



Bristol Energy Network

Directors Report 2020

This report is a summary of the network's activities over the period of its financial year July 2019-June 2020 and includes some activity up to the AGM in November 2020.

Summary of the year

This has been a strange year – the 8 month period up to the impact of Covid19 was one of growth and increasing visibility with a number of successful projects and funding secured. A partnership with Bristol Energy and good collaboration with Bristol City Council has helped to widen our impact. Our second conference, in November 2019, was again very well received with around 140 attendees.

Covid19 has been a challenge although the team has continued to work remotely and engage with members, partners and citizens. Online workshops, team meetings and Open Meetings for members have helped to keep everyone engaged and projects on track as far as possible. We are also pleased to have an active and engaged group of volunteers and champions helping across a number of projects.

The most notable celebration this year was that BEN is ten! Back in 2010, BEN was set up by a small group of enthusiasts who could see that community energy activity across the city was starting to grow and bringing these groups and learning together would only be of benefit to the city. We marked the 10 years, virtually, at our AGM in November.

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. As a network, our membership is important and, at this critical time in the growing awareness of climate change and the need to take urgent action, we are increasingly recognised as important elements in the efforts to take significant action.

BEN core activities

– as agreed with our members shortly after formalisation as a CIC in October 2014

- **Being the network**: communicating with members, bringing people together.
- **Supporting the network**: building capacity and supporting existing groups and the development of new ones.
- **Representing the network**: the visible face of Bristol Community energy.
- **Strengthening the network**: developing shared resources, partnerships and collaborative working.

Externally funded partnership projects

REPLICATE - Dec 2017-July 2019

BEN has now completed its work with BCC on the REPLICATE (REnaissance of PLaces with Innovative Citizenship and Technology) EU funded project. We delivered community engagement for the Smart Homes / retrofit elements of the project in partnership with local community groups in the project-defined areas of Easton, Ashley and Lawrence Hill. Our work on the project, with an extension and some additional funding was completed in July 2019.

Activities included developing 'energy champions' and engaging over 2,000 people through events and activities. A final event was a celebration meal in Barton Hill in July where participants were invited to share food and talk about their experiences of the project. It was also an opportunity to introduce the final phase of the project which invited households to take part in an automation trial of white goods – for which they could earn rewards.

A legacy of this project is the development of energy champions and engagement methodologies, and deeper relationships and energy knowledge across the project area. Our work on this project was nationally recognised in the project winning an award for our community asset/capacity building engagement with the project.

<https://news.bristol.gov.uk/news/bristol-project-honoured-at-national-innovation-awards>

Bristol Energy Smart System Transformation (BESST) - Jan-July 2019

We worked with Bristol Energy (project lead) and Ambition Lawrence Weston on the BESST project - looking at future energy systems. This focused on the area around Lawrence Weston, Westbury, Avonmouth and Shirehampton and used workshops and CHEESE surveys to engage residents in discussions about energy to develop new energy propositions such as heat as a service and local energy tariffs. This work continues in partnership with Bristol Energy Ltd.

<https://www.regen.co.uk/project/bristol-energy-smart-system-transformation-besst/>

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

BEN has been working with CSE and other partners on the WHAM (Warm Homes and Money) project in an engagement role to bring more communities into energy awareness and help address fuel poverty and associated financial issues. This has adopted the resources and methods developed through the REPLICATE project, supporting the Energy Champions in Ashley, Easton and Lawrence Hill and developing new training including face to face and online workshops.

Before the Covid lockdown, BEN had attended 10 events and engaged with over 400 people to give out energy advice and information. Further engagement was achieved through Ujima radio and local free publications such as (Vocalise (Ashley ward), Up Our Street (Easton & Lawrence Hill), The Mead (Southmead) and On Your Doorstep (Lawrence Weston) giving a combined reach of nearly 40,000 households. As well as working with existing members such as ReWork and the Hartcliff and Witherwood Community Partnership, the project has reached out into communities in Southmead and extended its messages through the Somali Youth Voice and The Network .

Covid has led to a pause in face to face activity, but BEN has continued to ensure that potential users are aware of the services that are available, particularly as the pandemic has a greater impact on lower income households, via our members & partner anchor organisations' newsletters & social media accounts; as well as our energy champions promoting the service in their communities.

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 report can be found here.

TOASTY WARM NEWS!

FROM BRISTOL ENERGY NETWORK

Energy Champions are local residents who are passionate about energy and tackling climate change. They live near you and talk to their friends and neighbours, helping them save energy and money.

Energy Champions are new to Southmead and will be helping out with the WHAM project (Warm Homes Advice & Money). This project helps people who are struggling with their energy bills or who may have a cold, damp house.

So, if you love talking to people and would like to join the Energy Champions please get in touch:
Caroline Ennion
tel: 07871 791 679
email:
coordinator@bristolenergynetwork.org



WHAMI Warmer Homes, Advice & Money

We can help you lower your gas and electricity bills, and make your home **safe, secure and warm.**

We offer ...

- Advice on how use less energy and how to switch supplier.
- Ways to make your home warmer and less damp.
- Help with budgeting and getting out of debt.
- Benefit advice.
- Access to grants and discounts.



For free and impartial advice call 0800 082 2234

WHAM is funded by Bristol City Council, Warm Homes Fund and Bristol Energy.

centre for sustainable energy
Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) James Court,
St James Parade Bristol BS1 3JH
www.cse.org.uk



The Mead Winter 19/20 ([Southmead Development Trust magazine](#))



BristolEnergyNetwork @BristolEnergyNw · Jan 29, 2020

Jenna from @cse_bristol giving the #EnergyChampions the lowdown on The Warm Homes Advice & Money (WHAM) Project at our design workshop.



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Energy Champions WHAM Training session & development workshop Jan 2020

FutureProof

BEN is working in partnership with CSE to find builders interested in becoming supply chain installers of energy efficiency retrofit measures and links to training provided by Green Register. Various methods were tried to engage sufficient builders but there are still insufficient numbers. Two of our open meetings this year have focussed on retrofit, the first in September 2019 in Cotham introducing Futureproof and the second (online October 2020) looking at the pros and cons of the Green Homes Grant – linking to the Futureproof process.

SONNET (April 2020 - present)

SONNET (SOcial INNovation in Energy Transitions) is a 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 summer 2021.

Early activity developed a community building survey which will be 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.

This project was due to complete in April 2021 but is currently extended to June 2021.

BEN's own projects and collaborations

Working with Bristol Energy Ltd, October 2019-April 2020

BEN has 1d/w funding from Bristol Energy to help them engage with community energy and develop projects to channel their ECO funding in a socially and environmentally positive way. The funding has helped further develop the energy champions initiative and enabled BEN to run training sessions.

Other activity included a workshop with the TUC on Going Green at Work exploring skills shortages opportunities for project development. As a result the TUC presented at the BEN Energy Transition Conference 2019 & Project Development Officer undertook an Energy Workshop for Green Rep TUC members, 12th November 2019.

Bristol Energy Network coordinated an Energy Trace at Bristol Zoo, conducting a heat loss survey of the Reptile House. Innovative thermal imaging tech was used in the Reptile House to identify where the enclosure, home to over 120 reptiles, may be losing heat. The energy efficiency survey was conducted February 2020, through the Bristol-based not-for-profit C.H.E.E.S.E (Cold Homes Energy Efficiency Survey Experts) project in partnership with Bristol Energy and Bristol Energy Network.

Elinor Kershaw, Sustainability and Projects Co-ordinator at Bristol Zoo Gardens, said: "We have learned a lot about how the building works which we could never have seen from looking at the equipment and the energy bills alone. It was also fascinating to see the animal enclosures and some of the animals through thermal imaging. The videos taken during the survey will be reviewed to prepare an internal report on the building. We also plan to share the results and information on the heat-mapping process with our Green Team and wider staff."

The C.H.E.E.S.E Project is a member of and supported by BEN. David Tudgey, Project Development Officer at the Bristol Energy Network, said: “Bristol Energy Network is proud to be working with Bristol Energy to enable and support the development of community energy projects such as the C.H.E.E.S.E project to accelerate climate action in the city”

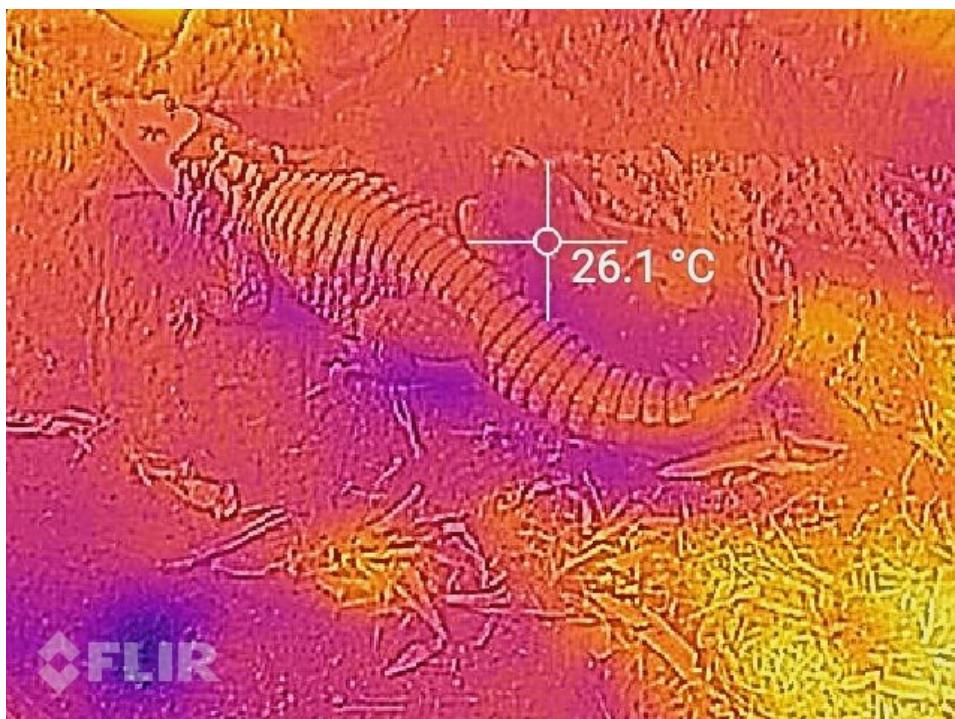


Image taken by David Tudgey Bristol Energy Network © Copyright & Phonographic copyright

This partnership with BE was put on hold when the key BE staff were furloughed in April and then came to an end when BE was put up for sale in the summer of 2020.

Energy Champions

The Energy Champions have been meeting regularly to develop ideas for new activity and support ongoing projects such as WHAM, helping to organise events with anchor organisations & supporting households with their energy bills. This activity moved online where they have been contributing to local newsletters and news outlets to promote WHAM as well as undertaking training online. Energy champions have met bi-weekly & formed subgroups to support various projects in their development & delivery such as the Energy Pledges project.

Energy Pledges

During the latter part of 2019, we started to develop the idea of Energy Pledges as a means of communication and engagement. This approach was used when we attended the global climate strike in September 2019 and at our conference in November. Rachel, one of our volunteers, brought together a database of pledges made and you can read a blog [Make your #EnergyPledge](#) on the BEN website.

The pledges were also used to support activity with the WHAM project, where people were asked what they would like to take action on in their homes. Many of them pledged to change their light bulbs to LEDs and to have energy audits including The C.H.E.E.S.E Energy Trace audit, which we were able to offer them, & also to contact the WHAM project for further support.

Across the city, partners Re:Work Knowle West, Hartcliffe Withywood Community Partnership, Ambition Lawrence Weston, Eastside Community Trust, The C.H.E.E.S.E Project have been helping to collect pledges from their events citywide.

Toolkit

Power to Change funded the development of a toolkit on how community energy and local government can, and should, work together for mutual benefit, drawing on our successful experiences in Bristol. [Transforming Energy – the Power of Local](#) was finalised at the end of 2019 and discussed with a wider national audience at Community Energy England's online conference in June 2020.

2019 autumn conference

We have held two autumn conferences (2018 and 2019) and had been hoping that it would become an annual event but the events of 2020 have made this more challenging. Both conferences were well attended and received so we do have a good legacy to build on when circumstances allow us to resume this activity. Both conferences saw us partnering with Bristol City Council and Community Energy England to reach audiences beyond our core membership and develop new connections.

Our second conference in November 2019 '**A Just Energy Transition: responding to the climate emergency**' was held in City Hall and attended by around 140 people, this was sponsored by Bristol Energy and Bristol University (2 departments / projects: EnergyREV project and Inclusive Economy Initiative). Feedback was overwhelmingly good: delegates thought it was well organised; they liked the variety of sectors that the speakers came from, the workshop discussions, the networking time and the cake! For the next event they would like to see more case studies from projects and groups, more stalls and a more diverse audience.

City Leap – community role

Bristol City Leap (<https://www.energyservicebristol.co.uk/cityleap/>) 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 working with other community-facing city partners (BGCP, CSE, BEC etc) to set up a consortium to support community engagement in City Leap. After bringing the consortium together, BEN has worked with the group to put together a proposal 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. It also provides for individuals in the city to invest in community energy projects led by communities or those taken forward by City Leap. Bristol City Council has lent their support to the proposal by informing bidders of the consortium's proposal and it is up to the bidders whether they include it in their bids. There was a delay to the City Leap procurement process due to Covid which has meant that the process had to restart in July 2020

The Bristol Advisory Committee on Climate Change

BEN's Project Development Manager, David Tudgey & our Director Sam Willitts were invited to join the the Bristol Advisory Committee on Climate Change (BACCC) which was created in Autumn 2019 as a key part of the city's climate emergency declaration and response to the climate emergency. Its primary purpose is to provide independent technical advice on reducing Bristol's greenhouse gas emissions and adapting the city to the impacts of climate change.

BEN's key contributions have been focused on supporting the committee to provide advice/guidance to the One City Environment Board and other institutions in making continued progress towards Bristol's ambition to become a carbon neutral and climate resilient city with regards to community energy matters including building performance & renewable energy targets, to enable a Net Zero Carbon City by 2030.

The BACCC activities during its first year can be found here in its annual report

https://thebaccc.files.wordpress.com/2020/12/baccc_year-one-report_12-nov-2020.pdf

Other significant activities

- shortlisted for best community initiative in the annual Regen awards – held in Bath in November 2019
- attended the **Global Climate strike** on 20th September 2019 to help people pledge action, part-funded by the UoB management school
- developed good working relationships with BCC, Community Energy England, WECA, Bristol Energy, BGCP - and more!

BEN meetings and events, 2019-20

1. Open Meeting: **Retrofitting for Energy Efficiency** hosted by Bishopston, Cotham and Redland Energy Group 19th September 2019
2. **Positive Action at the Global climate strike** – in partnership with the University of Bristol Management school Friday 20 September – pop up stand to help participants think about positive action to cut carbon emissions
3. **2019 AGM and 2020 forward look**, 22 January 2020
4. Our first virtual meeting: **City Leap and other updates**, 29 April 2020
5. Open meeting: **Re-energising Community Buildings**, hosted virtually by Hartcliffe and Withywood Partnership, 25 June 2020
6. Open meeting online, **Green Homes Grant**, in partnership with Bristol Energy Co-operative, online, 6 October 2020

Behind the Scenes:

Co-ordination and communication

We have been lucky over the last 18 months to have had two excellent co-ordinators (first Caroline Ennion and now Emilia Melville) helping to organise and manage 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. 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.

Using funding received for the conference and Toolkit, we additionally employed a communications manager for a day a week from September to March which was a great addition to the team and helped raise our profile further. This included modernising our logo and some improvements to the website including more, and more varied, blogs (8 over the 2019-20 year).

BEN staff 2019-2020:

- Project development: David Tudgey (0.5fte)
- Coordinator: Caroline Ennion (0.5fte) up to June 2020 and Emilia Melville from July 2020
- Communications: Liz Barling (0.2fte) - from September 2019 to March 2020

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. Additionally, Caroline Bird, as chair, also fulfils a staff / strategic management role on 2-3 days / month.

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 2019-2020:

The network's board is currently comprised of 8 directors:

Caroline Bird (chair)

Jenny Howard-Coles

Karn Shah

Mark Leach

Paul Phare

Robert Smart

Sam Willetts (treasurer)

Rebecca Windemer

Plus **Jake Barnes** (advisor)

Finances and funding

A detailed financial breakdown is provided in the accompanying financial report for FY 19/20.

BEN Office and storage

The shared office arrangement with Happy City came to an end with the first lockdown in March 2020. The lease was due to end anyway so we had already been exploring alternatives as an office base. Initially we had hoped to find somewhere that we could share with Bristol Energy Co-operative and the Bristol Green Capital Partnership as we enjoy close and productive working relationships and shared values with them. As Covid dragged on this looked less likely. So, in the interim, with staff mostly working at home, we have a registered and postal address at **Future Leap, 1-3 Gloucester Rd, Bishopston, Bristol BS7 8AA.**

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

Future plans

BEN will continue to seek project opportunities where they align with our values and objectives, continually aiming to grow energy awareness, and support and expand our membership. The Board and staff will also engage strategically in order to ensure that community voices are represented in decision-making and that community energy is valued in the city. We have a good working relationship with the city council and the inclusion and advice from community energy in their initiatives is a valuable outcome for the city. We are pleased that the short partnership that we developed with Bristol Energy brought a community voice into their innovation team and that this approach is now being replicated with the City Council's Energy Service where we are developing a new partnership.

The next 10 years are so important as we seek to deliver the City's net Zero ambitions and do our bit to keep global temperature rises within the 1.5C that scientists have said is necessary for our future wellbeing. We look forward to the challenge!

Appendix 1 - Strategic Planning

In our last report we outlined the development support that we had been given from the Sustainable Technologies Business Acceleration Hub (through SETSquared and the University of Bath). BEN staff and directors identified five broad success areas, each with a strategic aim for BEN to work towards. During this current year, the board and team have been starting to take forwards some of the recommendations and developing actions to support them. This work has been delayed by Covid but some progress has been made.

1. BEN is a financially self-sustaining organisation

Strategic aim: BEN has a stable finance model with a stream of grants and long-term funding secured. This supports increased resources to enable BEN to scale effort and results, and unlock great leadership and ambition.

2020 Goals: Develop a business plan for BEN
 Pursue an Esme Fairbairn bid

2020 outcomes: delayed, business plan is starting to develop but in a fast moving political landscape this has necessarily paused

2. BEN's team structure enables it to grow in scope of activities and influence

Strategic Aim: The organization is well resourced to support activity across the city; and work on multiple projects. CEO is in post who is known and called on locally and nationally to represent the sector.

2020 Goal: Plan to resource a Chief exec
2020 Outcome

3. BEN is a leading practitioner for its training and "enabling communities" programmes

Strategic Aim: Accredited retrofit training programme originated in Bristol but has spread country wide.

2020 Goal: Find opportunities to develop training from our current projects
2020 outcome several training sessions have been held with the energy champion cohort, building on the learning from projects and aiming to support them better

4. BEN supports an active and engaged network across Bristol, and contributes to networks nationally

Strategic Aim: Every community in Bristol is active in community energy with projects generating clean energy and using it efficiently

2020 Goals: Visit all members to find out what they want and need
 Launch BEN's City Leap initiative
 Deliver a great 2020 conference
 Make the website amazing
2020 outcomes staff and board members have been talking to member groups and using a survey format to help them articulate what they want support from BEN for
 The BEN City Leap consortium continues to develop its proposals, City Leap is delayed
 There are plans to hold a smaller virtual conference this year and we have volunteers who are working on the website

5. BEN is representative of a diverse Bristol throughout its staffing, membership and mechanisms.

Strategic Aim: BEN is a varied, equitable and diverse organization, representing the communities it serves

2020 Goal Engage with groups representing diverse communities to understand needs
2020 outcome an equality and diversity strategy has been developed and work is ongoing with members

Additionally, a further three points described “**what success will look like**” - defining how BEN will measure that it has been successful in 5 years time. These ambitions have not changed!

A. BEN delivers on community energy outcomes

Measure of Success: BEN has led the development of an active citywide revolution in energy projects including generation, efficiencies and on the demand side. Bristol is on a path to becoming carbon neutral by 2030 with the strong involvement of local communities

B. BEN has a reputation as trusted change catalyst in Bristol and is known at a national level for its work.

Measure of Success: BEN is sought out by all sectors wishing to interface with community energy (public, private , voluntary) and has a national profile with recognized best practice methods being replicated in other cities.

C. Recognition locally, nationally and internationally

Measure of Success: Recognition of BEN’s great achievements matches those great achievements!

It is also worth reminding ourselves of our guiding vision and values:

BEN vision and values

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

Our values, guiding how we and our members work are that we are:

- *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;*
- *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;*
- *Community-led – communities, rather than private interests, lead the work and benefit from it;*
- *Sharing and supporting – working together, sharing learning and supporting each other to achieve shared goals.*

Appendix 2 - Current member organisations (alphabetical, as of October 2020)

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