

Community Energy

Warwickshire

The power of community

PARTNERING WITH CEW

WHO WE ARE

Community Energy Warwickshire (CEW) is a pioneering social enterprise set up in 2010 by volunteers from community and environmental groups across south Warwickshire.

CEW is legally constituted as a Community Benefit Society - a form of cooperative. It is owned and democratically controlled by its members (shareholders) on the basis of one member, one vote. Following a successful community share offer in 2011, CEW currently has around 90 members and share capital of just over £113,000. There are nine directors, all of whom serve in a voluntary capacity and are unpaid.

OUR TRACK RECORD

Since setting up CEW in 2010, we have:

- installed solar panels with a total peak capacity of 60 kilowatts (kWp) at Stratford and Warwick Hospitals as part of a unique partnership between a community organisation and an NHS body
- run energy fairs, energy efficiency awareness sessions and other events in communities across south Warwickshire
- investigated opportunities for local sustainable energy projects using a range of technologies, including a Government-funded feasibility study into the potential use of anaerobic digestion to produce renewable heat and electricity
- built excellent relationships with local organisations, community groups and businesses, including Act on Energy, local authorities and local installers

HOW WE FINANCE OUR PROJECTS

As a Community Benefit Society, CEW is able to run its activities in much the same way as a company. Unlike a company, however, it has the legal privilege of being able to offer its shares for sale to the public without the bureaucracy involved in commercial share offers. This means that CEW can raise capital cheaply and ensures that its projects are owned by the community, not the banks.

CEW is permitted to pay a modest amount of interest on members' investments, but its main purpose is to create social and environmental benefits. For this reason, the rate of interest paid on share capital must not exceed that needed to attract and retain the capital required to carry out CEW's aims.

WHAT WE CAN OFFER

CEW is keen to work with communities wishing to install renewable and sustainable energy projects at buildings such as village halls, community buildings and schools. Depending on each community's needs, we can take total responsibility for planning, procuring and financing projects, or we can help the community to achieve its own project.

Where we are asked to raise the finance for a community energy project, we would expect to take full responsibility, including any associated professional fees and other costs, for:

- commissioning an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) assessment of the building - generally a requirement for registering a project for the Feed-in Tariff
- organising the supply, installation and commissioning of the project by competitive tender
- administering the community share offer and obtaining assurance from HMRC that qualifying share purchases will attract income tax relief
- registering the project for the Feed-in Tariff or Renewable Heat Incentive (as applicable) and obtaining any necessary consents and permissions
- meeting all ongoing operational costs, including insurance

WHAT WE EXPECT IN RETURN

If we take responsibility for organising and raising finance for a project, we would need the host organisation to:

- ensure access to its building for visits by EPC assessors, installers and others involved
- provide copies of documents, including utility bills, site plans and circuit diagrams
- work with CEW and its installer to achieve a cost-effective design which can be installed quickly and straightforwardly at least cost
- help CEW to obtain an appropriate long-term lease for the use of areas of its building, such as roofspace and/or plant room capacity, required for plant and equipment
- help to market CEW's share offer to the organisation's members, building users and the wider community

SHARING THE BENEFITS

If CEW takes 100% of the responsibility for financing a project, it expects to assume ownership of all plant and equipment, together with all the income arising from the Feed-in Tariff or Renewable Heat Incentive and from sales of energy. However, it will obviously expect to share the benefits with the community, taking into account the expected profitability of the project and the relative financial and other contributions made by CEW and the host organisation.

Subject to detailed negotiations, potential benefits to the host organisation could include one or a combination of:

- annual rental payments for the use of building space occupied by CEW's plant and equipment
- generous discounts on energy produced by the project
- donations from CEW's "charity pot", which could be used to improve the energy efficiency of the host organisation's building or otherwise help to address local needs

CEW would also be keen to work with the host organisation to offer energy efficiency awareness sessions for the local community and to run energy fairs and similar community events.

GET IN TOUCH!

If your community building would benefit from investment in renewable and sustainable energy, we'd love to help! Please contact us by e-mail at info@cew.coop or by phone to 01789 290736 or 01789 298503.

Community Energy Warwickshire Limited is registered with the Financial Conduct Authority as an Industrial & Provident Society for Community Benefit with registered number 31145R.

Registered address: 108 Shipston Road, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 7LR.