

CEL Director Election June 2020

Community Energy London is having an election for the Board of Directors as part of our Annual General Meeting (AGM). This is a volunteer position of at least one year, and Directors are expected to attend quarterly Directors meetings, as well as feed-in to ongoing CEL work. Our rules state that CEL should have a minimum of 3 Directors. Herewith are a few words from the candidates this year.

Candidate names:

Syed Ahmed - Energy for London

Sydney Charles - En10ergy

Tanuja Pandit - PUNL

Hannah Short – Solar SOAS

Victoria Ward – Aldgate Solar Power

We expect to have up to 7 Directors on the CEL Board and 5 people have put themselves forward to add to the 2 Directors remaining on the Board. Our election guidelines state that, so long as the candidates are formally proposed and seconded, they will automatically be appointed as Directors.

Syed Ahmed



Affiliation: Energy for London and Repowering London

I have been involved with CEL since 2016, working actively to help establish the organisation as a key network and voice for the community energy sector in London. I firmly believe that community energy will have a significant role to play in the energy transition, however, national government's retreat over the past few years from working with the sector has been a major setback for groups and their projects. This is why I firmly believe that it is critical for CEL to support greater partnership-working with stakeholders in London to highlight the benefits of community energy and build support and identify potential routes of delivering new projects. CEL has been successful to date in doing this by working with the GLA, the Mayor of London and London boroughs but there is far more to do to realise London's full potential for community energy. Looking forward, I would like to support CEL's activities in three key areas: continue to build on these partnerships and make community energy centre-stage in plans to address the Climate Emergency and Green Economic Recovery; secure financial and other support for groups, projects, and for CEL as an organisation; and ensure CEL can continue to build and develop groups' capacity and resilience.

Sydney Charles



Affiliation: en10ergy and Highgate Society Sustainable Living

I was very involved with the formation of CEL, working on the website, taking minutes etc and then helping to recruit paid officers. I have been the Secretary of CEL since November 2017, worked with officers on administrative aspects and contributed to the consultation responses of CEL.

I believe that, at this moment that the UK emerges from the Covid crisis and the timeframe to change course from climate catastrophe gets ever nearer, CEL could become more and more important. There are signs that the powers that be are thinking about 'Building Back Better' and may listen to those who understand renewable energy, energy efficient homes and how to harness Community strength. If elected again I hope to continue helping to grow the Community Energy sector in London and influencing actions to enable the sector to thrive.

Tanuja Pandit

Affiliation: Power Up North London



I have been involved in environmental sustainability work since late 2016 when as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts I set up a household sustainability project and ran a number of events on ways to reduce each household's environmental impact. This led me to join Power Up North London in late 2017 and then to attend CEL meetings. I have found the CEL meetings useful forums for sharing new ideas and for offering opportunities to community groups to work collaboratively and to get involved in new projects.

I believe CEL can be a springboard for the development and scaling up of community energy groups in London and would like to offer my financial and business management experience in the commercial and charity sectors to further CEL's ability to do so. The community energy sector has and can continue to play a vital role in the decarbonisation of the UK bringing solutions that are fair and inclusive. It is needed now more than ever when there is a greater appreciation of the climate emergency and of the power of communities to support each other and to solve challenging problems collectively for the greater good.

Hannah Short



Affiliation: Solar SOAS/ UniSolar

Aspirations for CEL and my contribution:

I've been involved in the community energy scene for a number of years, from helping to co-found the first community energy project on a University Solar SOAS, to interning at Repowering London for 3 months, to working for almost a year as the CEL Officer.

I believe CEL's role is to maintain a positive relationship with the GLA and to continue to secure vital financial support for feasibility studies, as well as to provide a platform to enable groups to work together to develop new ways of setting up different kinds of projects. The work CEL is doing around Council Climate Emergency action plans is vital, and will help embed community energy as part of the London vision for our zero carbon future. Finally, I think CEL provides a means of collaborating around issues relevant to the new context of Covid-19.

I'm familiar with the sector, and have already built relationships with many key stakeholders, including most community energy groups in London, as well as the GLA and CEE. I also know CEL as an organisation well. I think we sorely need younger, more diverse voices in the sector, and I bring a perspective that will prioritise this. I currently work as a campaigner at Greenpeace, and have a range of experience working in different capacities across various environmental issues.

Victoria Ward



Affiliation: Aldgate Solar Power

Aspirations for Community Energy London (CEL) and my proposed contribution.

I wish for all members to feel supported by CEL and for an inclusive environment to discuss the positives and challenges faced by us as individuals and member organisations, that we share best-practice, promote success, grow our voice and inspire and encourage others to take on projects in their local communities.

I have a BA(Hons) Physics from the University of Oxford and have spent the past 13 years recruiting finance leadership roles for non-profits. I have strong networking, business development and negotiation skills, working with multiple stakeholders, with different agendas, in a collaborative, constructive and open manner.

I am passionate about clean energy, tech for good and a more sustainable way to live and believe this opportunity with my professional background will allow me to make a success of Aldgate Solar Power and act as a true ambassador for CEL. I will also support the running and governance of CEL.