

COMMUNITY

ENERGY PROCLAMATION

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP OF RENEWABLE ENERGY

Our Vision

Our Vision is for a transition to a clean, secure energy future for our citizens in an Ireland where communities – whether organised as co-operatives, voluntary associations or individual citizens – are active participants in energy planning, conservation, energy generation and energy distribution or ‘Community Energy’ as it is more commonly known.

Developments by the community for the community

To attain the Government goal of a sustainable energy future it is essential that communities be supported and empowered to come together to improve energy efficiency and develop renewable energy projects, owned by the community, for the benefit of the community.

An equity stake... developer led with citizen participation

For individuals and community groups who are not in a position to develop their own renewable energy project, it is essential that they have the right to participate in developer-led projects in their areas. This must include more than just a consultation exercise, and more than compensatory ‘benefit’ or ‘gain’ payments. It must, rather, require developers to enter into partnerships with communities and offer them the opportunity of an equitable stake in any development.

Removing Barriers and Enabling Change

For these aspirations to be realised, there must be a shift in the current approach to delivering renewable energy projects in Ireland, particularly wind energy projects. Quite simply there are too many barriers which prevent communities from developing their own projects, and there is no mechanism to involve citizens in developer-led projects in a fair and equitable way

Government Policy to Enable Change

A fundamental shift in policy perspective is required that views citizens and communities as indispensable agents in securing our energy future, not obstacles to be negotiated.

Government policy must:

- I. Recognise explicitly the positive role of citizens and communities as indispensable partners in the transition to a sustainable-energy future based on energy-saving, renewable energy generation and energy distribution
- II. Establish a policy framework to support Community Energy including a Target for Community Energy and commit to the following:
 - A Feed in Tariff for solar electricity;
 - A fair export tariff for surplus grid-connected micro-generation;
 - A dedicated route to the national grid for community projects;
 - A renewable heat incentive that includes communities;
 - Providing a national community energy advice centre to support communities become active participants in a more equitable energy future;
 - Capacity and capital supports for community actors to deliver energy efficiency and renewable energy projects and
 - Appropriate environmental assessment –particularly Strategic Environment Assessment - for all energy plans and policies.

Irish people agree with renewable energy but increasingly feel alienated

A recent Eurobarometer survey showed 89% support for renewable energy targets in Ireland. However, amidst concerns with adverse local impacts and a perception of unequal participation in the benefits derived from national resources, some communities are actively resisting developments they feel they have no control over and see little benefit from. We believe that Community Energy is the key to ensuring strong public buy-in for renewable energy in Ireland, and will put us on track to reaching our full renewable energy potential.

Energy Costs, Dependency and the Transition to a Low Carbon Society

Ireland imports 85% of its energy needs with an annual cost of €6.7 Billion. We must reduce this dependence by developing indigenous renewable energy resources, thereby insulating ourselves from volatile fossil fuel price and reducing our carbon emissions. This transition will also stimulate our economy, increase our competitiveness and resilience and enhance our balance of payments.

Local Economic Benefits

Energy which is generated and used locally benefits local communities by keeping local money in local communities. It also stimulates local investment and creates local jobs by stabilising energy costs and supporting local businesses and people.

Active Energy Citizens Supporting the Common Good

As an island Ireland has a relatively small grid which requires to be made more resilient. We recognise the necessity for grid stability and support measures which utilise the grid fairly for the common good. We envisage communities contributing to, and benefiting from, the growth of a secure and stable smart grid via smart meters and micro-grids. We see, within reach, active energy citizens acting as 'Prosumers' (both producers and consumers) in local area groups actively providing grid support and stabilisation services while enabling the increasing penetration of renewable energy towards a near zero carbon energy future.

Engaged Energy Citizens

There can be no doubt that to realise a transition to a sustainable energy future of the scale and in the time-framed required, it needs to engage all our citizens to become proactive energy citizens.

Organisations supporting and endorsing this community energy proclamation

Abbeyleix Bog Project
Ace - The Academy of Champions for Energy
An Taisce - The National Trust for Ireland
Aran Islands Renewable Energy Ltd. - Comharchumann Fuinnimh Oileáin
Árann Teoranta
Ard Aoibhinn Community Initiatives Ltd. poshiel@gmail.com
BEOFS Camphill Kilkenny
Birr 2020
Birr Growery
Camphill Ballymoney
Camphill Ballytobin
Camphill Community Mountshannon
Carlow Kilkenny Energy Agency
Cavan Community Energy Group
CELT - Centre for Environmental Living & Training
ChangeX (niamh@changex.org)
Changing Ireland Community Media Limited
Circle Way Ireland
Claiming our Future
Clann Credo - the Social Investment Fund
Claremorris & Western District Energy Co-Operative
Cleanteck Asset Finance
Cloughjordan Community Farm
Codema - Dublin's Energy Agency
Comhar Caomhán Teo
Common Ground, Bray
Community Energy Scotland
Community Finance (Ireland)
Community Renewable Energy Supply Templederry (CRES)
Community Workers Co-operative
Cork Environmental Forum
CRNI Community Reuse Network Ireland
Cultivate Living and Learning/ Sustainable Ireland Co-operative Society Ltd.
DaysE (Donate As You Save Energy)
Drombane Hall Committee
Drombane Upperchurch Energy Team
Ecobeo Energy, Kilkenny
Ecoworks
Eirbyte www.eirbyte.ie office@eirbyte.ie
Energy Co-operatives Ireland
Energy Communities Tipperary Cooperative Limited
Energy Wise Construction Ltd
Energywise Consultants
Environmental Education Ireland
Erris Sustainable Energy CLG
FEASTA: The Foundation for the Economics of Sustainability
Friends of the Earth
Galú
Glas Energy

Good Energies Alliance Ireland
Greenwatt Ltd
Inch Hydro
Inch Sawmills
Interactions Ltd info@interactions.ie
Irish Co-operative Organisation Society (ICOS) (s.mehigan@icos.ie)
Irish Green Building Council
Just Forests
Kerry Sustainable Energy Co-operative
Laois Environmental Action Forum
Lisne Murrough Foundation
Mendes CLG / Cloughjordan Co-Housing
Mercy International - Global Action globalaction@mercyinternational.org
Merriman Solutions Chartered Building Surveyors.
Micro Electricity Generation Association (MEGA)
Murrough Community Co-operative
Nano Nagle Centre, Ballygriffin
Nimble Spaces Project Callan, Co Kilkenny
North Tipperary LEADER Partnership
Orenco Energy padraic@orencoenergy.ie
PActive House Solutions
People's Climate Ireland peoplesclimateireland@gmail.com
Presentation Ireland (presentationecology@gmail.com)
Presentation Justice Network Ireland
Society for Co-operative Studies in Ireland
Solas Bhride Centre & Hermitages Kildare Ireland (info@solasbhride.ie)
St. Anthony's Park Community Development Initiative (Cork)
Sunflower recycling Dublin
Sustainable Clonakilty
Sustainable Energy Finance Consultants - tom@cafl.ie
Sustainable Projects Ireland Ltd. / Cloughjordan Ecovillage
The Forum Renewable Energy Charity louisfitzgerald@gmail.com
Tipperary Energy Agency
Tipperary Green Business Network tipperarygbn@gmail.com
Tourmakeady Community Energy Group
Transition Galway
Transition Kerry
Transition Monaghan (transitionmonaghan@gmail.com)
Transition Town Kinsale
Transition Town Tramore T3
Transition Towns Sligo
TSA Consultancy
Voice of Irish Concern for the Environment (VOICE); info@voiceireland.org
Water Power Services fiaccobr@gmail.com
WeCreate Workspace Ltd.
Wicklow Planning Alliance
Wind Site Evaluation Ltd
XD Sustainable Energy Consulting Ltd