



Test Source Community Energy

Presentation to Hampshire Climate Change Parish Event 1/02/23

Martin Baker

www.testsource.org.uk

Agenda



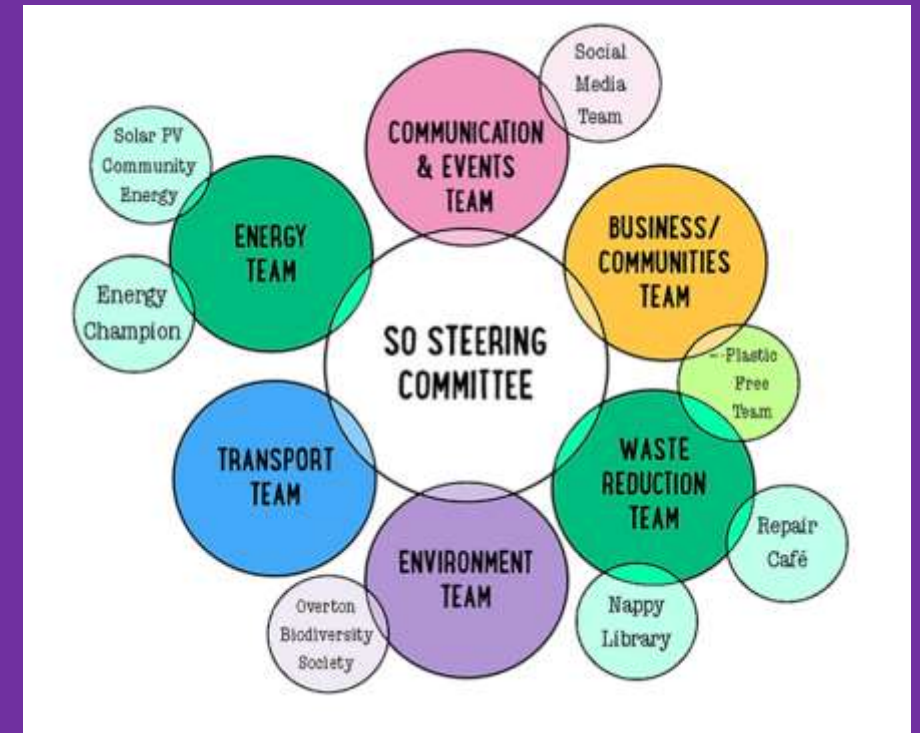
- How did we come about?
- Funding and Resources
- Parish Council Importance
- What are we doing?
- What is community energy?
- Our partners
- Energy Champions
- Progress
- What do local people think?
- Lessons Learnt

How did we come about?



- Overton Parish Council declared a climate emergency with the goal for village to be carbon neutral by 2030
- Called village meeting resulting in creation of Sustainable Overton
- Sub groups were set up as shown:

- The energy team, which I'm part of, has pursued two targets: rooftop solar PV and energy champions
- In 2021 we became a community benefit society, regulated by the FCA - Test Source Community Energy Limited



Funding and Resources



- Sustainable Overton (SO) benefitted from support from Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council to fund consultants to help identify projects and advise on our application for an RCEF (Rural Community Energy Fund) grant.
- As part of this initial funding SO was commissioned to create two “Toolkits”: Climate Action Group and Community Energy
- These are available on the Sustainable Overton website: www.sustainableoverton.org.uk
- *If you haven't read them I highly recommend you do so!*
- SO has since set up the Overton Cup, a Nappy Library, Plastic Free Overton Status, a Repair Café, No Mow May, Recycle demonstrations, no idling notices etc.

Parish Council Importance



- Our experience proved the importance of working in partnership with the parish council for many reasons:
- Good community wide communications. Usually PCs have a regular newsletter delivered to all residents
- Parish Council involvement helps lend stature and stability
- Gives financial credibility – essential when applying for grant support
- Probably initial use of a bank account

What is Community Energy & how does it work?



- We identify potential viable sites and liaise with the site owner – looking at their energy bills
- We raise the money for installation via a share offer – so local people can own their own energy and earn a return
- We sell the green electricity generated back to the site at a discount
- We maintain the panels – ongoing contract to ensure 20-25 year period
- The surplus covers our overheads, and the rest goes into a community fund for further community projects

Our partners



- We work closely with Hampshire County Council (Community energy is one of the key pillars of their energy strategy) – we are their pilot group
- Also Community Energy South – who are working with HCC on the Pathways project – launching in Hampshire and Surrey – following their success in Essex and the South Coast.
- Also Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Climate team
- And Community Energy England – who train up our Energy Champions
- Also Parish Council, Village Agents, etc

Energy champions

- Help people with insulation advice, those struggling to pay their bills and reducing energy efficiency/usage
- Encouraging heat pump installation
- Claiming green grants or loans
- Thermal imaging camera to help identify heat loss
- Looking to build this service more and extend our reach, including employing a part time lead champion



Progress



- RCEF grant March 2021 for feasibility study on 4 sites - solarPV
- We worked with our consultants RenewEV to produce the feasibility studies
- Hope to get our first Power Purchase Agreement/Lease signed on one large site shortly
- Few more sites in the pipeline – we have some funding via Community Energy south for more feasibility studies in neighbouring parishes
- Energy Champion team recruited and trained

Lessons Learnt



- Everything takes much longer than expected; grant applications, site owner buy-ins, legal issues, FCA recognition, arranging bank account, creating website, share offer and business plan preparation
- Keep seeking new volunteers – never too many!
- Be careful of volunteer burnout
- Communicate by all possible methods. Embrace social media
- Recognise achievements
- Keep talking about climate change and energy initiatives to everyone you meet/know
- Organise social events for volunteers



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