

Shared community ownership newsletter #3

This newsletter is being sent to you because you signed up for shared ownership partnering opportunities or on the sco-res.uk website. Shared community ownership, which encourages sustainable energy production and diversifies ownership of generation infrastructure, is being introduced in the UK as an innovative part of the government's Community Energy Strategy.

What the government is up to

The budget

Sustainable energy featured less prominently in the Budget than oil and gas, but there were some useful announcements:

- Thanks to effective campaigning by CEE and its collaborators, the Chancellor has confirmed that Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS) tax relief for community energy enterprises will not be terminated suddenly on 6th April, but will continue until 6 months after receipt of State Aid approval for the enlargement of Social Investment Tax Relief (SITR). You can read CEE's extensive briefing on these issues [here](#).
- The government also intends to bring forward in the next Parliament legislation for competitive tendering of onshore electricity transmission infrastructure. Hopefully this could alleviate some of the problems so many projects have in obtaining viable grid connection offers.
- The government will extend the range of ISA eligible investments in 2015-16 to include listed bonds issued by a co-operative society and community benefit society.

Community Energy Strategy update

DECC published the 2015 update on progress against the Community Energy Strategy last Thursday. You can view the full update [here](#); key new announcements were:

- £1.3 million for the Big Energy Saving Network
- Commissioning of new research to build on community energy evidence base
- Creation of a new Community Energy Efficiency Working Group
- Funding 17 Community Energy Savings Competition projects
- Introducing a new innovation programme on solid wall insulation to help skill up community energy groups during the installation process
- £1 million to develop local authority community energy best practice

Registration of mutual societies

The FCA announced last week that it plans to “further engage with stakeholders and alongside this aim to issue a further draft of the guidance which will address issues of clarity and consistency raised by consultation respondents.”

This suggests that – again thanks to the CEE campaign, and interventions from DECC – some of the anomalies in its original draft guidance might be removed.

What developers and communities are up to

Project opportunities under the new 5+5MW Community FiTs

From 1st April solar projects above 5MW will no longer be eligible for support under the Renewables Obligation (and the Feed-in Tariffs also have a ceiling of 5MW). Therefore the only support mechanism available to 5-10MW solar projects (apart from the more complex Contracts for Difference) will be the Community FiTs.

We have therefore analysed the government database to identify projects in planning, which might be suitable to take forward as split projects. There were a total of some 160 such projects on the REstats database at the end of January. Community enterprises which have registered their interest in shared ownership projects have been sent a list of relevant opportunities in their area of interest.

These projects are also shown on [this map](#) on the sco-res website. We want to keep this up-to-date, when existing projects are completed and new ones are developed, so:-

Please help us identify the status of suitable projects

Please identify any projects on the map which are near you. You can zoom in as far as you like – the project locations should be accurate. You can see outline project details (including the project name and CEE reference) by clicking on the icon.

On the next sunny weekend, why not take the family out for drive and have a look? If the solar park is now built or under construction, then it may be too late for shared ownership. If not it's a real prospect.

Either way, please let us know using this [easy email template](#).

Shared ownership partnering service

Developers have already [registered a number of new projects](#) seeking suitable community partners, and dozens of community energy enterprises across the country have [registered their interest](#) in partnering on shared projects.

Community Energy England's partner finding service has identified over 90 potential partnerships, and made introductions to those community groups and developers interested in pursuing them.

- If you are a developer with new projects worth over £2.5m, and have not yet started to identify suitable community ownership partners; it takes only a few moments to register your projects [here](#) for CEE's partnership finding service.
- If you are a community energy enterprise with an interest in partnering on shared ownership projects, and haven't already done so; register [here](#) to indicate the size, type and location of projects which would be suitable for you.

We anticipate that the number of new projects starting to engage under the shared ownership protocol will accelerate from the beginning of April, when the backlog of projects under construction approaches completion.

What Community Energy England is up to

Next shared community ownership seminar

Community Energy England (CEE) is holding the next seminar on shared ownership in Leeds on 22nd April. The last one was sold-out so you can pre-register for the next one in advance from [this webpage](#). Formal bookings will open imminently.

Tax relief and registration of mutual societies

The community partner in shared projects will be affected by developments in the regulation of Co-ops and Community Benefit organisations and in the available tax incentives. The first event in Bristol on Budget day was very successful, and there is still just time to book for the second in London on 30th March. Details and booking [here](#).

There are substantial discounts for CEE members on all these events.

For further information

The website www.SCO-RES.uk is now fully operational with full details about the background to the [protocol](#) and how it operates. It also includes guidance documents both for [developers](#) and [communities](#) and these are available for free download.

The Community Energy Hub is now being developed with funding from DECC, and will be hosted within Community Energy England's website. This too will have links to further information about shared community ownership.

Future newsletters

We expect to send newsletters relatively infrequently, unless things change fast, and there is a lot to say!

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If there are other people in your organisation who would like to be added to the circulation list please [let us know](#). Similarly if you do not want to receive updates in the future please [unsubscribe](#).