



# 'COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ON ENERGY' WORKSHOP

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WORKSHOP REPORT  
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On 24th August 2015, a day-long workshop was held in SEAI, Wilton Place, Dublin 2. It was organised by Clare Watson, Energy Modelling Team - Environmental Research Institute (ERI), and Energy, Climate and Community Response Research Group (ECCRG), University College Cork (UCC), with the support of her supervisors, Prof. Brian Ó'Gallachóir, ERI and School of Engineering, and Dr. Gerard Mullally, Department of Sociology, UCC, as part of her PhD research on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funded project - *Climate Change, Behaviour and Community Response - a Blueprint for Action*.

A number of targeted stakeholders with direct experience of setting up and running community based energy projects were invited to attend the workshop, alongside relevant personnel from the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural

Resources (DCENR), Sustainable Energy Agency Ireland (SEAI) and UCC. In all, 15 people, including the research team and facilitator, attended the event (Appendix 1). The numbers were kept deliberately small in order to ensure an open and productive discussion, and to involve all participants in the research exercise. The event was facilitated by Eleanor McClorey.

The main aim of the workshop was to identify lessons and learning from those with hands-on experience of encouraging people at a local level to cut their greenhouse emissions, particularly in relation to energy use. It is hoped that the learning and experience identified will be of use in the development of any future strategies around community engagement on energy.

Prior to the workshop, each representative of the community projects was asked to prepare an A1 poster to use as a focal point for a ten minute presentation (Appendix 2) under the following headings:

- ORIGINS, AIMS & OBJECTIVES
- SET UP
- FUNDING
- KEY ACHIEVEMENTS
- KEY FAILURES
- CHALLENGES
- FUTURE PLANS
- LEARNING

The workshop began with six poster presentations from the stakeholder groups which prompted core themes for further discussion. These themes were then used as a basis for dialogue in three small break-out groups in the afternoon, and the main points were subsequently fed back to the plenary session.

This report is a summary of the day's interactive discussions and the themes, points and questions that emerged. It draws on the range of inputs from the different participants based on their individual experiences. **As far as was possible the wording has been taken directly from the audio transcript and flip chart sheets.**



## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

**Model Distinction** - There is a distinction between **top down** local energy efficiency projects led by agencies or businesses which may or may not seek to involve members of the local community, and **bottom up** projects, which are set up and run by the local community, and supported by other agencies and businesses.

**Timing Clash** - There is a disconnect between the scale and pace of change required, bearing in mind the implications of runaway climate change, EU targets and potential fines, and the ability and willingness of people and communities to engage and act.

“The level of change required in a short space of time is phenomenal”

**Policy/Vision Gap** - There is clearly an absence of a nationally mandated energy management role. There needs to be a national plan and structure involving all stakeholders with clear roles and responsibilities, which filter down to the local level.

**Champions Required** - There was a clear common thread across the successful projects on the key role played by community champions, energy champions and agency champions.

**Energy Citizenship** - Energy citizenship should not only be conceived of individually - the concept must also support and promote collective citizen action. Policy makers need broader metrics - not just KWh savings on a year to year basis - which include the capacity of local groups and longer term planning.

**Funding Imperative** - A number of projects represented are currently in serious financial need. Funding is required for group co-ordination at a local level, as well as for project management. It needs to be consistent, continuous and multi-annual.



## TOPIC 1: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### How do you Define Community?

- There are different types of community
- Don't identify the boundary
- Let the community define itself
- There should be a distinct defined community space alongside the corporate.

### Capacity of Given Group

- Be aware of the capacity of a given group to deal with a certain scope
- Different actors have different potential
- Need to understand what the community approach can achieve – for instance, a community worker can reach householders, but may not be so good at getting help from businesses.

### How do we Engage People?

- Start with what's there
- Build on existing community – the parish, the GAA, rugby club, etc
- Ask the community what they need rather than tell them what to do
- Work with the willing - those who are prepared to participate
- Nurture community development and allow things to emerge
- Use the power of 'word of mouth' and 'keeping up with the Jones's'
- Begin the project with a local energy audit
- Local demonstration projects are essential
- Build on success – 'success breeds success'
- Capitalise on how the community sees itself - their sense of identity and pride of place.

### Local Gains

In order to engage people there need to be clear local gains, the language must be relevant and the initial message should be translated into something people can understand, such as:

- Local employment – use local contractors, provide local jobs
- Savings on energy bills
- Warmer homes
- Community ownership of the energy “profits”; the micro generation opportunity
- Community rewards - support and recognition from outside; boost in local pride; ownership throughout; shared interest to derive benefit for community and community “progression”
- Strengthening of local community and social capital.

### Energy Citizenship

There are also gains to the energy system – the system needs communities to engage and become pro-active in using less energy, and switching to renewable sources:

- Energy users are becoming part of the energy system
- Everybody uses energy and has a stake in it
- At present most of the visible engagement is articulated by friction and opposition
- Need to make the unconscious conscious
- People have to engage on more than just electricity - heat and transport are a much bigger problem – anaerobic digestion feeding into the gas grid is a potential solution for transport
- Promote “Energy Citizenship” and ‘Energy Ambassadors’.



### Engagement rather than Opposition

- Try to grow the positive and offset or minimise the opposition to this change project
- Harness the campaigning “energy” from opposition groups
- Is community ownership a strategy for community engagement? Or is opposition to the technology the issue?
- Community ownership of the energy and its profits should be supported and facilitated
- Need for micro-generation opportunities
- CER should introduce an export tariff for micro-producers
- Look to research from other countries, e.g. Scotland, Denmark, Germany.

### Importance of Trust

- Trust needs to be built up and maintained
- Trust only comes on delivery
- Trust emerges as the group becomes known and respected locally.

### Local Champion

A multi-skilled community leader, a ‘local champion’, is a key element for success.

- Someone who is known locally, respected, trusted, and who can engage others
- This person needs to be supported, e.g. administrative support etc.
- Recognise that it can be difficult to find that person - people may not want the responsibility, or have the required time
- Maybe the champion doesn’t have to be a single person, could be a co-op, or a team of people
- Beware of burn-out, disillusionment and reliance on individuals and volunteers.

### Group Structure

An internal structure and steering/management committee is important.

- Consider the co-operative approach
- Set clear objectives and vision
- Hold regular meetings, perhaps rotate the chair
- On-going planning and financing is very important
- Keep everyone informed of what is happening
- Intergenerational focus - make sure the next generation are brought along.

### Outside Support

Communities need outside help in terms of funding, advice, guidance, education and on-going support.

- They need to be equipped with IT, and building and technical knowledge and skills
- Need to understand the costs involved and how to manage project financing
- Momentum and innovation should be nurtured
- The involvement of an outside agency both endorsing and supporting the work is very important.

A number of the community projects represented at the workshop are supported by other agencies - Drombane Upperchurch Energy Team is supported by North Tipperary Leader Partnership; Erris BEC by GREAT and Údarás na Gaeltachta; Templederry Community Windfarm by Tipperary Energy Agency; Dundalk 2020 by Louth County Council. SEAI’s Better Energy Communities Scheme is a key source of both funding and support.

### Templates

Relevant templates should be provided to assist new groups in setting up and developing their projects.

- Link local projects into a national network
- Draw on credible working models in other similar jurisdictions such as Scotland

### Political Leadership

Political leadership is essential, both in relation to energy policy and strategy, and also in communicating the message to the public.

- It is not enough to expect people on the ground to change if they don’t see change at the top
- They need to hear leaders talking about energy and what needs to be done
- “We’re all in this together”
- There will be a citizen engagement strand in the forthcoming White Paper on Energy Policy.

## TOPIC 2: SYSTEMS, STRUCTURES, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### National Plan

The processes around community engagement on the ground appear to be secondary to the bigger picture. So what national programme and resources are driving the agenda? Who is 'championing the champions'?

- There needs to be a national plan and structure involving all stakeholders with clear roles and responsibilities
- The involvement of all relevant agencies – local, regional, national and EU, is key to the roll out of community engagement projects
- There is clearly an absence of a nationally mandated energy management role
- The policy needs to be thought out and developed down to delivery level, and programmes put in place to support it
- We can learn from other countries, e.g. Denmark where a national programme funds the risk involved in developing geo-thermal energy for local district heating
- There is an interdependency between the local community and local and regional agencies, and central and local government
- There needs to be a link with local development plans
- At a Green Paper response conference in Tipperary, the participants agreed that the following is needed: a carbon tax, subsidies for renewables and a detailed programme for everyone to do the right thing, using the 'carrot, stick and tambourine' approach.

### Roles and Responsibilities

There is no systematic structure outlining roles and functions in the various agencies and local authorities in relation to energy management.

- Who does what, and who should do what?
- What kind of a system would support community engagement?
- We tend to jump forward to answer the problem before fully understanding where the problem comes from – it is hugely important to go back to basics, and map the existing system – who does what, what works and what doesn't, who is engaging with whom – and to recognise that there is not a uniform system for each county. We need to be credible for when the funding comes in
- There is an overreliance on people and an under reliance on structure – where is it working well and where are the gaps?
- There is a blockage point, a disconnect between the different sectors about what is happening in the community energy space – the role of local and regional authority is minimised, not as yet an enabler
- Should there be a template for the involvement of local agencies and authorities? Should it be mandatory given the scale of the national change required? Is a single role in an agency enough?
- Bottom up structures need top down supports
- Some local authorities are engaged more than others, depending on who the champion is; problems emerge when that person changes job or role within the authority
- Local authorities have two roles in relation to energy – there are clear public sector targets for the energy they use themselves, but they struggle with the role of the energy they influence as it doesn't fit under existing sections such as Economic Development, Environment and Water or Planning
- No one person is tasked with energy, unlike other issues such as waste
- While the Dept of Energy is engaged on the issue, other departments are not so motivated.

### Funding

There is an urgent need for consistency, continuity, and multi-annual funding.

- A number of projects represented at the workshop are struggling financially and require immediate financial help – you can't keep squeezing and squeezing
- There needs to be a long term programme that is sustainable and aims to avoid stress and burn-out
- Groups need to understand where the different sources of funding are, the mechanisms involved and how to use one funding source to attract others – leverage – better bang for your buck
- There can be an over-reliance on SEAI funding
- Delivery personnel and project co-ordinators need to be funded
- Funding should be ring fenced like the Environment Fund – the return on carbon credits could be invested into community projects.

## TOPIC 3: THE BUSINESS CASE

We need to identify quantifiable local and community gains, as well as speaking to national energy policy and building a sustainable national community of energy leaders:

- The language should be appropriate to each stakeholder
- Present the business case as a political case
- Position with credible business, strategic, cost effectiveness arguments – the value and the kilowatt hour
- National energy policy should emphasise reduced imports, less export of money, local jobs/votes, potential climate and energy policy fines, and the responsibility of leadership
- Focus on payback and the money staying and circulating in the local economy
- Partner with local businesses
- Work with local and national politicians – many are very interested, others not so, but there needs to be involvement at a local level.

### Stress the Benefits

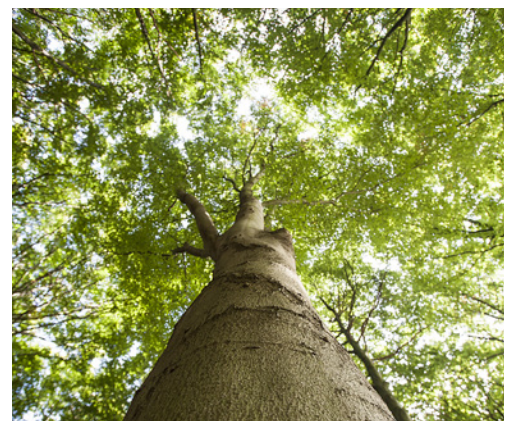
- Local Value - energy saving; saving money; local jobs; local energy generation; stronger community, and social capital – social capital is much harder to quantify, but without it the other changes won't happen; tackle fuel poverty; multiple benefits of sustainable energy
- National Value – less dependency on imports; more energy self-sufficiency; better value per kWh; less CO2 emissions.

### Behavioural Change

- Could have massive impact
- People need to become more conscious of how they use energy, how much they spend annually and how to reduce this
- Many people don't understand their bills
- Education is important.

## FUTURE STEPS/FOLLOW-UP

- Define the concept of “Energy Citizen”, a term which first emerged in 2007
- Develop both technical and community work skills at a local level
- Support the champions that are already in place – address the short-term, immediate funding cliffs facing a number of the groups attending the workshop
- Develop a sustained, long-term plan, and provide the necessary funding. Move from a project to a continuum, to a process that is continually funded
- Research the definition of the social capital metric – how we measure progress beyond the money, the kWh jobs, the CO2, what is gained within these communities; the term can be used loosely, important to value it more
- Focus on education and awareness raising
- Put in place targets for local authority areas
- Develop the energy community network.



## APPENDIX 1

### AGENDA

10.30: Arrival – tea/coffee

11.00: Welcome and Introductions

11.30: Project presentations on achievements, challenges and learning. Identification of key themes

1.30: Lunch

2.00: Thematic small discussion groups and large group feedback and analysis

4.15–4.30: Closing reflections.

### PARTICIPANT LIST

**Darrell Crowe**

Terenure Better Energy Community (BEC)

**Michael Curran**

Director of Services Energy and European Development Louth Co Co,  
and Chairman of Dundalk 2020 and CONCERTO HOLISTIC Project

**Gearóid Fitzgibbon**

Director Energy Communities Tipperary Cooperative Ltd. and local community worker

**Madeline Hallinan**

Programme Manager Better Energy Communities, SEAI

**Con Harrington**

Member of Drombane Upperchurch Energy Team

**Klaus Harvey**

Co-ordinator, Transition Town Kinsale

**Paul Kenny**

Chief Executive Officer, Tipperary Energy Agency

**Eleanor McClorey**

Workshop Facilitator

**Declan Meally**

Head of Department Emerging Sectors at SEAI; former Head of Dundalk 2020

**Rebecca Minch**

Principal Officer, Energy Efficiency & Affordability Division, DCENR

**Dr Ger Mullally**

Lecturer in Dept. of Sociology, UCC

**Dr Orla Nic Suibhne**

Project Coordinator for GREAT & 2015 Erris Better Energy Community (BEC)

**Prof. Brian Ó Gallachóir**

Director, Energy Policy and Modelling Research, Director, MEngSc in Sustainable Energy, UCC

**John Randles**

Head of Department - Delivery, SEAI

**Clare Watson**

PhD researcher, Dept of Sociology, ERI and School of Engineering, UCC



## APPENDIX 2

### PROJECT POSTERS

Each community participant was asked to prepare a poster using the headings below. The main aim of the poster was to focus the mind on key questions, and to give the focal points for a 10 minute presentation.

#### POSTER HEADINGS:

##### 1. ORIGINS

When did the project start; who came up with the initial idea and why

##### 2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

What are you trying to achieve?

##### 3. SET UP

Outline the early stages, and who was involved in the process.

##### 4. FUNDING

When did you require funding and for what; where did you look for it; where did you receive it?

##### 5. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

What has worked and why?

##### 6. KEY FAILURES

What has not worked and why?

##### 7. CHALLENGES

What have been the barriers and stumbling blocks along the way?

##### 8. FUTURE PLANS

Where do you see the project in 3 years time - include both concrete plans and aspirations?

##### 9. LEARNING

What have you learned that might be useful for future projects?

### PROJECTS

Drombane Upperchuch Energy Team (DUET) & Energy Communities Tipperary Cooperative (ECTC)

Dundalk 2020/Dundalk Sustainable Energy Zone (SEZ)

GREAT<sup>1</sup> Community Energy in Erris, Co. Mayo

Templederry Community Windfarm

Terenure Energy Group

Transition Town Kinsale

<sup>1</sup>EU project funded under the INTERREG IVB NWE Programme

## TEXT OF COMMUNITY PROJECT POSTERS

### DROMBANE UPPERCHURCH ENERGY TEAM (DUET) & ENERGY COMMUNITIES TIPPERARY COOPERATIVE (ECTC)

**Gearóid Fitzgibbon & Con Harrington**

#### 1. ORIGINS

Group of community volunteers approached NTLP/ LEADER in 2010 in order to create economic benefit to people in the community.

Key concern: stopping emigration – loss of 4 or 5 young people from hurling team within a year.

#### 2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Stimulate economic activity - Self-organising the first step.

Initially, energy only one of a number of avenues to explore.

DUET survey: 60% (200 out of 349) cited financial savings as their most important reason for investing in energy efficiency.

Core values of belief and trust in people – principles of community cooperation & self organising. Agencies should be facilitating and supporting communities to take action on their own.

#### 3. SET UP

A meeting with Tipperary Energy Agency (TEA) to discuss options on “Energy”.

Advised that focusing on conservation rather than generation would be a better starting place for community action.

Carried out energy survey of homes – an animation/ motivational tool, which helped focus thinking on what could be achieved; Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT) and TEA gave technical support in compiling survey – Student placement; huge volunteer involvement; 400 survey sheets- 353 responses- 87%.

Oct 2011 – survey launched - Standout figure - A 25% reduction in energy usage could save the parish €250,000.

March 2012 – Community Energy Officer appointed under Job bridge Scheme – 9 month internship position hosted by NTLP. Tasks: cluster homes & organise group tender to insulate homes.

Local interest stimulated through a range of community events - Information evening at Drombane hall - 35 interested homes emerge.

#### 4. FUNDING

August 2012 - SEAI launched a Grant under the Better Energy Communities Pilot scheme -2012.

Drombane Upperchurch Energy Team were successful.

2012 Scheme – 22 houses done in 4 week period – 12 received grant of 40% and 10 received 100%.

Total cost €115,000 - SEAI grant €88,000. Savings €15,860/yr. 6yr payback.

2013 Scheme – 28 houses – 12 @35% grant – 16@100% and 2 community halls.

Total cost €285,000 – SEAI grant €213,000 savings €39,480/yr. Energy units sold to Electric Ireland €16,000.

SUMMARY - 2012-2013 - A total of 50 houses upgraded and 2 community buildings. Total cost of project €400,000 Grants from SEAI €300,000

2014 - NTLP & DUET recruited other communities to replicate Drombane approach.

Kilcommon / Rearcross - Lorrha / Rathcabbin - rural parishes recruited because of stats on disadvantage & Birdhill.

Initial approach - 4 individual community applications - Meeting of Energy Teams to share information.

Creation of Energy Communities Tipperary at instigation of SEAI.

Securing of funding - Total cost of project €1,078,000 - Grant from SEAI €840,000.

Approx 1.5 GWh/ year saved - A total of 110 houses and 2 community buildings.

## 5. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

In partnership with SEAI, we have demonstrated the potential of our approach in recruiting hard to reach rural households. Most of these households would never be insulated but for the voluntary community involvement.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (2012+2013): 2720 hrs = 1 community worker 1.5 years @ 15e/hr = €41,850.

2014: volunteers 700hrs, Project manager 500hrs, NTL 500hrs, TEA 60 hrs.

LOCAL MARKETING - Local committee contacts - house calling - mass notices - word of mouth - brochures - leaflets - websites - facebook - Drombane co op milk suppliers letters / meetings.

Links with local agencies and third level institution - Growing in confidence in dealing with them.

EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES: 65 employed for duration of project with local contractors.

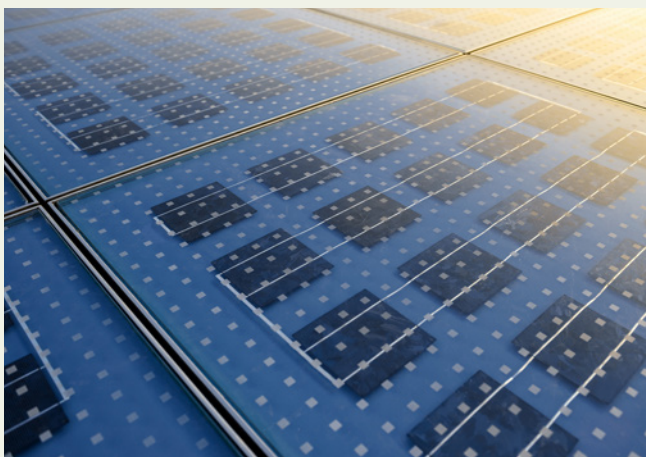
NATIONAL PROFILE - Eco Eye TV appearance, Grundvig European group ( Turkey Belgium Italy Rumania Netherlands).

## 6. KEY FAILURES

Failure to develop comprehensive community energy plan - conservation & generation - as the basis of a long term approach.

Now - risk of volunteers questioning whether the time that they give would be better spent in other ways in their own communities.

Over-reliant on SEAI - anticipation that SEAI would guide us on long term approach & local energy planning.



## 7. CHALLENGES

Broader Challenge for the country/community - how to mobilise & motivate people, how to encourage & support energy citizens.

Specific Challenges of scheme to date - Along with all the benefits, now seeing the flaws of it & where improvements are needed.

Inordinate amount of voluntary input - need for recognition of ebbs & flows of volunteer energies. Changeability of voluntary groups.

Difficulty in accessing bridging finance for larger projects. Clann Credo the only game in town. High rates of interest.

Timelines - not enough time for communities to market scheme and reach out to local householders.

Work only being carried out on 3 months of year - the 3 normally busiest months for these contractors, which include builders holidays. Contractors letting go good tradesmen - work starts in June/July until November.

Changes in the configuration of the project - from issuing of the letter of offer and discussion on terms and conditions - reduce the achievability of the project (with builders holidays in the middle of the summer and manufacturers needing sufficient notice for putting products on order).

Dealing with lack of coherent national policy on community energy in Ireland... No clear definition or measure of community benefit.

e.g. voluntary groups are in the same scheme as large corporates with much greater organisational capacity.

The focus seems to be on achieving the energy efficiency units only, and not also developing energy actors/citizens to solve their community's longer term energy needs.

Settling for short-term gain - utilising community actors to achieve energy efficiency targets, no long term benefit.

ECTC and its member Energy Teams have invested huge time to develop a model of rural energy efficiency - backed by local non-profit agencies who have offered capacity building and support - but in absence of long term plan for local community energy initiatives/ energy citizenship - volunteers questioning their own participation - i.e. is their time better spent in other ways in their own communities. (cf. original motivation - how to benefit the local community, not how to address climate change).

Mixed messages to communities – earlier signals over 2 years that individual grants would be abolished. 2015 saw significant increase in the individual grants, in competition with Community scheme. This, among other factors, affects drop off in Can Pays on ECTC – and ratio of FA to CP.

Unrealistic expectation of capacity to diversify funding elements for energy efficiency upgrades – e.g. investment by businesses.

Core community costs (€9,756.00) and costs in kind (€9,975.00) – per community - not considered eligible for grant assistance.

Unique complex project – with detailed financial, administrative and technical requirements. Without substantial facilitation /secretarial / leadership involvement from NTLP and advice from TEA – not feasible to continue this project on voluntary basis.

## 8. FUTURE PLANS

No progression or long term plans as scheme currently stands.

### REQUIRED ASPECTS OF NEW COMMUNITY ENERGY SCHEME.

Clearer definition of community and recognition of longer term Social benefits in supporting the area based community initiatives.

Formation of a “Community Energy” Support Unit within SEAI – with a practical commitment to community development and collective citizen energy action.

Provision of community development/capacity building support – either to the Local Development Companies or Energy Agencies - for energy citizens to analyse and identify their own requirements.

### SPECIFIC SUPPORTS REQUIRED TO DEVELOP A COMMUNITY ENERGY SECTOR.

Practical templates for community energy plans  
Training/up-skilling for community activists on energy initiatives.

Funding for feasibility/community energy plans.

Capital for community energy initiatives – targeted at level of communities.

Longer Term - 3 year rolling scheme with set terms &

conditions for the scheme - With 2 – 3 phases & built in review by SEAI.

Need for political direction on Local Economic and Community Plans & Leader plans currently being developed in all county areas – get Minister of Environment to direct LDCs to prioritise energy conservation & generation in these areas.

Subsidiarity of competencies: National - DCENR/SEAI; Regional – Energy Agencies/LEADER companies; Local - community groups.

## 9. LEARNING

Citizen/community energy lost within current catch-all scheme.

The Drombane Upperchurch Energy Team (DUET) energy efficiency scheme shows how communities, in partnership with local and national agencies, can be local drivers in cutting the fossil fuel bill and creating employment. Onus now on state actors to be supportive to voluntary actions and to encourage sustainability of groups who show progress.

Need for clearer definition of community – to recognise and supports voluntary effort & wider social benefits of this.

### Defining Community Energy

#### FEATURES

1. Addressing technologies and behaviour, supply and demand
2. Empowering people to collectively change energy supply and use
3. Enabling multiple benefits appropriate to local contexts (e.g. community development, averting fuel poverty)  
Hielscher et al. (2013)

#### CATEGORIES

Individual / collective  
Locally concentrated / geographically dispersed  
Energy produced for feed-in / local consumption  
Exclusive / inclusive control over project  
Full ownership / co-ownership  
Legal ownership / sense of ownership  
(Schreuer/Weismeyer-Sammer 2010)

STATE & SEAI should use the leverage that they have: the potential to direct and influence community activity and plans - to create energy actors/active energy citizens – who will be engaged in the long term picture. Energy citizens have only limited impact unless they work as a group – cf. Power of One campaign.

## Need for clarity on what DCENR & SEAI want to achieve.

Just want to reduce the units? Or do they want to transform the economy?

Motivation of DUET & ECTC is transforming the local economy - the experience of the continent, esp Germany, shows that the local economy is a key driver/motivator for people.

If year on year KWh saved is the only measure of success, long term energy citizenship will not be supported.

With support, potential of energy to be a main driver of local economy.

## GREAT COMMUNITY ENERGY IN ERRIS, CO. MAYO

**Orla Nic Suibhne**

### 1. ORIGINS

SEAI, GREAT Project, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Mayo County Council.

### 2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Research, development and implementation of a Sustainable Energy Community and associated activities including: energy efficiency, energy education, renewable energy, energy storage, smart grid, smart buildings and smart transport.

### 3. SET-UP

Dr Orla Nic Suibhne, Margaret Tallott, Erris Sustainable Energy CLG.

### 4. FUNDING

2 full-time staff from GREAT - BEC 2014 - BEC 2015 - Community Gain Investment Fund (Shell) - Community.

### 5. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

GREAT - BEC 2014 - BEC 2015 - Eco-eye - Claremorris event - Community event - Local SMEs.

### 6. KEY FAILURES

Lack of Continuity in the Erris Community - Post GREAT?

### 7. CHALLENGES

Personnel - Finance - Community Engagement.

### 8. FUTURE PLANS

Establish an SEC: follow SEAI five step model; Postdoc Study "The Energy Transition Process in a Rural Area: Becoming a Sustainable Energy Community"; Continue with the BEC upgrades; Work extensively with local SMEs to develop eco-innovations; Net zero buildings; The Erris community will be engaged and knowledgeable about the low carbon transition and 2020 targets.

### 9. LEARNINGS

- Energy champion is essential
- Community trust is prerequisite to any success
- Access to finance is challenging
- Showcase and demonstration projects are critical.

Orla added the following during the workshop:

- In 2014, 2 electric vans, one for Meals on Wheels and the other for the laundry service were purchased, 14 buildings were upgraded, and 2 7KW solar PVs were installed.
- In 2015, 6 schools were upgraded.
- A turbine to power the Rossport water scheme was proposed but failed due to opposition.
- The GREAT Project ends at the end of September 2015, which means that the future of the Erris project is very uncertain.

## TERENURE ENERGY GROUP

**Darrell Crowe**

### 1. ORIGINS

Transatlantic climate gathering conference on Communicating Climate change in the Burren in 2013, Moved onto the Climate Gathering in Dublin (Plan C) in 2014, linked to *I Love Terenure Community* project by establishing a Terenure Energy Project in January 2014. Common thread has been Sandy Dunlop.

### 2. AIMS/OBJECTIVES

- Move from Reduce to Produce
- Create the Terenure Energy Co-operative
- Have a BER (Building Energy Rating) for every home and business in Terenure
- Measure/benchmark how much money is spent in Terenure on Energy bills
- Retrofit (upgrade) every Community and Public Building
- Retrofit 5% of the homes in Terenure, every year (5 years = 25% of homes completed)
- Retrofit 20% of the fuel poor homes in Terenure, every year (5 years = 100% of homes completed)
- Install solar panels on every Community and Public Building where roofs are correctly orientated.
- Install solar panels on 10% of the residential roofs
- Promote sustainable travel options, highlight cycle safe routes around Terenure, and include cycle lanes on the minor roads
- Introduce 'walk/bike to school' plans for every school in Terenure
- Involve schools in energy reductions and energy usage programs via Green Schools.

### 3. SET UP

Came from idea that policy makers, climate experts and Politicians were not connecting with people to get real support and action on climate change. Idea was to move conversations on policy into action on the ground and learn what were the communication and motivational triggers.

Sandy Dunlop – Branding Consultant, Board member of Green Foundation Ireland, Facilitator and International branding/Marketing specialists, Martin Hawkes – member of Peoples Energy Charter, And member of Climate Gathering, Ryan Meade – Previous Adviser to Minister John Gormley Government.

### 4. FUNDING

After first year and half attempted to get an SEAI BEC application together in 2014 which failed. Then partnered with Energywise and Dalkia to make successful application in 2015.

Voluntary project to date.

### 5. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Successful application to SEAI  
Awareness and building momentum within community of Terenure Energy Project  
Engagement with Green Schools.

### 6. KEY FAILURES

Losing participants out of BEC projects due to time delays.

### 7. CHALLENGES

Getting real momentum going in community on this.

Lack of Policy support in place to facilitate larger objectives (Solar PV, Community Energy).

Identifying and promote real local exemplar examples of energy retrofits.

### 8. FUTURE PLANS – 3 years time

- RetroFit 5% of households every year
- To have 40% of Fuel poor homes retrofitted.
- To have every Community and Public building upgraded in Terenure
- 10% of homes/20% of businesses with Solar PV systems installed
- To have improved the average BER rating of homes in Terenure region
- We will have established an Energy Co-operative:
  - To invest in renewable Energy Projects
  - To group buy energy needs for businesses and households
  - To see Terenure as an exemplar sustainable urban community.

## 9. LEARNINGS

- a. Momentum and delivery are key to credibility
- b. Moves very fast from voluntary to formal
- c. Community can achieve more than the individual, but individuals look to others for endorsement and guidance
- d. Individuals can and will take personal responsibility and action if given correct guidance.

During the workshop, Darrell added that 27 community projects were identified for the BEC proposal.

## DUNDALK 2020/DUNDALK SUSTAINABLE ENERGY ZONE (SEZ)

**Declan Meally**

### 1. ORIGINS - AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

VISION: 'To stimulate a national move towards a sustainable energy practice through demonstration in an exemplar community'.

The SEZ is 'setting a precedent that will cement Dundalk's status as an innovative gateway and is an exemplar of sustainable energy best practice. It is stimulating a change in energy investment that can be used as a model across communities in Ireland.'

Targets to be achieved by 2010:

- 20% electricity from renewable sources performance (sic) of selected buildings
- 20% heat from renewable sources
- 40% improvement in the energy performance of selected buildings.

'The above targets will save 10,000 tonnes of CO2 every year from 2010.'



## 2. SET UP

An integrated approach, bringing together what were individual projects, and plans. It involves local authorities, agencies and professional organisations, as well as businesses and local community groups – including, housing industry, education, healthcare, retail and leisure facilities.

The following organisations involved: Dundalk Town Council, DKIT, HSE, Centre for Renewable energy at DKIT, Louth County Council, Newry and Morned District Council, IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Louth County Hospital, Dundalk Chamber of Commerce, Dept of Education, Teagasc, ESB Networks and customer supply, SEI and various resident associations. Participating companies include: Adston, Horseware, Heinz, Ice Dome, ABB, Moffett Engineering, Diageo, Furniture Link, Xerox, Glen Dimplex, Kingspan and Oriel Windfarm.

Key to the approach is the use of clear, measurable targets and tracking; the creation of networks across the community and between businesses; the sharing of resources and knowledge and above all else a clear benefit to the people of Dundalk.

Projects concentrate in the 4 square kilometre area of the Sustainable Energy Zone – where 2,500 people live; 3,500 people work and 5,850 people are in full-time education.

### STRUCTURE:

Steering Group chaired by Michael Curran, Director of Services, Community and Enterprise for Louth Co Co.

7 Action Groups: Energy Supply; Built Environment; Demand Side Management; Socio-economic; Communication; Industry; Research and Technological Development and Innovation.

A Resident's Action Group was to be set up in 2009.

Dundalk 2020 is co-ordinated by SEI (now SEAI) and is part of a pan European programme called CONCERTO. The project allows for replication in any community in Ireland – to be rolled out through a Sustainable Energy Communities Programme – with a target of creating 5/6 Sustainable Energy Communities over next five years.

### 3. FUNDING

Funding was received from the Framework 6 Programme, Concerto 11 (HOLISTIC proposal); €3.5 million specifically allocated to fund the development of the Dundalk Sustainable Energy Zone; 2007-2012.

Other HOLISTIC partners - Modlin, Austrai; Neuchatel, Switzerland; Newry, Northern Ireland; Aachen Germany; Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea.

### 4. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Energy and carbon savings - 5000T CO2 per annum.

Funding Leverage.

SEC Management Process and Guidelines.

Dundalk Partnerships - Close in learnings of energy in communities.

The SEC Network - Starting in Dundalk and now growing to national level.

SEAI Communities Programme- the New national movement.

Cross Border and International collaboration.

### 5. KEY FAILURES & CHALLENGES

Changes in momentum and personnel.

Economic downturn.

Technology changes.

Lack of capacity and knowledge outside of SEAI.

### 6. FUTURE PLANS & LEARNINGS

The Sustainable Energy Community Programme Development and rollout.

2012 - Pilot Scheme

- dispersed pockets of activity.

2013 - Consolidation

- consolidation of established communities
- increased pockets of activity in urban communities.

2014 - Building Capacity

- impact as catalyst evident
- expansion geographically by sector and project type (e.g. schools).

Snapshot of Networks and Clusters emerging:

- Musgrave Retailers - nationwide programme of 37 Musgrave retail stores, 34 GAA clubs, and 36 senior citizen apartments. Energy Savings: 9,565, 626 kWh.
- Aramark - energy initiatives on a number of regional farms in the midlands and in a handful of community buildings. Energy savings: 2,841,200 kWh.
- Leitrim County Council - Project in Mohill targeting residential homes, community buildings and public lighting. Project Cost; €349,00 (sic). Project pay-back: 4.3 years.
- Marino Community (Dublin North City) - a partnership of local school and third level institutions, including classroom energy workshops. Energy Savings: 1,436, 421 kWh.

Building Capacity for the Future - what's needed for development of SEC's in the future?

- Network of Champions - connecting the existing SEC champions into a facilitated National Network.





- SEAI Strategic Partnership – pool resources with activation programmes, brokered by SEAI.
- Tailoring Enabling Supports – menu of tailored supports to enable the Network to grow strategically.
- Awareness Campaign – promote benefits that have been realised.

7 key skills required: Energy Champion – Integrated Planning – Strategic Financing – Energy Efficiency – Renewable Energy – Smart Grid Generation – Transport.

## TEMPLEDERRY COMMUNITY WINDFARM

Paul Kenny

### 1. ORIGINS

The wind farm project grew out of the local Community Development Plan, which was focused on the future economic development of the parish. The Local Development Plan was drawn up by Professor Tom Collins following a local consultation process with the local development group. One major aspect was the possibility of establishing a local sustainable energy project. The community recognised the importance of renewable energy and looked in to the feasibility, via the Local Energy Agency, of other energy sources, such as biomass and anaerobic digestion, but decided to proceed with wind first after a technical feasibility study. A subgroup of the parish council set about a development, inviting locals to get involved with an initial modest investment for a wind mast and planning permission. Leader funding was secured to co fund this initial investment and the local energy agency completed the planning permission and the wind monitoring.

### 2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Economic development for the parish, wealth increase of citizens, decrease environmental impact.

### 3. SET UP

Initially public meetings were held to gain local investment and interest. 28 individuals were interested. They each invested €500.

The Local Energy Agency (TEA) completed feasibility studies (initially on 20 hills, refined to three hills).

The local authority planner supported the site selection by giving a day to tour the region and select the most appropriate locations from a visual impact.

The local leader organisation (NTLP) supported the initial wind monitoring and feasibility study.

### 4. FUNDING

Initially:  
LEADER + Local Investment for studies.

Years 2-10: local investment from existing shareholders, A loan of 90k from Bank of Ireland secured with personal guarantees from 5-7 of the local community group, pro-bono services from the TEA.

Years 11/12 (construction):

- Existing equity from shareholders: 3.5%
- Leader funded: 3.5%
- Business expansion scheme managed by Davy (18%)
- Senior Debt: 75%

A bridging loan from Enercon to facilitate the grid completion, civil works and turbine pre-payments was in place before senior debt was arranged/finalised, i.e. construction start to financial close (3 months after commissioning).

### 5. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Construction of Ireland's only fully community owned windfarm.
- Established a method of completing future similar sized projects.

Why:

- Directors driven to achieve and never gave up.
- Leadership, commitment and sacrifice.
- Local Development company funding, advice and flexibility. Competence, commitment and flexibility.
- Local Energy Agency using significant other funds to support the development, agency staff willing to work outside of normal working hours (additional). EU funding to cover some shortfalls.
- Local authority planners working collaboratively to achieve a solution, rather than current process of almost adversarial system.
- REFIT making the finance work.

### 6. KEY FAILURES

- Development time to get project up and running.
- Phase 2 turned down at ABP stage.

## 7. CHALLENGES

There were many challenges and stumbling blocks, main ones:

- Grid moratorium delaying project 4 years.
- Re-submittal requirements of planning leading to appeal to ABP.
- ABP taking 2.5 years to approve the project without any justifiable reason (no further info, no Ecological or other additional studies, 2 years to do a site visit).
- Financial crisis delaying project 2 years, bridging finance was difficult to secure at critical junctions. ESB requires significant finance before grid consent, lenders will not lend without grid consent.
- State agencies being late with comments at inappropriate times delaying project unnecessarily. Lack of accountability, lack of resources.

## 8. FUTURE PLANS

- Community Energy Supplier supporting this and other community energy groups to bypass major utilities.
- Community Solar Energy
- Further wind development if public attitude changes.
- Potential wood energy business plan.
- Low energy Community / Social housing plan

## 9. LEARNING

There have been several academic papers and case studies that would be more useful, but a few key points:

- Leadership from within the community is the most important factor.
- Agencies (leader/ LEA/ LA) are required to be in a position (i.e. have funding!!) to support the development.
- Communities will need to access mainstream finance in a commercial manner, and should not be afraid of it. If a project does not stack up (structure/ economics/ risk) for a lender, it does not stack up for the community.
- A small amount of bridging finance / risk finance would make a significant difference (see local energy Scotland model!).
- The "system" CER decisions, ESNB payment structure, Planning process etc are setup in such a manner as to make this process challenging for communities.
- Lack of consistent, clear and long term vision for Irish state energy needs, and the engagement of its citizens has led to current poor environment for wind energy development.
- Communities need to be commercial developers, with all the risk/reward / business practices that are required to be a commercial developer.

Paul added the following during the workshop:

Phase Two of the Templederry Community Windfarm was turned down at the planning stage. There are 10 people living in the vicinity of the wind farm and one person didn't want it.

The project took 11 years to develop from beginning to end - it couldn't happen now as there isn't available grid connection - TEA wouldn't be able to support it now as we did then. If the Templederry project were started today it would not succeed.

## TRANSITION TOWN KINSALE

**Klaus Harvey**

### 1. ORIGINS

- Kinsale College of Further Education - Permaculture/ Practical Sustainability course.
- 2004-05 - Course co-ordinator Rob Hopkins and students wrote college project, 'Kinsale Energy Descent Action Plan' as a community response to climate change and peak oil.
- 2005 - Louise Rooney, graduate of the Permaculture course, developed non-profit 'Transition Design'.
- 2006 - Kinsale Town Council adopted the Energy Descent Action Plan, awarded start-up grant, committee set-up.

### 2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To make the transition from a dependency on fossil fuels to a low carbon future. Vision is a resilient, sustainable community and thriving local economy.

### 3. FUNDING

- Kinsale Town Council (promotional fliers, Community Garden, Education for Sustainability).
- West Cork Development Partnership/Leader (feasibility study for community anaerobic digester).
- Local Agenda 21 (Community Garden, Education for Sustainability)
- Leargas (EU cross-border two-year research project 'Teachings for Transformative Change')

### 4. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Community Garden ran successfully for 3 years
- Education for Sustainability - 6 local schools with food gardens established

- 50 Mile Meal Award @ Kinsale Gourmet Food Festival
- 50 Mile Meal in restaurants and cafes that sell local produce
- Kinsale Community Supported Agriculture – buying local produce directly from and supporting local farmers
- Kinsale Community Orchard
- Regular awareness raising events, talks, films, workshops on peak oil, climate change, sustainability, food production, energy saving etc.
- Regular wild food/nature walks
- Cork Environmental Forum Community Award 2013
- Worked with many local groups e.g. Kinsale Tidy Towns, Kinsale Arts Festival
- Transition has become a global movement.

## 5. KEY FAILURES

- Anaerobic Digester
- Community composting scheme
- Kinsale energy audit
- To engage wider community.

## 6. CHALLENGES

- Not enough people willing to drive process forward
- Engaging the wider community
- Energy projects very large and expensive

- Little or no top-down support
- Misperception that TTK is 'alternative' only for a certain type of person ('greens' 'hippies')
- Many key TTK members are not locals and perceived as 'blow-ins' which can have negative connotations.

## 7. FUTURE PLANS

- TTK 10 - celebrating 10 years of Transition Town Kinsale
- Reboot - new logo, new fliers being developed
- Further develop Community Orchard
- Develop 'Edible Walk' through town with edible plants in pots and beds with information signs
- Tús administrator - 6 months paid position.

## 8. LEARNING

- Spend more time and effort engaging wider community and local councillors
- Get more top down support
- Needs core person to coordinate/administrate - should be paid position
- Get EU funding for interns, who are very enthusiastic and willing to work.

