixing the church roof.”**

The reality

- **Community energy is supporting people most in-need and in some cases, transforming local economies.**
 - Provided fuel poverty support directly to thousands throughout the energy crisis
 - Supporting local-level decarbonization and climate outreach
 - Delivering community wealth building and supporting local jobs and businesses



Source: Community Energy State of the Sector (2024)

CE4JT in action

Staffordshire Community Energy

- Community energy group worked with local NHS to install solar on hospital buildings
- Proceeds fund local fuel poverty charity – NHS links allows them to also track savings to the NHS through tackling health issues with energy efficiency and support
- Cooperative model which prioritises outreach and engagement with typically excluded groups

Ynni Teg

- Delivering a Virtual Power Plant connecting solar and storage in urban areas of Newport and Cardiff
- Aiming to deliver low-cost energy to areas of fuel poverty
- Using faith centres as community hubs, supporting capacity building and outreach with local charities

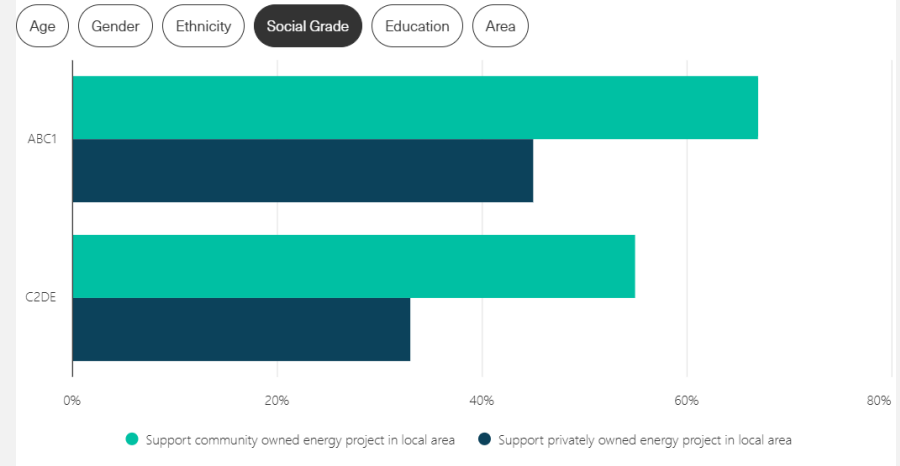
**“Community energy is great but it won’t ever
move the dial on the energy transition.”**

The reality

- **Community energy is popular across the country, increasing support for the wider clean power mission.**
 - 60% of the public support community-owned versus 40% for commercial developments
 - Community and shared ownership increase support locally for clean energy and decarbonization (Hogan et al 2024)
 - Community energy supports capacity and networks in communities and can engage as trusted actors in wider energy transition

Figure 2: Support for Community/Private Owned Local Energy Projects across Demographics

Q: To what extent, if any, would you support or oppose the creation of a community/private owned renewable energy project in your local area? [Asked to half of the the sample; n=2415] for community owned and [Asked to half of the sample; n=2415] for privately owned



Source: Commonwealth/YouGov polling (2025)

Fair by default?

- Not all projects are fair by default – and lots needs to happen to enable the sector at scale
- From work with Scottish Government and Climate Exchange, we suggest 4 key principles for ensuring “just” community energy projects
- Shared ownership can also play an important role here with so much of the CP2030 capacity already in the connections queue

1. **Ownership and governance:** Ensuring that ownership models are democratic, accessible and accountable, and actively include diverse stakeholders and organisations representing different social, economic and cultural groups
2. **Participation and engagement:** Projects are developed and governed with meaningful, proactive engagement with diverse citizens and communities, with people supported to codesign and make decisions on projects from the outset
3. **Finance, funding and investment:** Operating projects using transparent financial models that prioritise just transition outcomes and do not exclude people from governance based on ability to pay
4. **Benefits and beneficiaries:** Aiming to maximise social, economic and environmental benefits tailored to the priorities of different social groups, with as much maintained within the local area as possible



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