

Community energy is great, but...

Challenging the myths

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About Regen

Regen works to identify and overcome the strategic challenges to decarbonising power, heat and transport.

We apply our expertise to the whole energy system to advocate for a fast and fair transition to net zero.



Experts



Pioneers



Convenors

What is community energy

- Energy projects owned locally by communities – e.g., solar/wind turbines
- Delivers **34x more financial value** than community benefit funds
- Evolving beyond generation into demand, retrofit heat, flexibility, advice, etc.
- UK Government Target of 8GW of local and community energy by 2030



**Community energy is only for rich,
affluent people**

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.



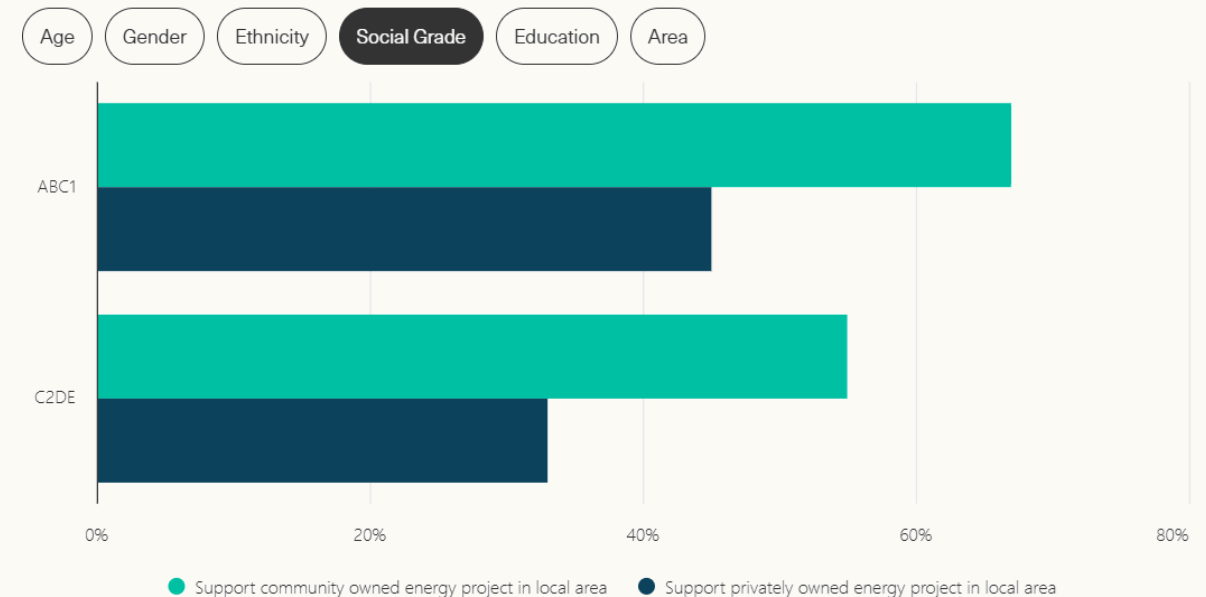
**Community energy is great, but it won't
ever move the dial on the energy
transition.**

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 for clean energy (Hogan 2024; Hogan et al 2022) and provide avenues for engagement through decarbonisation.
- Has to be anchored in actual community needs and aspirations first – and it's still difficult!

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)

Communities wouldn't know what to do with all that money. They just want to fix their church roof.

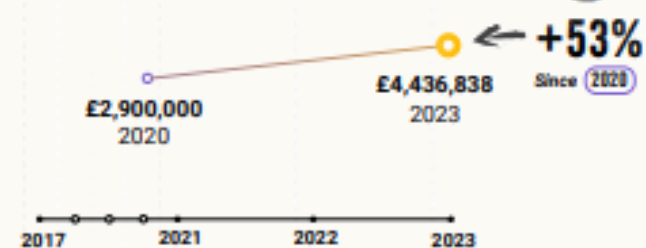
The reality

- 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 decarbonisation and climate outreach.
- Delivering community wealth building and supporting local jobs and businesses.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY & FUEL POVERTY

BILL SAVINGS FROM ENERGY EFFICIENCY & ADVICE

£4.4 million bill savings



£13.8 million saved since 2020



Source: Community Energy State of the Sector (2024)

Huntly Development Trust



Community energy seems like the right thing to do, but it doesn't have any benefit to the network

The reality

Community energy creates valuable network partners:

- **Informed local stakeholders** who understand grid constraints, connection challenges and infrastructure needs
- **Trusted intermediaries** between network operators and communities
- **Innovation partners** exploring flexibility services, demand response and storage to help balance the network



Network Innovation

Project Leo

- Examined how decentralised local energy solutions can help us balance energy in the local electricity network
- Using Oxfordshire as a test bed

Rural Energy and Community Heat (REACH)

- Examined smart, local solutions to electricity grid constraints in rural areas
- Working with community energy groups in NGEDs network





DISTRICT HEATING SYSTEM

COUNCIL

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LOCAL TRANSPORT HUB

HIRE

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