



**SevernWye**  
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# Community Energy Opportunities & Limitations

**Gloucester City Council– November 2013**

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# About Severn Wye

- Our vision: "working for a future powered by local energy and free from fuel poverty"
- Our history:
  - From a team of 2 within FoD District Council (1997)
  - Formed as non-profit in 1999, full independence in 2001
  - Now a team of around 45 in two offices
- Our geography: Gloucestershire, South Glos, Wiltshire, and throughout Wales
  - Plus partnerships across Europe!



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# Some key facts

- SAVE agency – part of European network
- Ashden Award 2006 winner – for Warm and Well
- Ashden Award 2011 winner – for Young Energy People
- Investors in People accredited
- Energy improvements to >38,000 homes, value >£27m
- 31 EU projects with partners in 24 countries
- Vice presidency of FEDARENE





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# Our themes

- **Homes and affordable warmth:** advice, retrofit, behaviour change
- **Business services:** advice, audits, training
- **Education and training:** schools, prof training, basic skills, education in prisons
- **Community Energy:** comm action, comm renewables, comm buildings
- **Strategy and planning:** building control, supply chain, LA and regional energy & carbon plans



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# Our community work

- Community building energy audits – many projects, over 250 sites since 2007
- Current and recent programmes:
  - Vital Villages – supporting communities in Monmouthshire
  - Pathfinder – community action on climate change
  - Ynni'r Fro – supporting community-scale renewable energy projects through social enterprise



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# The CHEERS project

- Partnership with Stroud District Council
- Part of the Target 2050 programme
- 31 community buildings over 2 years
- Many energy efficiency improvements
- 5 PV systems and 3 heat pumps installed
- LA grant funding as pump-primer
- Levered-in funding > £190,000



Stroud District

**Target 2050**

Countdown to a low carbon community



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# Community Energy





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# What is it? *What is it about?*

- Empowerment – shaping our own future
- Working together for a common purpose
- Local leadership – local collective benefits
- Leveraging available skills
- Delivering better outcomes more cost-effectively
- Improving local engagement with low carbon agenda







# Ownership structures

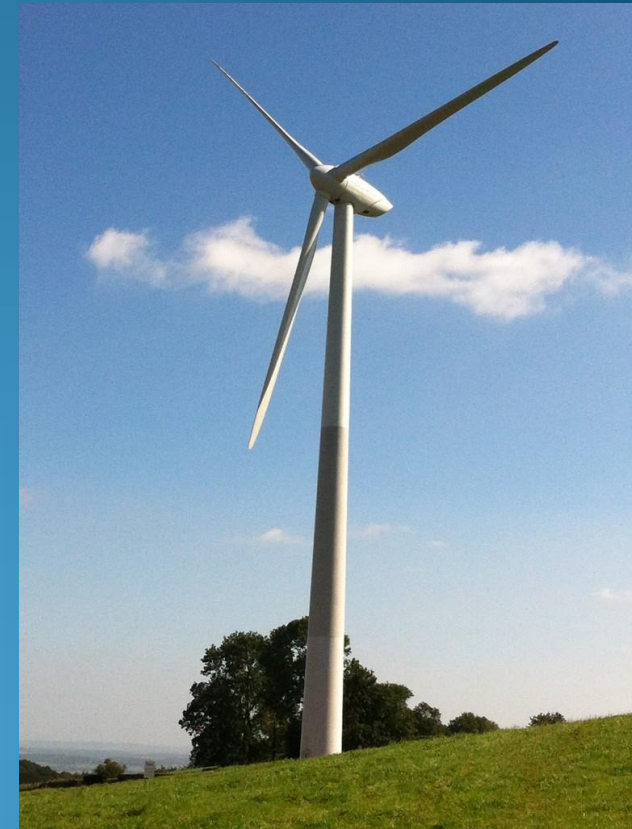
- Community Interest Company (CIC)
  - Like a limited company, cheap and simple to setup
  - 'community interest test' and 'asset lock'
- Co-operative - *formerly Industrial & Provident Society*
  - Share-based society, run in interest of shareholders
- Community Benefit Society
  - Like an IPS, a form of co-op: One member, one vote
  - Focus on community dividend, not private investors
- Charity – a demanding status to achieve, high regulation



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# Local Examples

- Resilience Centre / St Briavel's turbine
  - two new turbines in the pipeline
- Westmill Wind Farm
  - a long and arduous journey
- GCEC – first year success at GRC
  - now exploring new projects
- Gwent Energy CIC – 16 community PV
- Llangattock Green Valleys
  - visited in late October





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# Llangattock Green Valleys

- Vision began in 2008, setup as CIC
- Harnessing local natural resources
- Creating a richer way of life
- Kickstart funding through winning 'Green Streets' challenge in 2011
- Engagement strategy – litter picking!
- Homes, primary school, community hall, community woodstore, allotments, micro-hydro, long term ambition of AD gas-to-grid plant





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# Starting points

## Resources

Wind, Water,  
Buildings, Wood,  
Waste

## Market Need

Existing offers,  
Gaps, Community  
goals

## People

Leadership drive,  
Local expertise,  
Existing groups?



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# Challenges

## Funding

Structure, At-risk capital, Paying for experts, Grid access?

## Time

Project speed vs regulation speed, Gov't initiatives

## Pitfalls

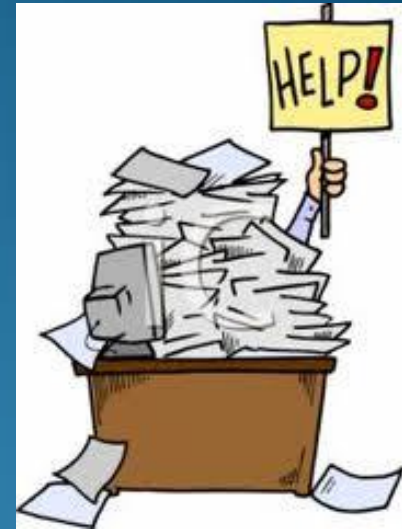
Planning, EA regs, Resource fragmentation, Divisive wind turbines?



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# Planning & consenting

- A very notable challenge
- Fast-changing regulatory regime
- Land ownership challenges, wayleaves
- Very high hurdles for wind and hydro – project failures
- Environment Agency regulations prohibitive for AD
- Determined opposition – often by incomers, not locals





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# Government role

- New CE strategy to be published imminently
  - Severn Wye & Glos County responded to consultation
- Financial enabling, funding peer support schemes?
- The role of trained intermediaries – ‘Energy Masters’
  - Supported by professional organisations, quality control
- Regulations – reform, but not too much!
- CE linkage with ‘Allowable Solutions’ – a good fit?
  - Yet another consultation...



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# Resources

- **PlanLoCaL** from CSE - [www.planlocal.org.uk](http://www.planlocal.org.uk)
- **Community Pathways** - [www.communitypathways.org.uk](http://www.communitypathways.org.uk)
- **DECC Community Energy portal** – [www.gov.uk/community-energy](http://www.gov.uk/community-energy)
- **Energy4All** - [www.energy4all.co.uk](http://www.energy4all.co.uk)
- **EnergyShare** – [www.energyshare.com](http://www.energyshare.com)
- **Severn Wye** – [www.severnwye.org.uk](http://www.severnwye.org.uk)







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# Final thoughts

- Take action, take control
- **Let's go out and build the future!**

- Renewable heat and transport: the next big opportunities?
- Learn from best practice examples
- Successful projects can change attitudes

