

# Event Report: South West Devon Community Energy Partnership Launch



## Event Summary

Devon's County Hall played host to the launch event for the South West Devon Community Energy Partnership on the 4<sup>th</sup> March. The group, representing the local authorities and communities in the South Hams, West Devon and Dartmoor National Park areas, welcomed delegates from across the county to hear inspirational presentations from the leading lights on energy issues in the South West, and discuss how to localise energy for economic benefit.

## Key Outcomes

This launch was held to introduce SWD CEP to organisations, authorities and groups throughout the county and the wider South West. It also acted as an opportunity to celebrate community energy action and gather information on opportunities, projects and schemes in the South West Devon area around sustainable energy to help reduce consumption and build resilience.

## The Partnership



The SWD CEP was formed following an invitation from the joint authority of South Hams and West Devon to meet their commitment within the Connect Strategy. The partnership was formed and its activities funded through the SEACS (Sustainable Energy Across the Common Space) project. [SEACS](#) is a €2 million project selected by the European Cross-border Co-operation Programme INTERREG IV A France (Channel) – England and is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund, Conseil General des Côtes d'Armor, Devon County Council, Dorset County Council, Agglomeration Lannion-

Tregor and Wiltshire Council. The project will continue until September 2014.

## Delegates

A range of individuals, organisations and local authorities attended the SWD CEP launch event. These included Devon County Council, the district authorities of South Hams, West Devon, Teignbridge, Dartmoor & Exmoor National Parks, academic institutions such as Exeter University, organisations like South West Water, Woodland Trust, RegenSW, Forestry Commission, Campaign for the Protection of Rural England and National Farmers Union among many others. Other delegates included community groups Bovey Climate Action, DARE, Dartmoor Circle, Devon Heartlands, Greener Teign, Newton & Noss Environmental Group, PL21 Ivybridge, South Devon Coastal Renewable Energy Network, Stoke Gabriel Low-E, Sustainable South Brent, Transition Tavistock, Transition Town Totnes and Wadebridge Renewable Energy Network.

## Call to Action

Stephen Frankel – Chair of Wadebridge Renewable Energy Network – opened with a call to participants for action to support the work of SWD CEP.

The future of our communities is in our own hands. We must acknowledge the cost of energy to our communities and work to convert this to an economic asset.

## Energy & The Economy

The focus of the event was one of Energy and the Economy and how we can develop financial resilience through energy reduction and local production.

- Households must prepare for a sharp rise in energy bills within two years as Britain comes “dangerously” close to power shortages, the chief executive of Ofgem has warned. The threat of energy shortages, security of supply, climate change and the mass exodus of finance to organisations outside of the county have prompted action from local councils and community groups in South West Devon.



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- There has been an increase in the average household energy bill in the period 2004-2012 of 140%, while the average household income has risen over the same period by just 20%. The average energy bill for households living on state pension is 11% of their income. While statistics suggests fuel poverty could affect one in three homes by 2016.
- Millions of pounds are spent annually by local residents on their increasing household and transport energy bills. Virtually none of this money stays in the area and the SWD CEP are looking at how we can work with the Councils to take direct action and support policies that minimise our use of energy locally and increase our ability to generate appropriate renewable energies within the districts. The focus of the launch event was to emphasise the economic opportunities within the local economy from energy efficiency measures in combination with decentralised energy production.
- This is prompted by South West Devon residents having the highest per capita emissions and domestic energy consumption in Devon. There is approximately 20% of the South West Devon population in fuel poverty currently, which will only be exasperated by rising fuel and energy costs. Currently around £400 million per year is spent on energy relating to all sectors including domestic, non-domestic and transport. If 15% of this consumption can be met from local generation and energy reduction then £60 million could be retained within the local economy. If this can be done locally it will mean job creation, skills development with enhanced health and well-being for residents.

The audience of over seventy delegates were treated to a variety of speakers covering a range of topics from Devon's readiness to embrace the Green Deal and retrofitting opportunities across the county, to how one of our local schools, Okehampton College, has managed to reduce its energy consumption by 50% , saving £50,000 a year and received the international Zayed Futures sustainability award.

**An Introduction to the South West Devon Community Energy Partnership - Kate Royston, Chair, SWD CEP**

- SWD CEP are currently developing a Community Energy Plan inclusive of a stage 1 area wide energy assessment being conducted by Exeter University
- The partnership will be working with local authorities and action groups to implement the community energy plan and influence plans and policy
- This will lead to building local capacity with economic benefit

*Pledge - Establish Tavistock Renewable Energy Network – Kate Royston Transition Tavistock*

**An Introduction to the SEACS Programme Doug Eltham, Devon County Council**



- The SEACS project is designed to empower and inspire people on each side of the “English” Channel to actively reduce their energy consumption.

**Speakers & Presentations**



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- Brittany and the South West were chosen because they are both dependent on imported energy, both peninsulas. They are rural areas with a highly dispersed settlement pattern, with many areas off gas, and with similar architecture (stone, cob, hard to insulate) and with a high potential for renewable energy.
- SEACS is supporting other community groups in Devon, namely 361 Energy Action and the North Devon Biosphere Energy Partnership both in the North of the county.

*Pledge - Retrofit all corporate buildings and schools – Doug Eltham DCC*

**Energy and the Economy**  
**Stephen Frankel, Chair, Wadebridge Renewable Energy Network**



- Why tolerate the odd outcomes of the current excessively centralised energy arrangements?
  - £1m to 2m energy cost per 1,000 people
  - Fuel price inflation, fuel poverty and fuel insecurity
- The answer is, literally, embedded within each loCALity's energy economy
- Social cohesion and quality of life are key motivations for community energy schemes

**Is Devon Ready for Retrofit?**  
**Ian Hutchcroft, Energy Savings Trust**

- The Ready for Retrofit Programme is designed to fund early market growth, support South West businesses and develop finance and the market for the long term.
- There are over 58,000 homes in the South West Devon area which require some type of insulation measure or eco-retrofit.
- The Green Deal and ECO funding could potentially equate to a financial income to the local economy of over £67 million in the South West Devon area.

**Renewables in SW Devon and the role for community groups**  
**Merlin Hyman, RegenSW**



- In the South West renewable electricity generation has increased by 18.6% while renewable heat generation has increased by 44.5%. The huge increase in the number of projects suggests that this deployment is happening at an individual and community level rather than large installations. While in the UK 939,600 people now work in the environmental and low carbon sector.
- RegenSW has a Community for Renewables support programme along with a Community Renewables Community Interest Company
- RegenSW can currently provide business model support, case studies, collective lobbying, consultation responses, shared learning and networking opportunities under its support programme

*Pledge - Increase accessibility of tools/info which enables local empowerment – Josie Ashe RegenSW*



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**Energy usage and potential for reduction and generation in SW Devon –The SWD CEP Energy Study**

Tony Norton – University of Exeter



- Establish the background and analytical approach across all study sectors of the geographical area
- Providing baseline data, methodology and criteria for the development of subsequent stages of the community energy plan
- In terms of financial cost of energy across our area the largest sector is transport, followed by the domestic sector and thirdly the non-domestic sector.

*Pledge: Continue and complete stage 1 study – Dan Lash Exeter University*

**One Turbine – 100% Community – undertaking a community based renewables project**  
 Joddy Chapman – Sustainable South Brent



- Sustainable South Brent have developed their community owned wind turbines development which will mean £100k to local contractors in next few months

- £120k to £250k reinvestment in South Brent community over the first 10 years of operation
- 4 to 5% interest will be received by local investors (up to 7% with EIS tax relief) plus return of capital

*Pledge - Share lessons from South Brent with other groups – Joddy Chapman SSB*

**How to slash the energy budget and get everyone involved!**

Keith Webber – Okehampton College



- Okehampton College have achieved a 50% (£50,000) reduction in electricity and gas consumption across the school site
- They have achieved this through energy efficiency measures inclusive of insulation, boiler replacement, monitoring and measuring systems and 3,000 efficient lighting replacements. The College has also installed 80kW of photovoltaic arrays and is due to install two wind turbines.
- The College has received the U4 Energy European Award, UK Ashden Sustainable Energy Award, ECO Schools Green Flag and International Sustainable High School Zayed Futures Award

*Pledge - Continue to look for savings and renewable energy opportunities at my school and encourage other schools – Keith Webber Okehampton College*



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## Energy efficiency projects in action – an insight into the Streets programme

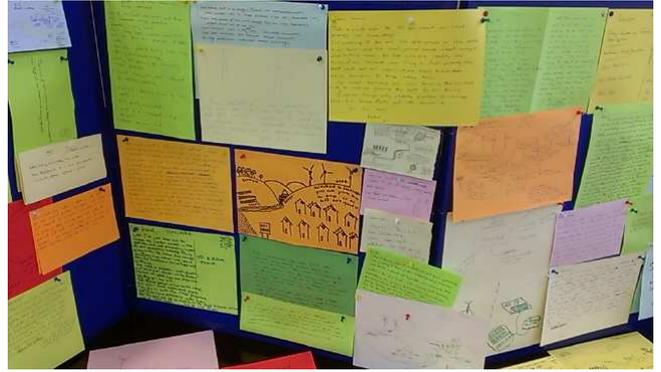
Frances Northrop – Transition Town Totnes

- Groups of friends and neighbours meet every few weeks with a practical workbook to make easy changes in how they use energy, water, food, packaging and transport.
- Most importantly though, people who have completed it, in spite of saving significant amounts of money and carbon, rave about the new relationships Transition Streets has led to, and how they feel more a part of the community.
- The programme can be replicated in any community with a developed tool kit and programme to follow. The streets programme has spawned other activities such as group buying of solar pv panels, draught-busting, home energy audits and protecting the vulnerable from fuel price increases.

*Pledge: Work with Totnes Caring or similar to deliver a project that offers hands on advice and handy man work regarding energy efficiency and fuel poverty – Mary Popham TTT*

## Workshops

### Postcards to the Future



Everyone was issued with a blank coloured card and invited to think forward to the year 2030: draw or write a postcard to a friend about how we respond to energy demands in our area -draw or write what they are proud of or less so!

### Postcard Workshop Conclusions

This workshop produced a range of images and creative writing from depicting how Devon's landscape could be altered by climate change to local energy generation and community resilience.

The main conclusions of this exercise were visions of community energy schemes, independence from centrally produced energy and an acceptance of renewable energy generating technologies within our landscape.

*The postcards produced can be found at [www.swdcep.org](http://www.swdcep.org) and [www.seacs.info](http://www.seacs.info)*

### Postcard Next Steps

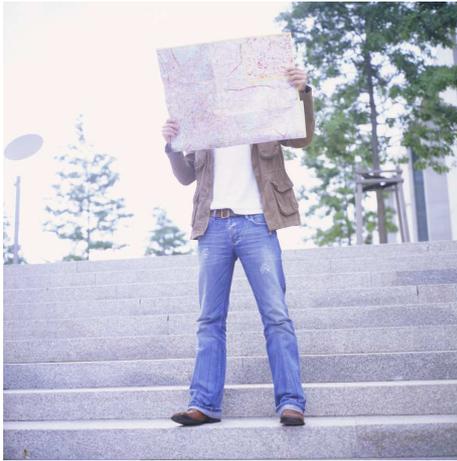
It was agreed that the SWD CEP has an important role to play in improving communications about, and perception of, energy across the area; and in working with our communities of interest to help bring these visions to reality.

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## Understanding the Area Workshop



Each table was provided with a map of the SWDCEP area already marked with the locations of the partner organisations. Delegates were then asked to mark (with sticky dots) the locations of existing retrofit and renewable projects they know of and annotate the technologies used. Then mark areas where there are planned projects and growth areas.

## Area Workshop Conclusions

The conclusion for each table and the collective conclusions were the same: that it was much easier to identify sites which had installed renewable energy and much harder to identify sites featuring energy efficiency/retrofitted measures. It was thought this could be due to a number of reasons: firstly energy efficiency measures such as insulation are not as visible as a renewable energy system, they are not promoted in the same way and they are often an accepted measure installed without fanfare or publicity. Installations which were illustrated on the maps were linked to group buying or community involvement. It was also agreed that it would be rather difficult to indicate every house with loft insulation or energy efficient lighting on the map.

This exercise also gave an indication of the huge wealth of projects and schemes which incorporated sustainable energy use and generation in the area which should be applauded and celebrated.

*The maps produced can be found at [www.swdcep.org](http://www.swdcep.org) and [www.seacs.info](http://www.seacs.info)*

## Area Workshop Next Steps

Our challenge as the SWD CEP is to work with stakeholders to find ways to make the amount of work underway more visible and to encourage further participation, particularly in the area of energy reduction.

## Identifying The Opportunities Workshop



Using the matrix below delegates were asked to answer the following questions in relation to sustainable energy:

- What potential is there in your area for improvements?
- What is needed to deliver it?
- What barriers must be overcome?

Improvement /retrofit measure or RE technology	Action needed	Barriers

Once the matrix was completed delegates used sticky dots to prioritise their top three measures, actions and barriers

*The matrixes' produced can be found at [www.swdcep.org](http://www.swdcep.org) and [www.seacs.info](http://www.seacs.info)*



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## Opportunities Next Steps

Measure	Action	Barrier
Insulation – domestic properties All Energy Efficiency Measures Energy Literacy User awareness	Research into why such schemes like Cosy Devon/CERT were not universally taken up when these measures were free. Determine which properties need which measures  Engage local trades  Better information available – CAB/RegenSW/CVS/EST  Systematic approach  Marketing  Reduce consumption	Costs & perception of costs Privacy Emptying lofts Trust Poor uptake Inertia  Entrenched attitudes and behaviour    Low cost measuring Over time
All retrofit technology/measures – Green Deal	Every home zero carbon by 2050  Offer incentives	Costs – 7.5% interest rate is not attractive Fear of not making savings once work is complete and paid for.  Uptake
Sustainable New Build Properties	Improved level of Code for Sustainable Homes and associated certification within planning policy. Strengthened building regulations (incl orientation) Planning authorities to encourage self-build – land society model & CUG awareness raised on whole life of house	Perceived cost to developers Perceived cost to consumers  Lack of skills Lack of long term consistent policy  Rogue traders and poor quality PV
Technology & measures for historic buildings	Identify how to incorporate technology into listed buildings and new technologies that are more acceptable  Double glazing	Inconsistent advice from English Heritage Heritage Higher quality design = costs more  Planning
Public Buildings & Schools Energy Saving	Education	Time

- Progress pro-active work with RegenSW on community / third sector renewable energy developments adjacent to SWW sites - Ray Arrell – South West Water

*A full list of the pledges can be found at [www.swdcep.org](http://www.swdcep.org) and [www.seacs.info](http://www.seacs.info)*

## What Happens Next?

The partnership has been able to commission the University of Exeter to conduct an area wide energy study encompassing the South West Devon area through the EU funded SEACS programme. This will be an analysis of current consumption across all sectors and the opportunities for local energy generation and conservation in our area to improve energy security and retain vital finances in local economies. The initial findings were presented at the launch and the full study will be released in June 2013.

SWD CEP is developing a number of initiatives across the area including community training, energy assessments, local authority engagement, and consultation on policies, events and impartial advice on energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainable transport. There is much more to come in 2013 from this unique partnership of local councils and community action groups.

## Commitments & Pledges Workshop

Delegates were asked to write on post it notes what action they are going to take to help deliver a more sustainable SW Devon

## Pledges Included:

- Think about how to run a project to motivate children to monitor energy in their homes – Mary Popham TTT
- Revitalise MAGS local action group – John Willis MAGS
- Apply Keith Webbers “if you can measure it you can manage it” to my place of work – Joddy Chapman SSB
- Buy a SMART meter for home – Simon Bates Tamar Valley AONB

## Keeping You Informed

The SWD CEP is developing its own website which will feature regular updates on the partnership activities. We will be contacting all attendees and invitees of the SWD CEP launch to keep them up to date on future events and developments.

Participants all agreed the event had been worthwhile and welcomed the opportunity to help shape our energy future. SWD CEP will endeavour to bring everyone together at least once a year!

Please visit [www.swdcep.org](http://www.swdcep.org) for more information.



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