

My name is Alex Jones, Director of Operations and Impact [at](#) Bath & West Community Energy / BWCE. Today I'd like to talk about the impact of our work in B&NES, supported by the close working relationship we have with you, our local authority.

Community energy means renewable energy projects that are owned and led by local people, with profits reinvested back into the community. Instead of distant commercial developers, community organisations raise funds from local residents, build renewable generation like solar or hydro, and then use the income to cut carbon emissions, support households, and strengthen local resilience.

Back in 2010, B&NES council helped us get started when we worked together on school rooftop solar, our first projects. Today, BWCE is one of the UK's largest and most established community energy organisations. We operate around 46 renewable energy projects, including 39 rooftop solar, six groundmount sites, and one hydro installation. Our renewable energy capacity is about 15 MW, and we generate enough electricity each year to meet the equivalent annual demand of around 5200 homes.

Alongside generating clean energy, our Community Fund distributes surplus revenue to local projects that reduce carbon emissions and tackle fuel poverty. To date we've donated £470,000 to the fund, and 119 local community projects have been awarded grants. From Share and Repair to the Genesis Trust or Marksbury School PTA, our funding has supported a range of causes, demonstrating the positive cycle where local clean energy directly funds social and environmental benefit.

BWCE has grown into a pioneer in the sector, continually developing new models and testing innovative approaches, from largescale solar to retrofit support for individual households. Our work is rooted in the belief that communities can and should play a meaningful role in the energy transition. Our latest ground mount solar project, Fairy Hill, in Compton Dando, will be trialling a local supply project, enabling households in the community near the solar farm to benefit from lower cost, locally sourced clean electricity.

A major reason we have been able to deliver at this scale is our longstanding partnership with B&NES. Collaboration on planning, site access, and strategic alignment has enabled community owned solar on schools, public buildings, and community sites. The partnership has unlocked opportunities that simply wouldn't have been possible otherwise, and it stands as a strong example of what can be achieved when councils and communities work side by side.

As the council reviews its climate and nature strategy, it's clear that tackling the challenges ahead will require a combination of ambition, collaboration, and community involvement. Community energy is one of the areas where those come together most effectively.

The BWCE example illustrates that with high ambition and enthusiasm, we can find different ways of getting things done. We have shown that these can bring benefits far beyond energy, to help B&NES in their aim of Improving People's Lives

Thank you for your time.