

Community energy governance

**A guide to available resources for community
energy organisations**

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Preface from the Greater South East Net Zero Hub

We are delighted to launch this guide for community energy organisations on how to build good governance practices. While the guide is aimed at community energy organisations in London and the South East, we hope that it will also be useful for groups in other parts of the UK.

Good governance ensures that organisations are well-functioning, impactful, transparent and responsive to their local communities, and sustainably led. On top of this, it is crucial for building trust with key partners and funders, unlocking new opportunities for the growth of the sector.

There is a wealth of experience, knowledge and support on this topic available and this guide aims to bring this together. We would like to thank all the community groups and individuals that have contributed their experience and expertise to this guide, as well as Community Energy South, Community Energy England, Community Energy London, Ashden Climate Solutions.

We hope the guide will help community groups who are getting started with their community energy journey, as well as long-established groups looking to grow or improve some of their governance practices.

Greater South East Net Zero Hub

Executive summary

Good governance is a key ingredient in ensuring community energy organisations are equipped to turn ambition into action at the scale required to deliver net-zero by 2030. Ultimately, we need sustainable, thriving organisations who have the right people, finance and resources to deliver projects that create real benefits for communities.

Governance covers all aspects of running a successful organisation. This guide provides tips and links to resources for community energy organisations, pooling together key resources from across the community energy and wider voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors. The guide is aimed primarily at groups that are starting out, however it's also useful for long-established groups looking to grow or improve their governance practices.

Developed through discussions with community energy groups in the Greater South East and experts in community energy and governance, this guide is structured around what they considered to be key governance priorities:

- **Getting set up as a group** (includes choosing legal and governance structures, writing governance documents).
- **Recruiting and supporting your leadership team** (includes attracting a diverse and representative board, getting the right mix of skills and background, working as and with volunteers, succession planning).
- **Widening participation** (includes offering more inclusive membership offers and getting engagement and involvement from more and more diverse people in the local community).
- **Creating effective systems and operations** (includes managing tasks and files, managing data, finding the right insurance, developing your organisational policies).
- **Learning from and working with others** (includes working with local authorities and where to get bespoke support).

You can navigate this guide in a way that best suits your needs - whether it's to find suggestions on dealing with a specific governance challenge, reading up on general governance principles, or looking for inspiring case studies from peers within the sector.

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About this guide

This guide provides tips and links to supportive resources on the topic of governance to community energy organisations. The guide is aimed primarily at groups that are starting out, however there are elements of the guide that would be helpful for organisations at any stage.

What is governance?

Governance can be defined as “the systems and processes that ensure an organisation’s overall direction, supervision, and accountability” ([Chris Cornforth Governance Overview, Governance and Participation project, Co-operatives UK, 2011](#)).

Governance covers all aspects of running a successful community organisation. This includes, but is not limited to, having an effective board, efficient operations and processes and ensuring wide participation from the community. Co-operatives UK has a lot of great resources on governance in the context of cooperatives and social enterprises. Their [Governance Wheel resource](#) outlines the multi-faceted nature of governance.

Why is governance important?

*“There are over 300 existing community energy groups across the UK, who have been developing and building local community energy over the past 10-15 years. We can learn much from these pioneers, today community energy has been tried and tested but there is a warning on the bottle; When you are starting on the community energy journey consider your long-term vision for your local place, consider your governance, have an idea of timescales and also that you are setting up an organisation with community benefit at its heart that could and should be operating for 2-3 decades if established in the right way. You may be looking at renewable energy generation projects or establishing a local energy advice programme or both. It will take time to get established and be resilient, so your governance is important.” – **Ollie Pendered, Chief Executive of Community Energy South***

Having good governance practices can ensure your organisation is:

- Legally compliant.
- Well-functioning, transparent and sustainably led.
- Enhances the impact of your work, and the wellbeing of your staff.
- Builds trust with partners and funders, unlocking funding and new opportunities.

How was this guide created?

This guide is based on discussions with community energy organisations in the Greater South East region and experts in community energy and governance, as well as a desk-based review of existing support and resources. This research was undertaken as part of the Community Energy Infrastructure project, funded by the Greater South East Net Zero Hub. The guide focuses on key governance challenges that were highlighted as priority areas for community energy organisations.

How to use this guide

This guide aims to bring together a curated list of helpful resources and support available. Each section will have a list of reflective questions for your group, to understand what stage you're at and what your priorities should be, as well as some helpful tips and links to resources and tools.

If you're keen to learn about governance more generally, the following resources provide an excellent overview. These resources are also referenced elsewhere in this guide, given they cut across several governance topics:

- **Cooperatives-UK's** [Simply Governance guide](#) provides a comprehensive overview of the systems and processes concerned with the running of a sustainable community organisation.
- **Cooperatives-UK's** [Corporate Governance code](#) helps chart what good practice can look like. It focuses on best practice around democracy and the quality of leadership that emerges through good governance.
- **National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)**'s [governance help and guidance for voluntary organisations](#).
- The **Next Generation** project ran a [series of webinars](#) that covered a number of different topics such as an Introduction to Community Benefit Societies, an Introduction to community share offers and Essentials of society management.
- **Locality** offers a [range of resources](#) for community organisations, focusing on topics such as Seven principles to understand good work and improve practices for new and existing organisations, a guide to changes in employment law and much more.

We also recommend speaking to an established community energy group in your proximity, as well as community energy support organisations (a list is provided at the end of this guide in the section "[Getting bespoke support](#)").

You can use the following questions to help you navigate this document.

Are you looking to:

- Get started as a group?
- Pick an appropriate legal form?
- Define your organisational structure?
- Write your governing documents?

Go to this section: **Getting set up**

Are you looking to:

- Recruit people to manage your organisation and deliver activities?
- Diversify your leadership team?
- Fill gaps in the current mix of skills and backgrounds in your leadership team?
- Manage with working with volunteer directors?
- Develop a succession plan for your board?

Go to this section: **Recruiting and supporting your leadership team**

Are you looking to:

- Learn how to engage with more people in your community or recruit more members that better represent your community?

Go to this section: **Widening Participation**

Are you looking to:

- Streamline how you manage projects, tasks and file sharing as a team?
- Manage contacts and data in a secure way?
- Better understand and manage your organisation's finances?
- Get the right insurance for your organisational needs?
- Understand what policies your organisation needs, and help to write them?

Go to this section: **Creating effective systems and operations**

Are you looking to:

- Work with partners – including how to best engage with local authorities?
- Access bespoke support?

Go to this section: **Learning from and working with others**

Getting set up

Getting started is an exciting moment in your journey as a community energy organisation. Whilst thinking about the impact your project could have in delivering community benefits and contributing towards net-zero goals, it's also crucial this time is used to set good foundations, ensuring you have the legal structure, policies and processes that will allow you to get the most out of your projects. It can also enable you to build a happy, representative and well-functioning team, attract finance and support for your projects, and reach a larger sub-section of your community, all of which will enable you to function well into the future.

Questions to consider

- Is your organisation clear on its overall purpose, aims and objectives over the next 12 months, 2 years, 20+ years?
- Do you have a 5-year business plan, or have taken steps to develop one?
- Have you spoken to other community energy groups who have experience in setting up an organisation like yours?
- Are you aware of organisations like Community Energy England who support community energy groups across the UK and share best practice?
- Do you understand the difference between the main legal structures and the pros and cons of each?
- Who are your members and how are you defining them?
- How will you seek finance for your project(s)? Certain types of finance require or exclude certain types of legal structure.
- What tangible benefits do you want to deliver for your community?
- Do you have appropriate governing documents in place?

Resources and tools to help you

- **Co-operative UK's** [Simply Start-up guide](#) covering the process of starting a Co-operative or Community Enterprise.
- **Humshaugh Net Zero** outline their decision-making process around identifying a suitable legal structure as a community energy group themselves and list key questions they would advise other groups to consider.
- **Community Energy London's** [10 step guide on how to set up](#) and run a community energy group.
- **Community Energy England's** [Getting Started with Community Energy page](#).
- **Community Energy South and Community Energy London's** [Top 10 guide to getting started](#) guide sets out a process you can take for getting started as a group.

Choosing the right type of legal structure

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to community energy given the range of business models, technologies, and the specific needs of your local community, so it's important to first and foremost consider what you want to achieve as a group and then select a legal structure that most aligns with your aims. Having a good understanding of the pros and cons of each type of structure can also ensure you don't face limitations to what kind of work you can carry out later down the line, for example, if you are planning to raise shares as a form of financing for your project, there are specific challenges that come with this and will inform what legal structure you select. At the same time, as you develop you are likely to want different things from your structure, and there are plenty of examples of groups pivoting their model and structure as they grow.

Although choosing a legal form and incorporation is not always required to deliver community energy projects, typically a group will need to do this to access funding and establish certain partnerships.

Typical options for community energy groups will be:

- Limited companies (Company Limited by Guarantee or Company Limited by Shares)
- Community Interest Companies (or CIC)
- Charities (usually Charitable Incorporated Organisation or CIO)
- Cooperatives
- Community Benefit Societies (or CBS) (the most common form for community energy groups, previously called Industrial & Provident Society, sometimes called a BenCom)

Co-operatives UK recommends the following questions to ask when choosing your legal structure:

- What is the purpose of the organisation?
- Who are the stakeholders and main beneficiaries?
- Who are the members or owners of the organisation?
- How will the organisation be funded or get its main source of capital?
- What can the organisation do with any remaining assets when the organisation comes to an end?

The table below is based on a table that was developed by Community Energy London, based on Co-operatives UK's Simply Legal guide. It helpfully describes key characteristics of different legal forms that are most relevant to community energy.

Legal form	What is its governing document called?	Can it issue shares? ¹		Does it have to register with a regulatory body?	Is it suitable for charitable status?	Does it have an asset lock? ²	Membership voting
		Standard shares	Community shares				
Company Limited by Guarantee	Articles	No	No	Companies House	Yes	No (unless charity)	One member one vote
Company Limited by Shares	Articles	Yes	No	Companies House	No	No (unless charity)	One vote per share
Community Interest Company (limited by guarantee)	Articles	No	No	Companies House & CIC Regulator	No	Yes	One member one vote
Community Interest Company (limited by shares)	Articles	Yes	No	Companies House & CIC Regulator	No	Yes	One vote per share
Charitable Incorporated organisation	Constitution	No	No	Charity Commission	Yes	Yes	As per the constitution
Co-operative societies	Rules	Yes	Yes	Financial Conduct Authority	No	No	One member one vote
Community Benefit Societies	Rules	Yes	Yes	Financial Conduct Authority	Yes	Yes (optional)	One member one vote

¹ The difference between shares and community shares is that if issuing community shares you can raise share capital without having to fully comply with the Financial Services and Markets Act (2000) (FMSA). Community shares can only be issued by Co-operatives and Community Benefit Societies

² An asset lock stops your organisation's assets from being used for private gain.

Community Energy Barnet's setting up journey and choice of legal form

Community Energy Barnet Ltd. are a new Community Benefit Society, established in late 2024.

At the start of their journey, the group met with several very helpful people including Community Energy London, En10Energy of Haringey (their nearest community energy group), Energy4All, members of Barnet Council and Repowering London. Based on advice from all of these people, as well as from their own research, it quickly became obvious that there was one clear leader in the choice of legal forms for them to adopt. Given that their main aim is to install renewable energy infrastructure (mainly rooftop solar) on urban community buildings such as schools, leisure centres and places of worship, they needed a legal model that would allow them to apply for grant funding and raise money through community share offers. A community benefit society was the obvious choice.

"Forming a community benefit society is not a decision to be taken lightly, as there are significant responsibilities involved. We had a fairly large group of interested Barnet residents but many people felt that this commitment was too significant given their other responsibilities. We reached a committed group of four people and together we took the decision to work with Repowering London, a community-energy facilitator. They were extremely supportive and helped us to submit our application to become a CBS via Co-operatives UK. They also put one of their team as a Director on our board, which helped to give us confidence. We were able to use the model rules from Co-operatives UK and we found the registration process to be straightforward and efficient. The day that we received confirmation of our registration and our official 'seal' felt like a really exciting milestone. The community benefit society model was clearly the right choice for us and we have already been able to apply for grants because of having chosen this route."

Director of Community Energy Barnet Ltd.

Resources and tools to help you

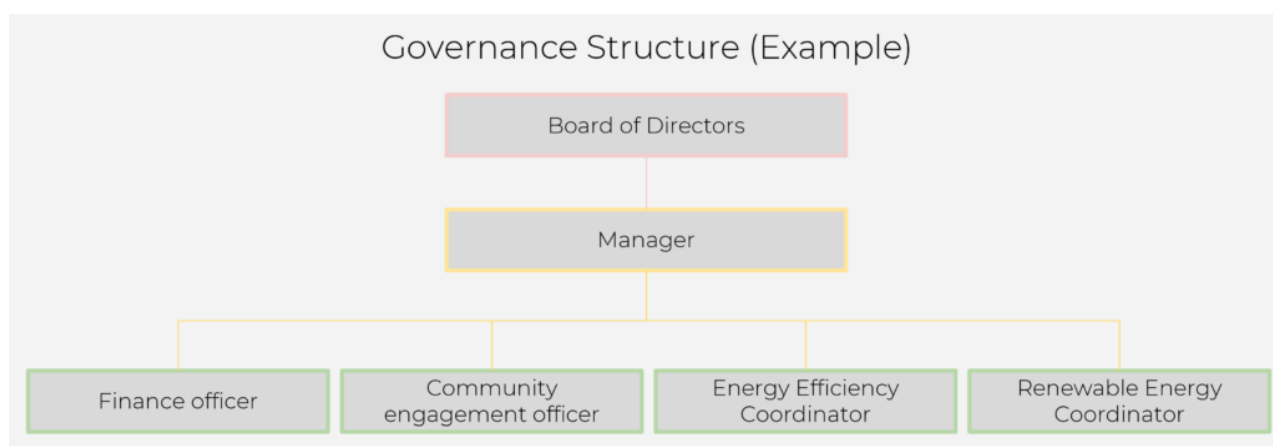
- **Plunkett Foundation** has extensive experience in advising community organisations on choosing the best legal structure for your organisation. This [webinar](#), [slides](#), [A brief guide to legal structures](#) and [Legal structure table](#) are particularly helpful.
- **Co-operatives UK's** [Simply Legal: All you need to know about legal forms and organisational types](#)
- [The Social Enterprise Guide to Start Your Social Enterprise](#).
- **The UK government's** [step by step guide of how to set up a social enterprise](#). Links to relevant forms are provided e.g. to Companies House for CICs, as well as links to support organisations for social enterprises such as Social Enterprise UK.
- **Next Generation's** [Introduction to Community Benefit Societies webinar](#) – Cooperative Futures discusses what a CBS is, along with the role of Directors and the skills required to do a good job. The session also covers how CBS differ from other legal forms.
- **Centre for Sustainable Energy's** videos on [different legal structures work for different groups](#) and [becoming a legally recognised entity](#) – describes which structures might work for you and what to consider when deciding on a legal form. The focus of this video is on renewable energy generation projects.

Setting up your governance structure

Defining and setting up your governance structure will determine the distribution of responsibility in your organisation, who will take on certain functional or operational roles and how you will make decisions within and beyond your leadership team.

At the leadership level, your structure will usually include a Board of Directors (or Trustees if you are a charity) that hold ultimate responsibility for the organisation, a manager (or management group) and operational roles.

Community Energy London's [10-step guide page](#) has a useful description of a typical governance structure in relation to the leadership and operational functions including the role of the Board, Management and Operations, shown below:



Strategic governance and accountability, however, do not always sit within the leadership and operational roles. For example, if your organisation is a cooperative, setting out the role of the membership in governance would need to be a key element of your overall governance structure. A charity group may also want to reflect on what the role of its beneficiaries is in its decision-making.

Energise South Downs' governance structure

Energise South Downs started with three directors one of whom was the secretary and project manager. The timing was an important factor in expanding their team as volunteers and employees need to be inspired by the direction your organisation is travelling in. Two years in, they carried out a skills audit and their board expanded from three directors to eight. Each Director has a clear role and responsibility that fits with their skills.

Their voluntary non-executive directors cover a range of skills from legal, to finance, business development, project management, communications and technical.

Their management roles moved from being voluntary to paid roles (CEO, operational staff covering communications, project management, finance and community engagement).

"Moving from a start-up to a fully functioning community energy organisation needs planning."

Catriona Cockburn, CEO, Director and Founder.

Resources and tools to help you

- **Co-operatives UK's** [Co-operative Corporate Governance Code](#) includes a good overview of what a board composition looks like, roles and responsibilities, membership, and general good governance principles.
- **Next Generation's** [webinar on Introduction to society law, board power and governance](#) includes the role of Directors and the skills required to do the job.

Writing your governing documents

When you have decided which legal structure your group will take, you will need a governing document which will be submitted when you register. The name of this document will depend on which legal form you take (e.g. Constitution for charities, Articles for companies and Rules for Cooperatives and CBS).

Your governing document will include the objectives of the organisation or charity's purpose, the role, powers and rules about members, the board of directors and the manager or how trustees are appointed, rules about decision making, director or trustee expenses and payments, capital management and dissolution of the organisation.

It's a good idea to use standardised templates (or "Model Rules/Articles") to save you some time, however some organisations might require more bespoke governing documents. It's also useful to look at the governing documents of other similar organisations - governing documents are usually publicly accessible so you can find these by searching an organisation's website (if they have one).

For Community Benefit Societies and Cooperatives, there are [a number of sponsoring bodies that provide Model Rules](#), some of which are more tailored to energy organisations than others (such as [Shareenergy](#) and [Energy Local](#)). A sponsoring body is an organisation that sponsors a set of rules which the Financial Conduct Authority accepts as a model. If you register via one of those bodies and you use a set of model rules produced by them, you may be eligible to pay a lower application fee for the registration of your society. Given the breadth of options and the importance of getting it right, it's a good idea to talk to an advisor.

Resources and tools to help you

- **Co-operative UK's** [Choosing your governing document](#) page.
- **Wrigleys Solicitors'** [Specialist legal advice for co-operatives, community benefit societies and mutuals](#) page.
- **Plunkett's Foundation's** [Model Rules for a Community Benefit Society](#): this is a service to help guide you through the process of registration.
- **The Charity Commission's** [Model governing documents](#) includes a model constitution for CIOs.
- **The Company Warehouse's** blog on [Understanding CIC Articles of Association](#).
- **Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies's** [Model Articles of Association](#).
- **Companies House's** [Model Articles of Association for limited companies](#).

Recruiting and supporting your leadership team

Having the right board or trustees ensures you have the best skills and experience to provide the strategic, operational and governance oversight needed to function as a community energy organisation. It also ensures your organisation is accountable to its members and to the communities you serve. Ultimately, your leadership team will guide everything you do and set the culture and values of your organisation. It's a key part of what makes an organisation successful in achieving its aims.

MaidEnergy's recruitment of directors and staff

MaidEnergy was invited by Community Energy South to take part in Community Energy People - a National Lottery Climate Action Funded programme aimed at growing established community energy groups so they can achieve more. Through this, MaidEnergy has been supported with succession planning for their board membership and funded to recruit three part-time staff.

Using the Reach Volunteering platform, the group were able to get the skills and capacity on the board so that they could be good employers and manage additional energy projects.

"A crucial aim for our recruitment was that over half of newcomers should be those experiencing barriers to involvement in community energy. Recruitment wording expressed that "The Society aims for the board to represent society well in terms of background, culture, abilities, experiences and approaches". Similar wording was used for staff recruitment "We actively encourage people of all backgrounds, ages, races, religions, belief systems, sexual orientations and gender identities to apply for this role. We are working towards being a Disability Confident employer and are open to discussing how best to make that work for our successful candidate". This was successful in achieving a strong balance of diversity in terms of cultural background, disability and economic status. Lastly, we advertised using Charity Jobs which anonymised applicant names so that shortlisting was based entirely on competence and experience shown"

Nicola Davidson, Director of MaidEnergy.

Questions to consider

- Do you have a good mix of skills across your board that will allow you to function effectively as an organisation, engage your community, as well as the technical and financial knowledge required to navigate a community energy project? Is this aligned with your organisation's business plan?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses as a board? If gaps in skills and knowledge exist, what measures have been taken to remedy this?
- Do your board represent your local community and include people from a mix of backgrounds?
- Do your board and trustees have an aligned strategy and clearly defined roles?
- Culture and values - have you considered the values you want to underpin your organisation and guide your work?
- Do you have a succession plan in place or strategy to ensure the longevity of the board?

Attracting a diverse and representative board

To ensure your organisation is properly accountable to your community and can ensure that its activities align with their needs, it's important that your board is representative of the people it aims to serve.

Diversity is also important to ensure your board has a range of perspectives to bring to the table when it comes to deciding on strategic direction and objectives for the organisation. This helps organisations to develop fresh ideas and can support the long-term longevity of the organisation.

Diversity can come in many forms (for example: age, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation) and a diverse board will look different depending on the local demographic make-up of your community.

"Finding workable solutions for people unlike yourselves is key to success. And the best way to do this is to find people unlike yourself to join the team!" – **Sarah Burgess, Board member, Grand Union Community Energy**

Resources and tools to help you

- **Co-operative UK's** [The make-up of a co-op board](#) video highlights the importance of having a diverse board.
- **Co-op Foundation's** [List of resources for diversifying and retaining a diverse board and workforce in charities.](#)
- **Younity's** [Community Energy Connect](#) is a volunteering platform that unites skilled individuals with community energy groups across the UK, aiming to expand capacity and plug the sector's skills gap. Skilled individuals (e.g. law, finance, marketing etc) can volunteer to help CE groups and CE groups can then post a volunteer opportunity and search for appropriate volunteers.
- **National Lottery's** [practical guide to embedding young trustees in your governance.](#) This guide provides some best practice tips and templates to help charities involve young people in their governance. Although the document is aimed at charities (and therefore some of the terminology may not be relevant for more common types of community energy organisations), there are some helpful tips that cross over. For example - template for doing a skills audit, writing an inclusive role description that is appropriate for young people, guide for time involved to recruit and support a young person etc.

Getting the right mix of background and skills

Community energy organisations are relatively unique in the community sector, given they often operate as both a community organisation and a professional commercial entity, seeking to be successful in both spaces. Therefore, balancing business acumen with the core culture of openness, transparency and honesty that is so important for community enterprises is essential. When thinking about who to have in your leadership team, it's a good idea to consider the culture and values that underpin your team and get a mix of backgrounds and perspectives that are required for a thriving community energy organisation.

In terms of skills, it's best practice to have a good mix of technical, legal, financial, project management, and engagement skills across your leadership team, or where there are skills gaps, to identify where this support might be sourced externally. Sometimes, these specialist skills can be expensive to source, however there are organisations like Younity's [Community Energy Connect volunteer platform](#) that helps unite skilled individuals with community energy groups across the UK.

It's important to place equal importance on the 'soft' skills such as communication, community and stakeholder engagement, and leadership experience, just as much as the 'hard' technical and financial skills a community energy project will require – the ethos of putting people at the heart

of your project isn't just about doing the right thing. If your projects don't have buy-in from your community it is unlikely to succeed, no matter how brilliant the idea.

A good place to start is with a skills audit of your leadership team.

Resources and tools to help you

- **Younity's [Community Energy Connect](#)** is a volunteering platform that unites skilled individuals with community energy groups across the UK, aiming to expand capacity and plug the sector's skills gap. Skilled individuals (e.g. law, finance, marketing etc) can volunteer to help CE groups and CE groups can then post a volunteer opportunity and search for appropriate volunteers.
- The **[One Million Hours initiative](#)** is a platform where people can pledge pro bono or skilled volunteering hours to help projects tackling climate change and biodiversity loss. The focus is on legal expertise, but also includes other skills such as data, technology, marketing, PR, financial, admin. You can use the initiative to either offer skills or be matched up to a volunteer who has those skills by submitting your project enquiry.
- **Chairs Network Scotland's [Board Skills Audit guidance and template](#)** – a self-assessment exercise for your board to highlight what each trustee brings to a committee and identify any gaps in ability and knowledge on your board.
- **Reach Volunteering's [How to complete a skills audit](#)** guidance. This includes a free to use template that organisations can use to identify the skills gap in their boards.
- **Centre for Sustainable Energy's** video on [managing a community project](#) includes a useful overview of the range of skills required for a successful project.
- **Next Generation's [Introduction to Community Benefit Societies webinar](#)** – Cooperative Futures discusses what a CBS is, along with the role of Directors and the skills required to do a good job.
- **Community Energy for Energy Solidarity (CEES)'s [Energy Solidarity toolkit](#)** is for community energy groups that are focused on tackling fuel poverty. The broad guidance covers the setting up of a group, assessment of community needs and capacity of organisations to respond to local needs, financing, community engagement etc. In relation to skills, it is helpful in identifying the softer skills required to deliver this type of work.

Working as and with volunteers

One of the major strengths and challenges of the community energy sector is that it is founded on the hard work of volunteers. Particularly as you start off, you are likely to be operating as a small team of volunteers, with individuals taking on multiple roles. This can be a challenge in terms of how much time you can give to the organisation and the risk of volunteer burnout.

Here are some tips you may want to consider in relation to managing a volunteer-run leadership team:

- Have clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- Provide training and mentorship opportunities where possible.
- Ensure that the roles allocated match well to individual's skills and interests.
- Be realistic about how much time tasks take.
- Be realistic about how much time you can commit, and therefore the size and type of project you can deliver.
- Outsource support where appropriate (this could be paid support, or it might be recruiting temporary volunteer support from existing membership or from outside the organisation).

On outsourcing support, it is useful to consider whether a skillset or activity is a one-off requirement or likely to be regularly needed. It may make more sense to outsource a one-off requirement than trying to develop those skills and knowledge in-house.

SE24's Volunteer Manager role

Sustainable Energy 24 has a Volunteer Manager who works for them for one day per week.

"Having a staff member focused on volunteering has given us the bandwidth to regularly review and expand the ways we involve volunteers. We started with volunteers assisting with feasibility surveys for potential new LED and solar projects, and now our volunteers are also involved in drafting grant funding applications, financial modelling to assess the financial viability of potential new projects, project management of new installations, operations and management of our existing portfolio, and community engagement work. Having a Volunteer Manager has also improved our volunteer retention, by giving us the capacity to keep volunteers informed and engaged about our work, seek their feedback on our volunteering processes, and implement their suggestions, while our Directors stay focused on delivering our pipeline of new projects."

Paul Hallas, Director, SE24

Resources and tools to help you

- **Locality's** [Pathways to Good Work](#) guide outlines ways community organisations can create good working conditions for its staff. This includes setting an organisational culture and values, as well as establishing ethical work practices for staff.
- **Centre for Sustainable Energy's** [Working with volunteers](#) guide outlines what you should consider when recruiting volunteers, including identifying the realistic levels of commitment required and how to keep volunteers happy and motivated.

Succession planning

Succession planning refers to the process of proactively identifying and developing future leaders within a community energy organisation, and ensuring that critical knowledge and skills are passed on when current directors retire, move on or become less involved. With community energy projects often having a long life span it is critical to guarantee the long-term sustainability and operation of the project. A positive aspect of succession planning is that it can bring new energy, skills and a fresh pair of eyes to your organisation.

Key aspects of succession planning include:

- Identifying key roles required.
- Developing a talent pool by actively recruiting and nurturing new members (see below section on Widening Participation).
- Provide coaching, training and mentorship opportunities.
- Support with leadership development.
- Checking in with key post holders to enable open conversations about their mid- to long-term plans and expectations.

Resources and tools to help you

- **Cooperatives-UK** [resources on succession planning](#) include guidance on why succession planning is importance, what it could look like in practice and what are the challenges.
- **Locality's** [resource on preparing your community organisation for the future](#) covers board succession.

Widening participation

Community energy organisations can make a big contribution to the democratisation of energy ownership and widening inclusion and participation in the energy transition, but we still have a long way to go. For example:

- A study commissioned by Community Energy England looking at three community energy groups found that 67% of respondents (who were members of the groups) who gave their gender were male, 95% of respondents who gave their ethnicity were White/White British, and 88% of respondents were over 50.
- A 2020 survey conducted by Co-operatives UK found that there is more diversity in terms of gender and income in community share investors compared to angel investors (individual investors in early-stage companies). Despite this, among community share investors in the UK, 73% were university graduates, 92% were White and one in three were aged over 65.

It's worth bearing in mind that diversity and inclusion will look different depending on where an organisation is based and the makeup of the local community. The important thing to remember is that your organisation should try to engage and involve all people who represent your community. Community energy should not be a privilege for those who have the time and resources to engage, it should be for everyone.

In the context of this guide, widening participation refers to getting more diverse people involved in your organisation and its activities, whether that is through your membership offers, your volunteering opportunities, your distribution of community benefits and general community engagement activities. This can ultimately support with ensuring that your organisation is benefitting everyone, as well as support with recruiting a diverse, and representative leadership team (see previous section on Recruiting a leadership team).

Achieving wide and inclusive participation from your community is not an easy task and can take a long time. It's worth building relationships with other community organisations or trusted community members to help with increasing participation.

"Community energy thrives on inclusivity, yet the sector remains unrepresentative. To foster equity, organisations must actively remove barriers, such as inaccessible venues, jargon, and rigid meeting times. Moving beyond tokenism, they engage diverse voices meaningfully, embed inclusion in governance, and invest in training. Challenges include a lack of diversity data, unconscious bias, and sustaining engagement. Solutions involve outreach, community partnerships, tailored messaging, and ensuring participation is dignified and welcoming. By prioritising inclusivity, community energy groups can create truly representative, people-powered change." - **Connie Duxbury, CEO & Founder, Croydon Community Energy**

Questions to consider

- How have you defined your 'community' – is this backed up by any local data or views from local people?
- Have you spoken to a range of people from your local community beyond those actively interested in energy and climate issues?
- Have you engaged with other community organisations in your local area? Do they know about you and what you do?
- If your project delivers energy advice to vulnerable people, do you have people in your team with lived experience of fuel poverty?
- Is there a clear and accessible route to becoming a member?
- How do you recruit new members on an ongoing basis?
- How do people from the community find out about what you do?

Resources and tools to help you

- **Repowering London's** [Building more inclusive community energy co-operatives toolkit](#) for cooperatives who want to increase the diversity of their membership and include underrepresented communities by using participatory research methods.
- **Community Energy Academy's** [Energy Citizen Empowerment toolkit](#) offers a free gamified tool to guide discussion about barriers to participation in the energy system and community energy projects
- **Locality's** [Five Step approach to an impactful DEI programme](#) page offers tips to groups on how to incorporate DEI (diversity, equality and inclusion) into their work, including setting 'ground rules' and good practice on how to run effective DEI discussions that create a safe environment to do so, information on the Equality Act 2010, equalities legislation, tips on incorporating EDI at a board level, as well as how to partner with ally organisations.
- **Locality's** [How to get and keep local people involved in your work](#) guide offers advice, tips and tools for getting and keeping local people involved in community organisation activities.

Creating effective systems and operations

Good governance doesn't end with establishing a legal form and governance structure. It should also be reflected in the effective, efficient and transparent ongoing day-to-day operation of the organisation.

Questions to consider

- How are tasks allocated as an organisation? Is this currently manageable?
- How are files kept and shared across the leadership and operational teams?
- Are you familiar with the different paid and free options for task allocation and file sharing?
- What data are you collecting about people? How are you currently using and storing this data?
- Are you securely collecting and processing data and adhering to GDPR regulations (of volunteers, members and others engaging with your organisation e.g. local people receiving energy advice/retrofit measures)?
- How do you manage your membership?
- Do you feel confident in understanding your financial model and cashflow?
- Do you have the appropriate insurances in place for your organisational activities?
- Do you have a set of policies that underpin how you function as an organisation
- Does your team understand how these policies relate to their day-to-day activities?
- Are you able to offer any training on these policies or source support externally?

Managing tasks and files

As a group working together potentially on a number of activities, it's worth considering how you delegate and keep track of tasks to ensure efficient use of time.

It's also important that as a group you have a well-organised system for sharing and storing key files related to the organisation and any tasks you're undertaking as a group.

Having these systems in place is key for:

- Transparency in decision making (easy to find where documents are saved outlining key decisions e.g. meeting minutes).
- Building accessible institutional memory (important for the longevity of organisations).
- Ensuring time efficiency for volunteers who are often stretched for time.

Resources and tools to help you

- **Centre for Sustainable Energy's** [Managing a community project video](#) provides some useful tips for managing complex infrastructure project. It includes advice on delegating tasks, managing and recording meetings.
- The following project and file management tools have been explored and compared in terms of their relevance and ease of use for community energy organisational requirements. Ultimately, the decision to use a specific system should be made as a group, and will depend on your budget, tech readiness of the potential users in your organisation, and whether they are comfortable using online systems, what you need it for (for generation organisational running, single or multiple projects?).

Tool	Paid or free	Ease of use	Functionalities			Special features and notes
			Project & task management	Collaboration	File storage and sharing	
<u>Trello</u>	Free	Easy	✓	✓	✓	You can have different “boards” for different work areas (with different people on each board). File storage and sharing are possible but it’s not the main function.
<u>Loomio</u>	Paid	Medium		✓	✓	Can be used with a wider membership, good for transparent decision making.
<u>Basecamp</u>	Free and paid options (free option for one project – fine for smaller organisations)	Medium	✓	✓	✓	Chat, message board, to dos, file saving, schedule.
<u>Monday</u>	Free and paid options (free option only for two users)	Hard	✓	✓	✓	Boards for different projects, lots of features, more appropriate for larger organisations.
<u>Slack</u>	Free and paid options (free option likely work for most community organisations)	Medium	✓	✓	✓	Range of features including different channels to communicate as a team, management of tasks and file sharing.
<u>Google Drive</u>	Free	Easy		✓	✓	Requires Google account to set up. Not GDPR compliant so not good to store files which contain any personal information.
<u>One Drive</u>	Free (paid version gets you more space)	Medium		✓	✓	Requires Microsoft login. Mostly built for personal file saving purposes. Can share files but not good for collaborating and editing. GDPR compliant.
<u>Drop Box</u>	Paid	Easy		✓	✓	For storing and sharing files. GDPR compliant.

Managing data securely

As an organisation, you are responsible for the secure handling of personal data. As a minimum, it is good practice to familiarise yourself with GDPR requirements to ensure that any personal data you capture about your members, staff, volunteers or members of your community is handled in a legally compliant way.

Data protection is being clear with people about what data you're collecting from them and what you're going to do with it.

Whether you are maintaining a register of members, recruiting volunteers, giving information or advice to local residents, sending a newsletter etc. you'll often be collecting personal data from people for your records. This can include contact details, home addresses or demographic details. You can use the following advice and templates to make sure you're doing the right thing with people's data.

What is GDPR?

GDPR stands for General Data Protection Regulation, which was implemented in the EU in 2018 and adopted by the UK. The main aim is to give individuals more control over their personal data and to set guidelines for how organisations handle and process that data. Personal data is any information which identifies someone. It can include names and email addresses, phone numbers, postcodes, photographs, videos, and demographic data (e.g. gender, ethnicity, age). The key parts of GDPR are about individuals agreeing to share their data. If they wish in the future, they can contact you if they want to access, change or remove the information – this is their right under GDPR. If their data is shared without their permission (for example to another external organisation or third party) then they have the right to be told about this.

Good practice tips for collecting, storing and processing data

- Register with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) as it is a legal requirement for anyone handling personal data to do so and pay a data protection fee (unless exempt).
- If you are collecting personal information from people (e.g. email addresses, names...), include a statement and option for them to agree to you collecting and storing that data.
- Explain to people why you are getting in touch and give them the option to "opt-out" of future emails if they are not interested.
- If you are keeping a register of Members, you can manage this yourself using a secure Excel spreadsheet or using a system like AirRegister (see below) or you can outsource the management of your register to an external organisation offering registry services.

- At a minimum, password protect documents with any data that can be used to individually identify someone, even lists of email addresses. Share the password separately to the document (e.g. not in the same email) when working with others.
- Have a central list of contacts rather than keep them on different phones or address books. Nominate someone to be the keeper of the list and delete other records once you've added them to the central list. Keep track of who has access to the list at all times and remove anyone who does not have a genuine need to access it.
- If you are storing personal data (e.g. email address, phone number) make sure the platform you use complies with GDPR law. Note that Google Drive is not by default GDPR compliant so you shouldn't use it for storing and sharing personal data such as email addresses.
- If you have paper copies of personal data e.g. from sign-up sheets at events, ensure these are secured in a locked room or storage container, and destroy them as soon as the data has been moved over to a digital format.

Resources and tools to help you

- **Co-operatives UK's** blog on [Membership and register of members](#).
- **The Resource Centre** have a [helpful page providing a summary of data protection responsibilities](#) for small, volunteer-run community groups, including how to comply with GDPR.
- **The Information Commissioner's Office's** [website](#) has lots of GDPR guidance and resources – check out their [page on advice for small organisations](#).
- Rather than save contact details in a file that gets shared amongst your team, you may want to consider using a **Customer Relationship Management system** (CRM) to help with managing contacts. The table that follows contains some suggestions (all of the options have been checked for GDPR compliance):

Tool	Overview	Cost	Notes
<u>SuiteCRM</u>	Open-source CRM system with a range of features used by charities and cooperatives.	Free	Full CRM capabilities including managing contacts, donors, and volunteers, workflow automation to streamline tasks, integration with tools for email marketing, project management, and case handling.
<u>Mailchimp</u>	Commonly used marketing CRM software that is used to collect contacts to send information to. The tool can send out newsletters and help you to group your audiences and target your messaging better.	Paid and free options.	Free option allows for up to 500 contacts but is limited in some of the additional functionalities such as analytics and reporting. Allows for a link for people to self-subscribe to your newsletter and includes opt-out option.
<u>Fairer Warmth App</u>	Multi-function toolkit and app package developed by the Centre for Energy Equality specifically aimed at organisations delivering energy advice services.	Free	Includes an integrated CRM to enable the administration of advice services and reporting for national and local energy advice and retrofit schemes. The app is being used by BHESCo, Green Rose CIC, Low Carbon Communities and Exeter Community Energy (and many more)
<u>Nook</u>	Open-source entry-level case notes and impact reporting tool dedicated to UK energy advisors. Being developed by Outlandish. For organisations delivering fuel poverty advice services.	Free	Also includes task management to help with the group's operations.
<u>Airtable</u>	Data management system that allows users to create and manage multiple data types in one platform. It can also be used as a project and task management software.	Paid and free options.	50% discount for charitable entities. Used by organisations giving energy advice, can be adapted to different organisational and reporting requirements.
<u>AirRegister</u>	App to manage your society's community shares register.	Free	Designed by leading community shares practitioners with support from Co-operatives UK to help societies meet best practices around their ongoing administration and management of their share register. AirRegister v2 is now available for free.

ECOE Advice's use of Airtable for delivery of energy advice

ECOE Advice is the advice arm of Exeter Community Energy. They use Airtable as their CRM tool as well as for managing their staff and projects.

They used Excel for 3 years which became tricky when clients started returning for support and in terms of avoiding double counting. They knew they needed to do something to help them better manage their client data, report on their work and improve the overall management of their projects. After a few months mapping out their data needs and client journey and researching options, they decided Airtable was right for them. Airtable was chosen based on its ease of use, its adaptability and flexibility, its cost and the fact that it doesn't require technical knowledge.

They have been using Airtable since 2020, and use it for: client data management, team noticeboard, outreach and events calendar and data, project management and to-do lists, recording social impact and case studies recording and supporting their purchasing process. They have been able to really adapt it to their needs and are continually improving it. Here is what **Tara Bowers, Co-CEO of ECOE Advice** has said:

"After 5 years we still like Airtable for its ease of use, speed of making changes and adapting to the needs of funders, and that we can do all of this in house without having to contract in an IT specialist. The staff love the ease with which they can interrogate the data and see when we last spoke to the client, what advice we gave, who we reported the data to, referrals made, fuel vouchers distributed..."

"For any new group just starting out, my advice is:

- Allocate one person to manage data – this doesn't need to be a techy person but someone who has a good grasp of what data you need to capture, when and for whom.*
- Train up a second person for contingency support.*
- Think about your future strategy and what you might need your CRM to do in the future. Choose a solution that will allow you to adapt and grow without having to start from scratch in a few years.*
- Sometimes cheap or even free options can be just as suitable as an expensive IT provision. Spend time researching options.*
- Document everything – every little tweak or change you make to the system needs to be documented to protect for the future.*
- The data you hold is only as good as those inputting it, so build some time to review how data is being inputted and supporting the team.*
- Hold regular reviews of your data system – funder requirements change a lot, and you can easily end up with a lot of unneeded data or unused fields*

"Setting up our CRM in 2020 was absolutely the best thing we ever did. It allowed us to grow and thrive, and we couldn't function without it now."

Managing your finances

Proper financial systems ensure that funds are used well, enable you to plan activities longer term, ensure compliance with legal requirements, and that you are using funding correctly which builds trust among stakeholders, including donors, members, and communities.

Much of what falls under financial management will be the responsibility of the organisation's Treasurer however in a lot of cases, many directors are involved in different aspects of financial management.

What falls under financial management includes:

- Budgeting and managing cashflow.
- Record keeping and accounting.
- Financial planning.
- Managing tax requirements.
- Banking.
- Getting your accounts audited.
- Ongoing management of share capital.
- Filing accounts including at Companies House or the Charities Commission.

Resources and tools to help you

- **National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)**'s [guide on Financial Management](#) for a collection of guidance, techniques and tools for managing your organisation's finances.
- **Co-operatives UK**'s [Community Shares financial guide](#) covers ongoing management of share capital for Cooperative Societies, Community Benefit Societies, Charitable Community Benefit Societies. It covers roles and responsibilities, and financial responsibilities depending (by legal form), audit requirements, reducing share value, investing in other entities, treatment of grants, managing members' financial interests, interest payments, tax implications, AGMs. It also has a really helpful glossary of key terms.
- **Co-operatives UK**'s [Community Shares Booster Fund](#) supports new and existing community businesses in England that are at all stages of a community share issue.
- **Next Generation**'s [webinar on Introduction to community shares](#) – features a presentation from Cooperatives UK outlining the main facets and features for raising community shares for renewable energy projects.
- **Next Generation**'s [webinar on essentials of society management](#) – includes key financial and management accounting principles.
- **Air Register** – [an application to help you manage your society's community shares register](#). It was designed by community shares practitioners with support from Co-operatives UK.

Getting the right insurance

Finding the right insurance and understanding what it means for your organisation should be considered carefully and seeking legal expertise where possible is advised to ensure you are adequately protected.

What insurance you get as an organisation will depend on what your activities are/will be. For example, if you intend to provide energy advice in your community, you will need to have Professional Indemnity Insurance to protect your organisation against claims by clients for negligence or bad advice.

Typical types of insurance for community energy organisations include:

- **Directors and Officers Liability Insurance (D&O insurance):** this protects company managers, directors and officers against liability claims which arise from decisions and actions taken as part of their day-to-day duties.
- **Trustee Liability Insurance:** this protects trustees against liability claims which arise from decisions and actions taken as part of their day-to-day duties.
- **Employer's Liability Insurance:** this is a legal requirement for any organisation that has paid or voluntary staff. It protects employees who suffer injury whilst at work due to your negligence.
- **Public and Products Liability Insurance:** this protects you against claims by third parties that your trading activities (or products) have injured them or damaged their property (having this insurance in place is a requirement to work with public sector, local or central government).
- **Professional Indemnity Insurance:** this protects your organisation if you are offering professional advice services against claims by clients for negligence or bad advice.

There are also other insurance types for specific renewable energy technologies that you may need to explore if you are planning a renewable energy project. [Naturesave has a page on this](#).

Once you know what type of insurance you'll need, finding a good insurance broker is a good way of sourcing a range of competitive quotes.

Resources and tools to help you

- **National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)** provides a helpful [summary of insurance requirements](#) for charitable organisations.
- **National Community Land Trust Network** recommend lawyers, insurers, and other service providers that understand the sector; however, you must be a member to access many of their resources.

Developing your organisational policies

Policies give your organisation and its staff and volunteers a detailed guide on how to embed your values, and governance principles into everything you do. Having key policies in place is also important from a legal compliance perspective and may be required by funders/partners as part of their due diligence checks.

Typically, as a minimum, your organisation should have the following:

- Equal Opportunities.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Health and Safety.
- Data Protection.
- Risk Assessment.
- Employment Policies, for example a grievance procedure.

Other policies may include:

- Conflict of Interest.
- Modern Slavery (particularly in relation to the supply chain).
- Environmental.
- Financial.
- Expenses.
- Safeguarding (particularly if working with young people or vulnerable adults).
- Whistleblowing.
- Anti-bribery.

A common challenge for groups is the time it takes to develop key organisational policies. To save time, standard templates can be used however it is not advised that they are simply copied and pasted directly.

When developing and reviewing your policies, ensure that your leadership team and any operational staff/volunteers are familiar with them, and how they apply to your organisation's activities. Providing training to your wider team on how the policies apply to their day-to-day work is also strongly advised, to avoid policies becoming a tokenistic box-ticking exercise.

It is considered good practice to create a staff handbook that incorporates all your policies into one place. You should ask staff, directors and trustees to sign the handbook and amendments and agree as a board on how frequently policies need to be reviewed. Policies should be consistent, up-to-date and regularly reviewed.

Resources and tools to help you

- **Resource Centre's** [page on Policies and Procedures](#).
- See the **Co-operative Assistance Network Limited's** [list of policy templates](#) for a full list, advice on policy development and ongoing management and open-source templates.
- **Co-operatives UK** also has a suite of [template policies](#) in their resources page.
- **RadHR** have produced free to use guides to help producing radical alternatives to standard HR policies.

Learning from and working with others

Working with partners and stakeholders

Your project is going to need support and touch upon the lives of local people, businesses, services and landscapes, and therefore a range of people outside of your group are going to be involved at some stage in your journey.

Carrying out a stakeholder mapping exercise is a good place to start, giving you a visual representation of which individuals, groups and institutions exist in your local area. Key stakeholders you may want to think about include (but not limited to):

- Community members.
- Public buildings (such as schools, libraries, leisure centres...).
- Grant funders.
- Corporate partners.
- Landowners.
- District Network Operators.
- Academic institutions.
- Healthcare.
- Grant funders.
- Potential investors.

Attending local events both in-person and online, signing up to social media platforms such as Facebook or LinkedIn and following relevant organisations, and reaching out directly to stakeholders are all good ways of starting to build your network.

Tips for engaging with local authorities

With the government's plans to turbocharge the community energy sector through their Local Power Plan, local authorities will have an even bigger part to play in the support and delivery of local and community energy projects in the future. For this reason, it is critical that community energy organisations foster a positive relationship with their local authorities.

Here are some tips for working with local authorities:

- Understand how different departments work – what is in the department's remit and how does that link to your aims, who makes the decisions and how do they get made? What are the benefits of working with community energy for different departments (going beyond

the Climate team – think about engaging with the Housing, Education, Public Health and Planning Teams)?

- Find common ground – is there a natural alignment between what you want to achieve and the council's aims? Look to their key plan and policy documents to identify their priorities (for example, their Housing strategy, Climate Action Plan, Local Plan, or Health strategy).
- The Social Value Act requires the public sector to consider social value in their procurement – consider how you can help your local authority achieve its social value objectives directly or how you can help other organisations demonstrate their social value as part of their tendering processes.
- Adopt a professional approach – having an effectively governed organisation can help with this.
- Start with simpler projects to build trust – what are some easy wins you can deliver for/with local authorities?
- Identify potential council funding pots for community groups, these may not necessarily be environmental or energy-themed – but they might be there to help groups start-up or run other activities. This can be very useful in establishing your presence.
- Find champions within the local authority – identify who will help you in different departments, particularly the relevant Cabinet Leader on sustainability/environment/energy/climate (they may have different names depending on the council).
- Share best practices from other local authorities – some local authorities will not be aware of the benefits of working with community energy, it can be helpful to showcase examples of where this type of collaboration has worked elsewhere (for example, from the [Local Government Association's Community Energy briefing](#)).

Grand Union Community Energy working in partnership with Three Rivers District Council

Grand Union Community Energy (GUCE) has developed a very good relationship with Three Rivers District Council in Southwest Hertfordshire. What started with a coffee with a local green councillor has led to multiple projects initiated by the officers in the Climate and Sustainability department. Three Rivers District Council see Grand Union Community Energy as a key strategic partner in helping them deliver their Net Zero tasks and as such, they support them with funding ideas and networking opportunities.

Resources and tools to help you

- **Local Government Association's** [Community Energy briefing](#) explains the benefits of local authorities working with community energy organisations and highlights some case studies.
- **Power to Change** and **CAG Consultants** have developed a number of practical guides based on learnings from the Next Generation Innovation Fund projects – [a guide on partnership working](#), [a guide on working in partnership with local authorities](#) and [a guide on working with private firms](#).
- This **Thornton and Lowe** [guide on Maximising Social Impact: A Comprehensive Guide to the National Themes Outcomes and Measures \(TOMS\)](#) – a framework to reshape public procurement to place more importance on social value.
- **Mural's** [How to create a stakeholder map](#) webpage provides guidance on doing this, examples and templates you can use.

Getting bespoke support

Whatever stage you are at in your journey, it's worth knowing that you are not alone and there is a wealth of support available to help you. The table below summarises some of the key sources of bespoke support you may wish to explore:

Name	Description
Community Energy England	Membership organisation representing and supporting the community energy sector. Provide information, share resources and tools and run national and regional events to support the capacity building of the sector. Join CEE as a member for a fee (the fee amount is dependent on your turnover). As a member you have access to the CEE All-Member Forum, a private place for open discussion between all CEE members, to encourage open discussion and collaboration among the extensive network of members.
Community Energy South	Membership organisation supporting the community energy sector in the South of England. They have a number of programmes working with community energy organisations, local authorities and other stakeholders to enable the sector to grow and thrive. Join as a member for free to access workshops and networking opportunities, access to training, advice and support services and much more.

	If your local authority is part of the Community Energy Pathways programme , you could access further bespoke support.
Community Energy London	Membership organisation supporting the community energy sector in London. Join as a member for free to access support from CEL, priority access to peer mentoring, networking and promotional opportunities, events and monthly member meetings. Their webpage also includes lots of resources you can access to help with developing projects and organisational governance.
Community Energy Wales	Organisation supporting the community energy sector in Wales. As well as resources, events and networking opportunities, they can offer advice on different aspects of community energy (from technical to group set up).
Community Energy Scotland	Membership organisation supporting the community energy sector in Scotland. Join as a member for free to access support from CES, such as links with other community energy organisations, access to events, and finding the right people through job advertising. Their webpage also includes lots of resources you can access.
Your local Net Zero Hub	The Net Zero Hubs are regional bodies that were set up to lead on the Rural Community Energy Fund programme (now closed), and in 2024 were administering the Community Energy Fund. The Hubs continue to have a role in supporting local authorities and communities in England play a leading role in decarbonisation and the net zero transition. Each Hub will have its own package of support but they may be able to help with starting new ideas and projects, technical, legal and financial expertise, contacts with stakeholders, knowledge of funding. Find out more about the Local Net Zero Hubs: • North East and Yorkshire Local Net Zero Hub • North West Local Net Zero Hub • Midlands Local Net Zero Hub • South West Local Net Zero Hub • South East Local Net Zero Hub
Locality	Membership organisation that supports local community organisations. As well as a number of free resources, you can join as a member to access further support. Paid membership options offer bespoke support and consultancy, as well as access to networking and learning events. Non-members can access paid consultancy support on governance, business planning, community engagement, investment and funding, marketing and much more.
Co-operatives UK	Co-operatives UK is the voice of the UK's co-operative movement. As well as free resources, they can offer bespoke support with governance, HR, and funding.

<u>People Support Co-operative</u>	People Support Co-operative are a sociocratic workers' cooperative that support other charities and small businesses with practical HR and governance support and advice on topics such as recruitment and onboarding, wellbeing, employment law, policies and procedures, governance audits, member engagement.... They offer paid for services such as consultancy, online interactive workshops, training, away day facilitation. They have worked with <u>RadHR to produce some free to use guides to help with the production of radical alternatives to standard HR policies.</u>
Other community energy organisations and experts	Speaking with other similar organisations can be a great help, particularly if they have gone through a similar journey to your organisation and have some lived experience with the challenges that you may be facing as a group. There are opportunities to meet organisations through networking events and opportunities run by organisations such as the ones listed above. You can also proactively reach out to organisations near you or further afield. To find community energy organisations or associated experts and organisations, a good starting place is: - Community Energy England's <u>member map</u> and <u>national map of community energy organisations and projects.</u> - Community Energy South's <u>map of community energy groups.</u> - Community Energy London's <u>list of members</u> and <u>projects map.</u>

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