

Annual Report 2016/17

Energise Sussex Coast



Contents

Directors Report	3
Fuel Poverty Research	5
Fuel Poverty Workshop	6
Big Energy Saving Network	7
Energy Health Clinics	8
Big Happy Energy Days	9
Climate Active Neighbourhoods	10
The 1066 Energy Campaign	11
What's coming next?	12
Energise Sussex Coast Accounts	13
Company Information	14
Our team	15
Funders	16

Director's report

This has been a momentous year for ESC, now a team of five staff, one full time and four on flexible contracts.

With statutory and grant funding on the wane 2016 saw us start the transition from a 100% grant funded organisation to a community energy services provider.

2016 for us was all about partnerships – real partnerships – with organisations who are both our friends and colleagues.

We have regular meetings with other local organisations including Citizens Advice 1066 (CA1066) and the Seaview Charity for the homeless. And out of these several important and innovative projects have emerged.

Old friends and colleagues in the Community Energy network around the UK, particularly Community Energy South, Ouse Valley Energy Services Company (Ovesco), Brighton & Hove Energy Services Co-op (BHESCO) and the Schools Energy Co-op remain close as ever. This spirit of big hearted co-operation and shared vision helped us all survive 2015 and the unhelpful dismantling of all the tax incentives that underpin community owned renewable energy.

ESC remains committed to its founding goals - to tackle fuel poverty through innovative community energy ownership schemes that share local renewable energy and fund the retrofit of local homes – but to date we have pretty much left local energy generation to other co-ops and focused almost entirely on providing free energy advice to vulnerable residents, mainly because the deprivation and poverty stats in our locality are so awful.

In 2016 though we have felt the first breath of the global energy revolution hit the UK with smart grid innovations like *Energy Local* a potential game changer for the community energy sector. This makes the next two years - while we ride the challenges and opportunities of working with Hastings Borough Council, Optivo and CA1066 on two big EU projects – both exhilarating and transformative.

Don't shout it out loud yet but we think there's a change coming.

A community led, grass roots, radical change in the way we will generate and use energy in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Watson". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Richard Watson OBE

Fuel Poverty Research

Late in 2015 the inspiring and forthright Dr Brenda Boardman OBE, a trustee of the Chesshire Lehmann Fund (CLF), posed a research question

“What are the positive mental health benefits of key interventions: what really works and what are the policy implications?”

The full report and can be found on our website and the CLF website. This was one of 25 research projects that underpinned the CLF's final publication *Understanding Fuel Poverty* launched at the House of Lords.

The CLF grant was supplemented by an award from East Sussex County Council to amplify the research and integrate it within the framework of the Fuel Poverty Reduction programme in East Sussex.

We interacted with over 220 people who became our case studies, explored 75 cases in detail, and tried to answer the questions at a time when fuel poverty was increasing and our friends at CA1066 were telling us that there were a million homeless people in the South East and five hundred additional suicides of those failing PIP tribunals (for Personal Independence Payments). Add that to the scandal of the 43,000 Excess Winter Deaths in the UK in 2015, a third of those attributable to cold and damp homes, and you get a picture of the perfect storm that causes Fuel Poverty and damages health: Poor Housing, Low Incomes and High Energy Costs. The only way to tackle these effectively is tackle them all together with strong local partnerships.

This key research work - what energy interventions really work for the vulnerable and what are the policy implications - is ongoing and underlies everything we do.

Fuel Poverty Workshop



Peter Smith, National Energy Action, Matt Rudling, UK Power Networks, the Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP, Richard Watson, Energise Sussex Coast and Dr Brenda Boardman, Oxford University and the Cheshire Lehmann Fund at the “Community Solutions to Fuel Poverty” workshop organised by ESC on 13 May 2016 where the case studies and results of the research from this and other CLF projects were summarised for the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change.

This report and the policy recommendations discussed and prioritised by a wide range of academic, private sector, public sector and voluntary organisations at the workshop were sent to DECC (now BEIS) and the Secretary of State.

Big Energy Saving Network

ESC has helped over 2000 residents and trained 100's of frontline staff and volunteers since 2013 through the BESN. The figures below come from some of the 220 case studies in 2016 who were interviewed after the energy saving interventions were known to have taken place. These illustrate that significant (estimated) savings are possible through community engagement and research programmes supported by the Big Energy Saving Network, CLF and Local Authorities.

Savings in kilowatt hours were based on the Energy Saving Trust models.

£102,331 saved in total



Energy Health Clinics

With support from the Awards for All scheme and the Sussex Community Foundation in 2016-2017 ESC ran two full energy café weeks and several energy advice desks in Ore attended by over 200 residents.

Our team of energy champions from ESC, Citizens Advice 1066 and Seaview also ran weekly energy clinics at the Seaview Centre, Hastings Town Hall, the Bridge Centre in Ore and at Renaissance House in St Leonards.

We provide a free bill checking and warm home support service and visit people in their homes with a focus on vulnerable residents that the energy market has failed. It is still astounding to think that 70% of homes still do not switch their tariff or supplier.

In the case of the 42,000 homes in Hastings switching would generate annual savings of around £ 9 million.

That said, we don't view switching tariff as a goal in itself but the start of the pathway towards a warmer, healthier home and the first step out of the energy poverty trap.

There is little more satisfying than a client like 82 year old Ronnie who could tell us that he had "got his life back" after being repaid over £2000 by an energy supplier. Ronnie was charged erroneously by two electricity companies. The boiler outside his rented flat in a 6 storey Victorian seaside property was heating the radiators on every landing. No wonder his gas bills were so high.

NUMBER OF
CONSUMERS
REACHED
AUG16 – MAR 17

856

30

TRAINING EVENTS
HELD BETWEEN
AUG16 – MAR 17

Big Happy Energy Days



We have learnt that planning an energy café event is tough. We have to be inventive. When we organised the Big Happy Energy Day in Sussex Coast College during half term in Feb 2016 we invited 20 other local organisations and they all came. We had smoothie bikes, ping pong and sumo wrestling suits. We had free massage and yoga and Feldenkrais movement classes, a creative writing session, Costa coffee vouchers, a quiz with great prizes, background mood music, and a Transition Town gardening workshop for kids.

In 2017 we added Swap Shop events with Transition Town Hastings, free drinks and meals and cookery demonstration classes using food waste (leftover bread, a glut of tomatoes and peppers). We invited community choirs to sing and even had our local star opera singer compose and perform a hymn to solar panels to the tune of O Sole Mio. And it really works.

These are community events that people enjoy coming to and the energy desks are at the side where we give out free electricity monitors, look up price comparison sites and tell people about the Warm Home Discount and other benefits or grants they could receive. In March 2017 120 people came to the 1066 Swap Shop energy cafe.

Climate Active Neighbourhoods



Energise Sussex Coast is a partner in the Climate Active Neighbourhoods (CAN) project, an award of £900,000 over 3 years from Interreg North West Europe to Amicus Horizon (now Optivo) with ESC and Hastings Borough Council as sub partners.

The project will enable Optivo to retrofit 100 homes in Ore and fund ESC to engage with and support homes in saving energy and exploring community solar tariffs and innovative financial schemes that make homes more energy efficient to reduce carbon emissions.

It will also give ESC an opportunity to work with its partners to pilot innovative community energy tariffs, new technologies and schemes such as Energy Local (EL). The EL smart solution is for 100 -150 homes to install smart meters and some solar panels and to switch together to a supplier who can pool their locally generated electricity and offer the EL Buying Club members time of use tariffs and potential savings of up to 30%. The CAN project ends in 2019. ESC needs to raise further match funding to deliver Energy Local through 2018.

The 1066 Energy Campaign



600 panels installed on Glenleigh Park Primary school in Bexhill in 2014 by the Schools Energy Co-op (SEC) show what is possible in sunny Hastings. SEC has gone on to install free solar PV on 30 schools.

The strong local community partnerships that are emerging with organisations like CA1066, Seaview, Hastings Borough Council, Transition Town Hastings and Community Energy South made us realise we have the capacity and will to launch the 1066 Energy Campaign and put Hastings at the forefront of community energy innovation.

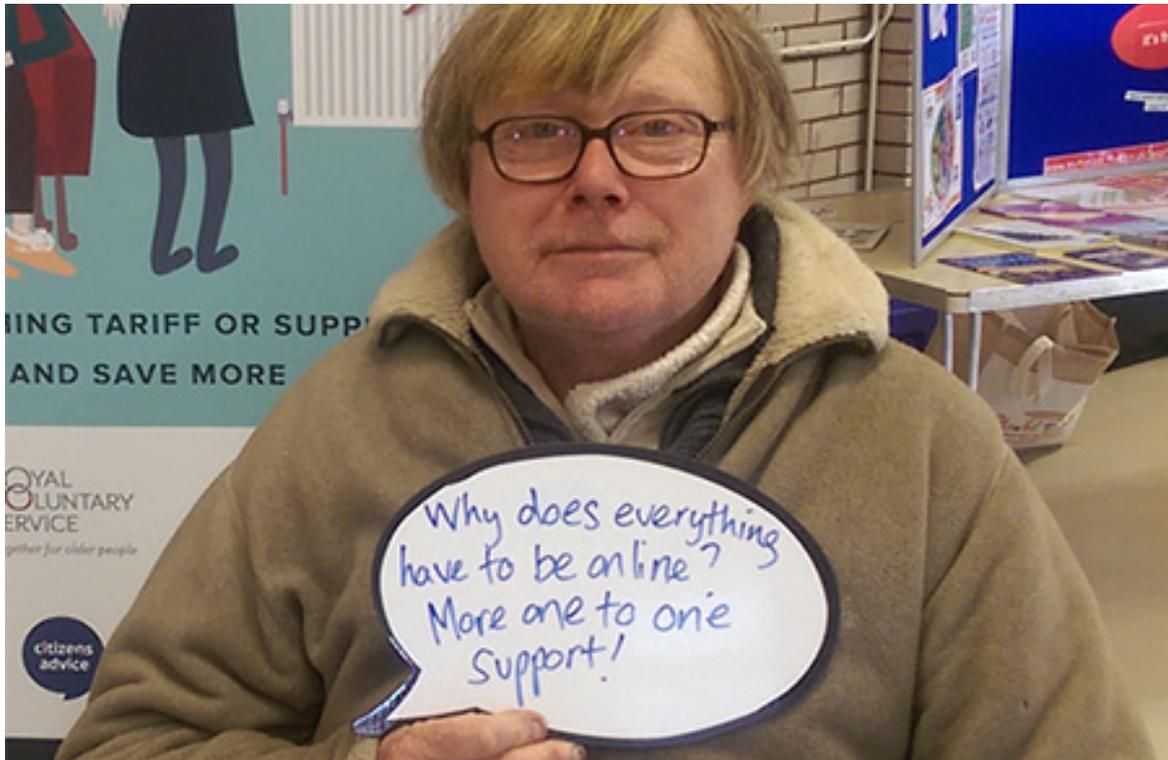
We are one of the sunniest places in the country. Generating and owning our own energy with the global solar revolution happening faster than anyone imagined makes good sense.

The decision to launch the campaign coincided with the Which Guide in February 2017 announcing that the average UK household energy bill was £1066!

The campaign will also look at how we can grow the local economy and help households and local organisations become more energy efficient

ESC has set up a new community benefit society with CA1066 and Seaview to ensure that the campaign will benefit everyone. We want to make sure that vulnerable residents who may already be excluded from the energy market do not become even more excluded.

What's coming next?



Andrew was helped to get a free central heating system installed replacing his 63 year old boiler. He is still trying to manage on an annual income of £4500 and waiting for the results of numerous PIP tribunal reviews.

ESC has ambitious plans for the future that include:-

- supporting the 1066 Energy Campaign and installing local renewable energy generation
- developing the 1066 Energy Heroes scheme for primary schools
- creating local employment by setting up the Retrofit Works co-op of local contractors in Hastings and Rother
- launching a local tariff aimed at smart prepay meter users
- working with the Brighton & Hove Energy Services Co-op to develop a local retrofit service with pay as you save loans for homeowners, businesses and landlords

In 2017/2018 we will be working with statutory and industry partners, energy companies and network operators to accelerate the energy market changes that we all want to see benefit the most vulnerable members of society.

Energise Sussex Coast Accounts

Income and expenditure for year ended 31 March 2017

		2017		2016
	£	£	£	£
Income				
Grants received		71,557		76,878
Other income		110		-
Cost of sales				
Consultancy fees	9,346		19,230	
BESN Grants given	15,000		28,250	
Other direct costs	3,947		12,022	
		(28,293)		(59,502)
Gross Surplus		43,374		17,376
Administrative expenses		(41,756)		(12,625)
Operating surplus		1,618		4,751
Investment revenues	8		8	
		8		8
Surplus before taxation		1,626		4,759

Company information

Energise Sussex Coast is a Registered Society 31639R and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. It was registered in 2012.

The principal activity of the Society is the provision of information and support services regarding domestic energy saving initiatives for the benefit of the community.

Management Committee

Mr R Watson

Mr T Reid

Mr I Smith

Secretary

Mr R Watson

Registration number

31639R

Registered office

23 St Leonards Road Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN40 1HH

Accountants

McPhersons CFG Limited, 23 St Leonards Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN40 1HH

Our team

Richard Watson, Director

Richard Watson is a founder of ESC. He was awarded the OBE in 2016 for services to the community of Sussex. Previously he worked at the Environmental Change Institute in Oxford. He is a director of the Schools Energy Co-op and Community Energy South.

Julia Hilton, Director

Julia is a trained landscape architect. As well as being the Green Party parliamentary candidate for Hastings and Rye, she is an active divestment campaigner and helped establish the Sustainable Transport Forum for Hastings.

Kate Meakin, Campaigns manager

Kate runs our 1066 Energy Campaign. She has worked for various NGOs over the last 13 years on campaigns focusing on fair trade, climate change and poverty and has run a volunteer led champion behaviour change programme.

Deborah Derber, Energy adviser

Deborah has been a trained energy adviser for the last three years. She is able to help customers get a better deal and sorts out problems they have with their energy supplier.

Heidi Foster, Partnerships manager

Heidi Foster has worked as a mental health social worker, manager of a homeless centre, counsellor in the USA for young people and has been active in voluntary organisations as treasurer and advocate in the local community.

Sarah Macbeth, Design manager

Sarah is a qualified graphic designer and has worked in the non-profit sector for over 20 years. As Chair of Transition Town Hastings she has a wealth of experience running and promoting inclusive community events.

Thanks to our Directors who stepped down this year.

Fledgling community co-ops like ours only survive the first 5 years with amazingly supportive volunteer Directors. Ian Smith and Tom Reid who stepped down this year because of other commitments were not just there from the beginning (Tom was a co-founder of ESC) but they came with a range of technical skills, expertise in renewables, high intelligence and knowledge that is completely irreplaceable.

Tom is one of the UK's leading renewable fuel experts and Ian has an engineering degree from Cambridge and 40 years experience in power generation. Both completed additional MAs at the Centre for Alternative Technology and lead genuinely low carbon lifestyles. We were exceptionally lucky to have their past and ongoing support as an organisation.

Our funders

