



# BRISTOL ENERGY NETWORK

## Bristol Energy Network

### Directors Report 2021

This report is a summary of the network's activities over the period of its financial year July 2020-June 2021 and includes some activity up to the AGM in October 2021



**Our vision is a city where clean, green, affordable energy is delivered to the community by the community.**



#### Summary:

The past year has continued to be a challenge for organisations as they find ways to be responsive to the ever changing requirements of public health whilst trying to continue with their work.

Bristol Energy Network has slowly started to engage in some more face to face activity such as the successful Community Climate Action event recently on St Mark's Road in Easton where local groups, businesses, and the Mosque came together to engage their community around climate action. There have been events in Lockleaze and Filwood where BEN have been able, with some wonderful volunteers, to help support our Bristol community in saving energy and finding out about community energy projects.

There have also been Open meetings, Community Anchor organisation and Neighbourhood Energy Group meetings, and Energy Champion training online, in an attempt to make these events as safe and accessible as possible.

In all of our activity, we strive to represent and support our membership, responding to their needs, sharing learning and representing their views to decision makers. We undertook a 'Member Survey' last year (report available [here](#)) and have used that information, along with feedback from meetings with different member groups, to present you with a draft of a new BEN Member Offer at this year's AGM.

We can make more of a difference and respond to the needs that climate change demands of us when we work

together and share our resources. That is why we want Bristol Energy Network to fulfill its potential and become the network which is more than the sum of its parts.

## Externally funded partnership projects

### **Warm Homes Advice and Money (WHAM) - May 2019 - present**

BEN has been continuing to work with CSE and other partners on the WHAM (Warm Homes Advice and Money) project in an engagement role to bring more communities into energy awareness and help address fuel poverty and associated financial issues in Bristol.

COVID stopped face to face activity for a while but BEN has continued to ensure that potential users were aware of the services that are available, particularly as the pandemic has had a greater impact on lower income households.

At the end of 2020 Bristol Energy Network met with some of our member community anchor organisations and heard about how people are struggling with their fuel bills. The '[Emergency Covid Winter Fund](#)' was the response we came up with together, launching our crowdfunding campaign across Bristol just after Christmas.

The £20,000 raised was distributed through community organisations who had been running emergency food distribution hubs since March 2020, who know their local communities, and can send funds directly to those who need it most. The money raised went straight to the hands of people struggling to pay their energy bills.

Organisations involved:

- Ambition Lawrence Weston – a resident-driven organisation striving to make Lawrence Weston an even better place to live and work
- Baggator – Easton, Bristol dedicated to the empowerment of residents in Easton
- The Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust – Lockleaze a resident-led organisation that exists to support residents to achieve positive change for themselves
- Re:work – A social enterprise at the heart of Filwood (or Knowle West as you probably know it) supporting the community with their day to day needs
- Bristol Disability Equality Forum – is an organisation of Disabled people who, live, work, or study in the Bristol area of England
- Heart of BS13 – Hartcliffe & Withywood social enterprise supports a healthy and thriving community
- CHAS Bristol – City-Wide Housing Advice Service
- Eastside Community Trust – Easton & Lawrence Hill
- ACORN Bristol – Citywide

BEN is once again focussed on training Energy Champions to go into their communities with information about saving energy at home, switching energy suppliers (though not during the current energy industry crisis), and Warm Homes Discounts in order to help their communities reduce their energy bills. We have reached out to foodbanks, food clubs, community centres, advice centres, children's centres and others to offer 'Energy Help Desks' at their locations where people can go to access someone with this information.

Together with our partners in the project we have met our Warm Homes Fund target; so far (Sept 2017 to Jan 2021), WHAM has supported 2,220 households to the tune of £1,172,182 in case outcomes - project impact report can be found [here](#).

### **SONNET (April 2020 - present)**

SONNET (SOcial INNovation in Energy Transitions) is an EU-funded research project bringing together six cities and six research institutions to assess how social innovations can help accelerate the transition from the use of fossil fuels to a more sustainable energy system. The project's Bristol City Lab is exploring new ways to finance energy efficiency and renewable energy investment in community buildings in Bristol. The City Lab partners are Bristol City Council, the [Science Policy Research Unit](#) at the University of Sussex and

BEN and the project will run until November 2021.

Early activity developed a community building survey which was sent out to all community building managers in autumn 2020 as way of engaging with buildings and exploring their energy profile and types of community use. Our open meeting 'Re-energising Community Buildings' which was to have been held at the Symes building in Hartcliffe in April 2020 was delayed by Covid and hosted virtually by Hartcliffe and Withywood Community Partnership in June. This served as the launch of the project and it was good to see representatives from community buildings across the city engage with BEN and members to discuss their buildings.

12 community buildings responded to the survey and then had full energy audits by BCC contractors. The audits have been useful for building managers as a roadmap for the energy efficiency measures that are needed. At least one manager has already used theirs in a funding application.

The second part of the project involved a citizen survey "Investing in the Energy Efficiency of our Community Buildings" that BEN created and promoted through various channels across the city. In particular, we focussed on people who use the 12 community buildings that were taking part in the project, asking them about how they used the buildings, their perceptions of the building's energy use and their views on council-backed crowdfunding models. To date we have had 171 responses to the survey which will help inform the council in creating their business model for a 'Community Municipal Bond' to fund the energy updates needed in community buildings. For further information, please see the page on our [website](#).

This project was due to complete in April 2021 but was extended to November 2021.

## BEN's own projects and collaborations

### **BCC Partnership**

Following a successful trial period at the end of 2020, BEN and BCC have agreed a partnership model in order to help BEN develop new initiatives, and support the delivery of the BEN business plan and the Bristol Community Strategy for Energy and to support the council's work on the achievement of the One City Climate Strategy. The agreement between Bristol Energy Network and Bristol City Council's innovation team includes the mutual ambitions of improving energy efficiency, championing local renewables and community energy assets, strengthening communities and fighting fuel poverty. The agreement provides funding for one day per week of BEN staff time over 3 years from March 2021. An early success was the development of BEN's support for the Bright Green Homes initiative which further develops the WUSU model for low income retrofit.

Projects developed with support from BCC partnership:

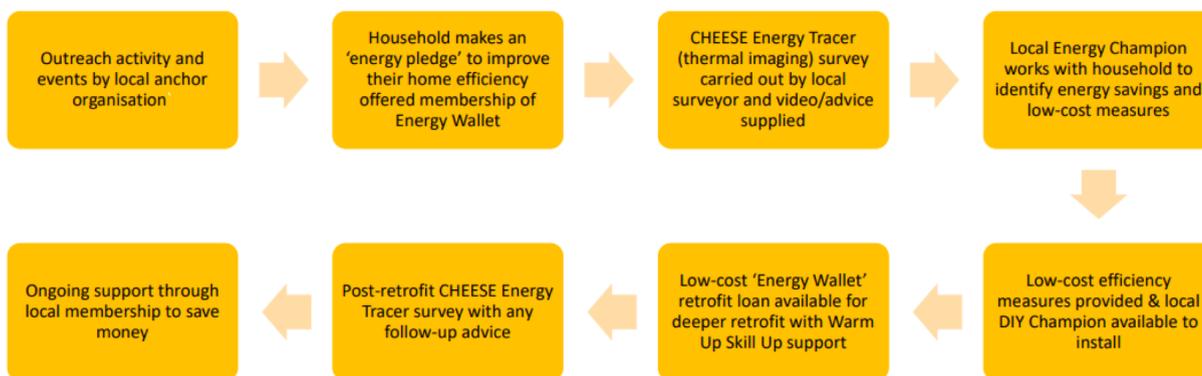
- **Warm Up Skill Up**

Community Led Retrofit Warm Up Skill Up Enabling whole house Retrofit.

Bristol Energy Network have pioneered a response to this national issue by proposing the Energy-Pledge-to-Action programme alongside the Energy Wallet and Warm Up Skill Up project (WUSU) to enable energy retrofits for communities throughout Bristol. There is an opportunity with the Pledges to explore options for creating a platform to track pledges and inspire local action throughout communities with use of this platform which will be explored in this plan. These projects, whilst separate in their conception, are interconnected with one another so as to provide support to Bristol homes and help to integrate efficient retrofit measures to reduce energy waste and subsequently help Bristol in becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

This diagram helps to visualise how the Warm Up skill Up Programme can be manifested in practical terms

and how it can enable us to reach wider strategic objectives of increasing sustainability throughout the community.



Bristol Energy Network (BEN) has been working closely with Bristol City Council (BCC) to develop the Warm Up Skill Up pilot project which will provide fully-funded service: providing energy-saving measures, such as insulation, double glazing and much more to homes in Bristol. Eligible households earning <£30,000 a year can receive up to £10,000 of fully-funded energy-saving measures designed and delivered by Bristol City Council to the new PAS2035 standard. The project is targeting homes with a household income of less than £30,000 per year with low energy efficiency ratings. Using the thermal imaging assessment “Energy Trace” undertaken by The C.H.E.E.S.E project to allow Energy Tracers C.I.C. to inform the retrofit plan for each household

Importantly all eligible residents who apply, [The Warm Up Skill Up](#) project partners (Energy Tracers C.I.C, Re:Work, BEN, BCC) will also be offering training and support sessions to improve DIY skills and enable better shallow retrofit savings to local homes. This pilot project has been funded since March 2021 - March 2022. This pilot project is already proving to be successful and is anticipated to be expanded with additional BEIS funding.

- **Energy Wallet**

Led by Bristol Energy Network, this project will utilise community embedded neighbourhood development and energy groups in fostering adoption of network friendly behaviours by domestic customers. For this a novel flexible partnership business model will be codesigned collaboratively by citizens and key city stakeholders including Bristol Energy Network, Bristol City Council, Bristol Credit Union and the University of Bristol. Essentially, a dedicated “energy wallet” bank account (both for individuals and community groups) will be created which will enable aggregation of various finance streams for low income and vulnerable households (e.g. ECO funding, Green Homes Grant, low-cost finance schemes). The project is aligned with initiatives that target low income and vulnerable households which will enable participation of new customers in providing flexibility services at scale and hence produce a tangible impact on the network.

The project has been developed as a concept and is now seeking innovation funding to implement the project & complement existing Warm Up Skill Up project.

- **Energy Pledge-to-Action**

After developing the idea of an Energy Pledge as a means for individuals (and groups of individuals) to take steps towards the city’s goal of net zero emissions, it has transformed from a paper Energy Pledge into a ‘Pledge-to-Action’ project. After some helpful analysis by our University of Bristol intern Leila, we were able to quantify what making small changes in our homes (such as replacing lights with LED bulbs) can contribute to reducing the city’s carbon emissions. It was then decided that the best platform to move these pledges online was the carbon calculator tool ‘[Giki Zero](#)’.

Bristol Energy Network proposes an Energy Pledge-to-Action project where people make carbon reduction “pledges” based on their lifestyles and preferences, and are supported by the BEN team and our member organisations, to turn pledge/s into real tangible actions with measurable positive outcomes.

We invite you to join our Giki Team [here](#) and start seeing your progress as you save energy and save carbon.

From the pledges made, we will direct users to useful information and organisations that will be able to help with the pledges made such as having an energy audit with The C.H.E.E.S.E project.

Across the city, we hope to encourage our partners to use the Giki tool to promote carbon saving Pledges in their communities. The project has recently received a small grant from Patigonia (October 2021) to develop the project further with Bristol Energy Network membership.

### **Energy Champions**

We have been recruiting new Energy Champions and offering them training on reducing home energy use, switching energy suppliers and accessing Warm Homes Discounts so that they can take their knowledge back into their own communities. Our hope is that each community has its own embedded Energy Champion, a go-to and signposting person for all things energy.

### **Community Climate Action Plans**

BEN has been supporting some of the CCAP groups as they move through the process of putting their Climate Action plans together. We have been running workshops and training with Eastside Community Trust and Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust as their own Energy Champions start their work in their communities. A great example of Community Climate work in action was the recent event at St Mark’s Road in Easton where local vendors, neighbours, and other climate concerned volunteers came together through BEN’s facilitated workshops and created a neighbourhood event to share their knowledge and engage their community. It was a great day all round.

### **City Leap**

[Bristol City Leap](#) is the City Council’s initiative to bring in new investment to meet the 2030 net-zero carbon target. Their aim is to form a joint venture between BCC and an external technology partner to provide services to the Council and substantial investment in delivery of low-carbon infrastructure in the City.

BEN has been meeting with the consortium of other community-facing city partners (BGCP, CSE, BEC, Low Carbon Gordano, Triodos Bank, Zero West) who came together to make sure that community energy had a voice in the City Leap process. The consortium has put forward a proposal to the preferred bidders for how communities can engage in and benefit from the transition to net Zero by 2030. A framework proposal has been designed to give any community in Bristol and the surrounding region the technical and financial support it needs to deliver its own renewable energy generation or carbon reduction projects.

One of the bidders requested an more in-depth report on the landscape and potential for community energy in Bristol. BEN undertook this report on behalf of the consortium and submitted the report in July. The report will be shared with our members over the next few months with the opportunity for input and comment from the network.

There are now only two preferred bidders: Ameresco Limited, with Vattenfall Heat UK Limited as an Essential Sub-Contractor and E.ON UK PLC and Marubeni Corporation (acting as a consortium), and the contract is expected to be decided on by the end of 2021.

## Policy

BEN has been actively involved in responding to consultations and policy over the past year with David Tudgey, our Project Development Manager & board member Rebecca Windemere coordinating responses to various community energy related local, & national policies with members.

After the government put out its [Energy White Paper](#) in December 2020, BEN were involved with the Bristol Advisory Committee on Climate Change (BACCC)'s rapid assessment of the policy (detailed response [here](#)). This led into a piece of work that BEN developed in the lead up to the local City and WECA Mayoral elections. BEN's '[10 Asks](#)' which was informed by the response to the Energy White paper the government's '10 point plan' class for a Smart, Local and Democratic Energy system to take us to net zero. The full document can be [read](#) here and the responses from candidates from the election period can be found [here](#). BEN sees it as its responsibility to hold those now elected officials to their word. Special thanks to Ruzanna Chitchyan for her advisory role on this work.

In January 2021 BEN submitted a response to the UK Government Consultation on Improving the Energy Performance of Privately Rented Homes in England and Wales. Many thanks to our Bristol University interns Grace and Rhianna for their hard work on writing this response and to the members that inputted into the response. The response can be read on our website [here](#).

BEIS Contracts for Difference for Low Carbon Electricity Generation Consultation 30th May 2020 on proposed amendments to the scheme : Bristol Energy Network & Ambition Lawrence Weston response [Contacts for Difference Appendix 1 & Appendix 2](#)

West of England Combined Authority meeting on Tuesday 21st September 2021 :Principles for a refreshed climate emergency ambition and Green Recovery Fund plans:

David Tudgey gave a [statement](#) prior to the West of England Combined Authority meeting on Tuesday 21st September 2021 on agreeing the principles to their Climate Emergency Plan & Green Recovery Plans. He was there to raise his voice for community energy and community enterprise to ensure West of England Combined Authority -

- Recognise Community Energy/Enterprise Role in the Pathway towards NetZero for Just Transition in updating the West of England Climate Emergency Plan.\*
- Recognise & resource community enterprise using community energy as blueprint for other sectors, food, transport, waste – in co production & ownership models with communities.
- Resources for Community Intermediaries to provide market infrastructure organisations such as Bristol Energy Network, anchor organisation & enable:

1. Market participation with development grants for Community Enterprise
2. Long-term supportive policy (e.g., priority access to local land & buildings– identifying suitable sites for renewable energy, community led housing e.g. for every development over 10 units % of serviced plots provided for community led self builders
3. Dedicated support for skills needs – creation of energy learning zones within communities such as Ambition Lawrence Weston's aspirations to deliver locally rooted skills academy
4. Wide-scale information campaign on why and how to engage on Climate Crisis and local effects of how we together can combat the crisis without economically crippling poorer communities

The meeting Cllrs reference the statements made by David Tudgey & Cllr Fodor, and demanded that a larger budget be set than 20 million proposed & to triple this three fold. The Green Recovery Fund will now be

reviewed to identify additional funding and discussed at the next West of England Combined Authority meeting. David Tudgey will be representing community energy further in a meeting with Mayor Dan Norris in October to seek assurances that funding is made available for communities to participate in the Pathway towards NetZero & Climate Emergency Action Plan.

\*As a cosigning organisation of the Friends of the Earth South West Open letter, "A Declaration on Young People, Climate and Jobs" - meeting DanNorris & our 10 Asks for a Smart Local Energy System. David met with Dan Norris on 9th August along with Friends of the Earth & other environmental NGO's from the West of England to discuss the WECA Climate Emergency Action Plan. Building, Retrofit, transport decarbonisation, and nature restoration were all on the agenda.

### **Citizens' Assembly**

In January 2021 Bristol City Council held its first Citizens' Assembly around the question "How do we recover from COVID-19 and create a better future for all in Bristol?". The randomly selected members of the public were given expert advice around Climate Change and Housing, Transport, and Health and Social Care and then encouraged to debate the topics and come up with ideas as answers to the question. Our very own Emilia Melville and David Tudgey were called upon as experts in the Climate Change and Housing section to discuss Bristol Energy Network and our work in community energy. You can watch their talk [here](#).

### **Meetings:**

Bristol Energy Network - Community Anchor Organisations meeting - Wed, 18 Nov 2020  
Open Meeting: Build Back Better - Wed, 3 Feb 2021  
Energy in communities and community buildings - Wed, 17 Feb 2021  
Have your say - Bristol City Leap for community organisations - Thu, 20 May 2021  
Open Meeting: West of England Community Energy "Our message for COP26" - Tue, 22 Jun 2021  
Bristol Energy Network Community Anchor Organisations - Wed, 15 Sep 2021  
Neighbourhood Energy Groups - networking meeting - Wed, 22 Sep 2021 18:00

### **Events:**

Energy Essentials training CSE Managing Home Energy - Wed, 9 Dec 2020  
Filwood Community Market 5th June, 4th Sept 2021  
Lockleaze on Tour 12th June  
St Mark's Road Climate Action Day 23rd Sept 2021  
Warm Homes Discount and Supplier Switching training 30th Sept 2021  
LNT Festival of Solutions 9th Oct 2021

## **Behind the Scenes:**

### **Co-ordination and communication**

We have been lucky over the last 18 months to have had an excellent co-ordinator in Emilia Melville who has been helping to organise and manage the network - very ably supported by Rachel Moffat. She has been working on developing the Energy Champions and hosting special meetings for Community Anchor organisations and Neighbourhood Energy Groups alongside all our open meetings. She has brought her wealth of experience and expertise of community energy to the network.

As well as sending out regular e-newsletters and organising open network meetings, there has been lots of other communications through the website, Facebook page and regular use of Twitter. Thanks to our great new Comms volunteer Mia Smith (who took over from Adrain who did lots of great voluntary work for BEN's comms plans), we also now have a thriving Instagram page. Through the project work, we have made use of

local print newspapers to communicate about both projects and the activity of the network, successfully widening our audience and reach.

David Tudgey also undertook his first (and BEN's first) Instagram Live interview with Josie Phillips from Patagonia Bristol who have been keen to connect around community energy. It can be viewed [here](#).

We have held some internal workshops to start improving our website for users and have been learning about the best approaches for this.

### **Interns and Volunteers:**

We have been supported over the past year by interns from different departments from the University of Bristol. Leila Pankhurst and Izzaty Rodzi have both been Professional Liaison Network interns and Felix Hall was from the School of Management. Rhianna Murgatroyd and Grace Spalton-Woods supported on policy work throughout their time with BEN.

We also are very grateful for our dedicated volunteers who have been helping out at online and in person events.

### **BEN staff 2020-2021:**

- Project development: David Tudgey (0.5fte)
- Coordinator: Emilia Melville
- Support Office: Rachel Moffat (0.6fte)

### **Governance**

The BEN Board of Directors meets monthly to provide strategic direction to the Network and discuss progress with projects and new initiatives. Between these formal meetings, individual directors provide management support to the paid employees of the Network. Each project is overseen by one of the Directors who support BEN staff and work with partners to ensure effective delivery.

The Board and BEN staff have been continuing to ensure that current community efforts are recognised and built on for the benefit of the whole city – ensuring representation at relevant meetings and events including City Leap and the One City Plan.

### **BEN Board of Directors 2020-2021:**

The network's board is currently comprised of 9 directors:

**Caroline Bird**

**Jenny Howard-Coles**

**Mark Leach**

**Paul Phare**

**Robert Smart**

**Sam Willitts** (treasurer)

**Rebecca Windemer**

**Laura Penny**

## Finances and funding

A detailed financial breakdown is provided in the accompanying financial report for FY 20/21.

## BEN Office and storage

During the summer we moved into a small office, within a shared work space, in the Emmaus Bristol building on Upper York Street. It is nice to have a physical space once again. In October, Babbasa are moving in and will be taking up the majority of the work space but we will remain in our office and look forward to interacting with Babbasa. Vocalise, Interculture and Lightbox Theatre are all still sharing the space and we are enjoying learning about their work and interactions throughout Bristol.

We have retained our registered and postal address at **Future Leap, 1-3 Gloucester Rd, Bishopston, Bristol BS7 8AA.**

On the storage front, we have our event and engagement supplies into a rented garage in Filwood – these include gazebo, bike generator, mobile future home etc – these are all available for members to borrow.

## Future plans

In this year of COP26, BEN will be continuing to work on projects that centre community energy as a way to address climate change. As the host nation, it is important to show ways that the people of the UK and specifically the citizens of Bristol, can contribute to this important work. All projects will align with our values and objectives and we will continually look for ways to grow our membership and, as such, energy awareness throughout the city.

We will be keeping a close eye on developments with the City Leap projects and do our best to make sure that communities will benefit from this investment into the city's energy system as the whole city moves towards its ambition of reaching net zero carbon emissions.

## Our Values:

1. **For everyone** – actively working to create an energy movement that reflects the diversity of Bristol communities and ensuring everyone has a chance to play a part in designing and carrying out the work;
2. **Open and honest** – being accountable to those affected by our work by giving them the opportunity to be involved and openly sharing information about our activities;
3. **Community-led** – communities, rather than private interests, lead the work and benefit from it;
4. **Sharing and supporting** – working together, sharing learning and supporting each other to achieve shared goals.

## ***Appendix 1 - Current member organisations (alphabetical, as of October 2021)***

1. 1625 Independent People
2. African Voices Forum
3. Ambition Lawrence Weston
4. Bedminster Energy Group
5. Bishopston, Cotham and Redland Energy Group- Now West Bristol Climate Action
6. Boundless Futures
7. Bristol Energy Cooperative
8. Bristol Friends of the Earth
9. Bristol Green Doors
10. Bristol Multi Faith Forum
11. Bristol Power Cooperative
12. Buzz Lockleaze
13. Centre for Sustainable Energy
14. CHEESE project
15. Clifton Climate Action - Now West Bristol Climate Action
16. Coal Action Network
17. Demand Energy Equality
18. Easton Energy Group
19. Full Circle
20. Greater Fishponds Energy Group
21. GroundWork South
22. Hartcliffe & Withywood Community Partnership
23. Keynsham Community Energy
24. Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust
25. Low Carbon Gordano
26. MakeYourHomeEco
27. North Bristol Advice Centre
28. Re:work ltd
29. Residents Against Dirty Energy (RADE)
30. Sustainable Thornbury
31. Talking Money
32. Totterdown Energy Group
33. UJIMA Radio
34. Zero West
35. Zero Carbon Compton (part of Compton Dando Community Association)