

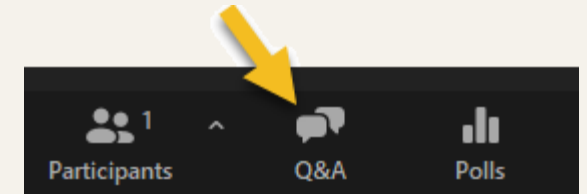


Widening Participation in Community Energy: Toolkit Launch

April 2026

Housekeeping

- Use the Q&A function to ask questions. We will answer these as we go, and save some to be answered live at the end.
- We'll only use the chat at the end to share a feedback survey link.
- Email elincommunity@cse.org.uk with any issues during the webinar, or if you have questions afterwards.
- We'll share the slides and recording to everyone signed up.
- Be present 😊



Energy Learning Network

- Helping more groups launch or grow schemes that decarbonise the grid, create resilience, reduce energy bills, and create benefits for local people.
- Building a better operating environment for community energy.
- Sharing learning and supporting collaboration between communities and organisations, bringing free insights, resources and connections.
- Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.



Centre for Sustainable Energy

We're a charity supporting people and organisations across the UK to tackle the climate emergency and end the suffering caused by cold homes.

- Support development of community energy across UK.
- We are the lead for Widening Participation work within the Energy Learning Network.
- We've worked with six community energy groups over 18 months to learn about and focus on widening participation. Complemented by small grants to groups.
- Supported by [The Better Org.](#)

Community Energy Go

- A free, national support service for community-led energy projects in England.
- Focused on early-stage acceleration, not mentoring.
- Triage-led: right support, at the right time, from the right expert.
- Helping groups move forward faster, when they're at the point they're most likely to stall.
- For early idea, early feasibility, or funding readiness.

This webinar:

- Overview of the Widening Participation in Community Energy toolkit.
- Key learnings from the toolkit and project.
- Guest speakers from Grand Union Community Energy and Awel Aman Tawe.





Welcome to the toolkit

Why widening participation

Community energy is about a more resilient, inclusive energy system with [affordable, clean energy for all](#).

It's a growing sector, but who's involved?

Widening participation is an opportunity to:

- Work with new communities.
- Unlock capacity and leadership, build trust.
- Align with just transition priorities.

Widening Participation:
Engaging people and communities often underrepresented in specific spaces and places.

About the toolkit

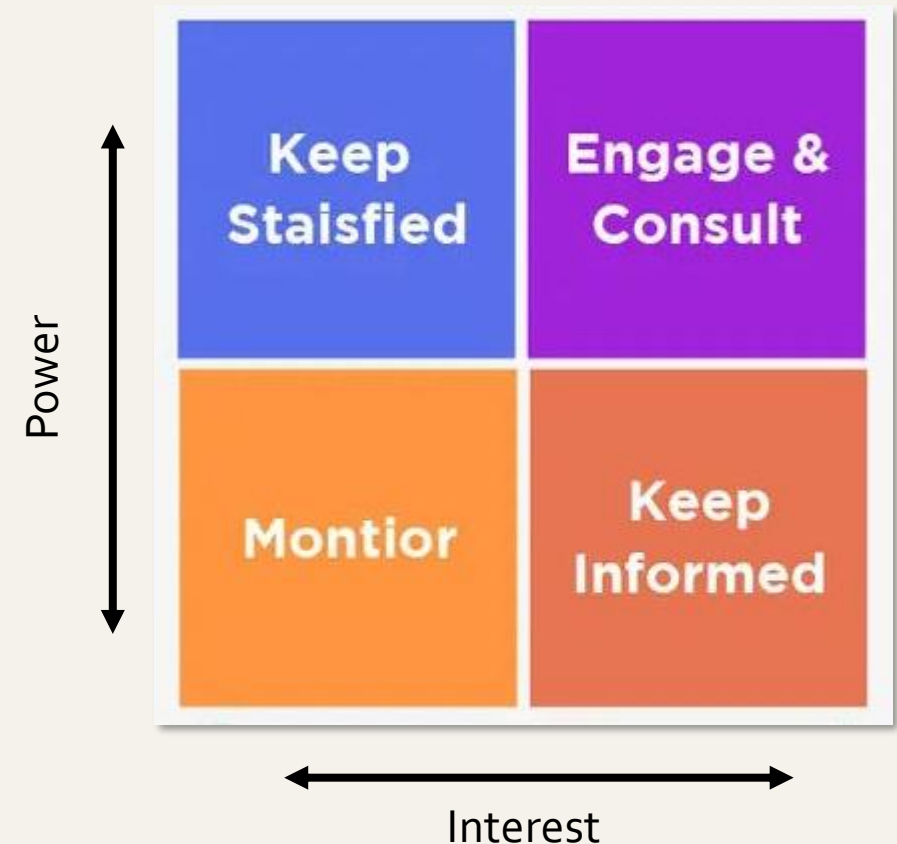
- A sector-first toolkit with practical resources, insights and case studies.
- Helps community energy groups increase impact through greater involvement of a diverse range of people.
- It's a big toolkit, use what you need!
- Questions at the beginning of each section to help you get started.
- Available for free on the Centre for Sustainable Energy's website in English and Welsh.



Key learnings

Good practice

- **Understanding who's in your community.** Use [Census data](#) to support this, and [Community Planning Tool](#).
- **Building relationships with local organisations.** Faith groups, youth groups, Women's Institute.
- **Go where people are.** Warm spaces, markets, libraries, faith spaces, food banks.
- **Use advice leaflets in different languages.**



Power Interest Grid, Community Planning Tool

How the organisation runs

Review your organisation, who is involved and what do they bring? Do a [demographic review](#) or [skills review](#) to understand this and identify gaps.

Inclusive and accessible recruitment:

- Reduces stages in application process. Ask for adjustments.
- Use platforms that support applicant tracking. Proactively encourage applications, or weight your selection process to address gaps.
- Change how you frame questions, ask about scenarios instead of examples.

Youth engagement

- **Finding people:** College, university, youth group, early career.
- **Role ideas:** Social media, updating CRM, event management, community engagement, project management.
- **What can you offer:** Mentoring, skills, training, expenses.
- **Practical considerations:** Apprenticeships for funding, safeguarding, be flexible.



Involving people in your work

Share offers:

- Lower minimum amount, group shares, gift shares, shares in instalments.
- Range of communication and engagement channels.

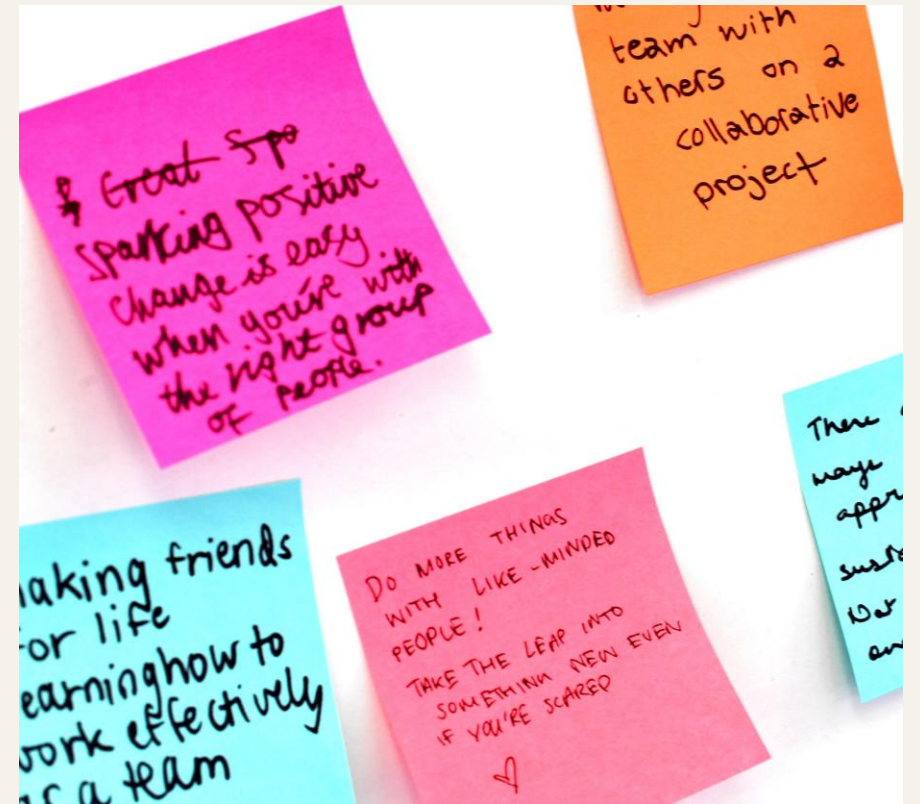
Involving people in different ways:

- Community Membership for £1, mailing list.
- Training, energy advice, social opportunities for volunteers.



Other useful sections

- Plans and impacts: setting goals, aspirations and measuring change.
- Wellbeing and collective care: practical information and resources to look after yourself and others while doing this work.
- Resourcing your work: funding and training options.





Guest speakers

GUCE - Who are we?

- Owned by members, run by seven volunteer Board Directors
- Tring to Watford along the Grand Union Canal.
- Community Benefit Society and cooperative business model
- Grant funding for paid contractors

- GUCE Projects :

POWER DOWN

Sustainable Streets

Energy Champions

POWER UP

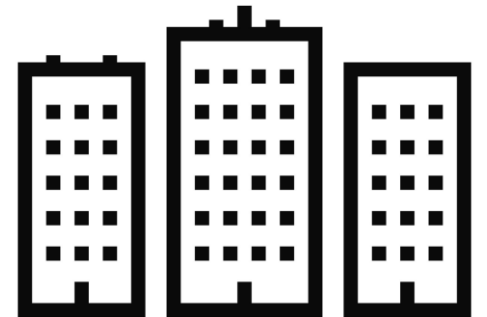
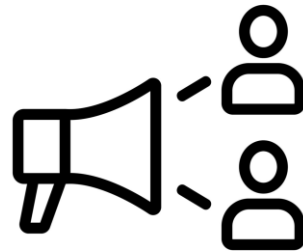
Rudolf Steiner solar panels

Feasibility Studies



Widening Participation

Energy Champions



Learnings



Partnerships



Patience



Reliability



Questions

GUCE

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AWEL AMAN Tawe

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Energy Advice	Cyngor Ynni
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Project learnings

- Key challenges: time, capacity, lack of ringfenced funding.
- High quality training helps organisational buy-in.
- Embedding dedicated widening participation support and paid time into funding programmes and projects.
- Bespoke support from intermediary organisations supports accountability and knowledge building.
- Widening participation takes time: but is crucial for scaling up effectively.

[Access the toolkit: bit.ly/4e5jmAv](https://bit.ly/4e5jmAv)

This toolkit is funded by the National Lottery and brings together the learnings from the Energy Learning Network.



Energy Learning Network
Rhwydwaith Addysg Ynni



Community energy

Widening Participation

A sector-first toolkit with practical resources, insights and case studies.

Using this toolkit will help community energy groups increase their impact through greater involvement of people from across their communities.

March 2026

Accessibility:
if you want this content
in a different format
please contact
[communities@
cse.org.uk](mailto:communities@cse.org.uk)

Stay in touch

- CSE could offer future group or one-to-one support on widening participation.
- We want to learn from you! Please complete our surveys when we send them out.
- Feel free to email elncommunity@cse.org.uk with any questions, learnings or experiences you have to share.
- We'll share the slides and recording to everyone signed up.
- [Sign up to our e-news](#) to stay in touch with CSE's work.

How was this webinar?



shorturl.at/vNImY



We're a charity (298740) supporting people and organisations across the UK to tackle the climate emergency and end the suffering caused by cold homes.

cse.org.uk