

PRESS RELEASE

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National Lottery funding supports Energy Local's quiet community revolution in the electricity system

The National Lottery Community Fund, the largest funder of community activity in the UK, is supporting Energy Local over the next three years. Energy Local allows community customers to create a local market for nearby renewable energy schemes. As everyone seeks to decarbonise and protect their communities from rising energy prices, this initiative will give households the helping hand they urgently need.

Thanks to National Lottery players, Energy Local CIC has successfully applied for a grant of £400,000 to expand and roll out the model it has created in Wales across Britain. The Energy Local model makes power truly local, benefiting the community's economy whilst decarbonising the power system.

Usually, renewable generators (including generators belonging to community-owned schemes) sell their electricity to a power company at a low price. Meanwhile, nearby households are paying standard rates to use it. In an Energy Local club, members use the power from local, green generators when they are operating, they pay a lower rate, compared to a domestic price, while the generator gets a better income. Club members are alerted when the green power is abundant so they can optimise their use of low-carbon electricity.

Energy Local CIC supports communities to create their own Energy Clubs, an energy ecosystem. Each club is locally organised and run, but with the 'back end' supplied by the team at Energy Local CIC. These in turn support the rest of the community infrastructure and economy.

In Bethesda, North Wales, pioneering residents are benefiting from lower prices when they use their local hydro plant. They have now been joined by Energy Local Clubs in Corwen, Crickhowell and Machynlleth, local solar clubs in Llandysul and Brixton and wind in Bridport. These are demonstrating what the zero-carbon electricity supply of the future could be.

"The power never goes off, local generation is automatically and seamlessly 'topped up' by their normal electricity supplier when necessary," says Energy Local's Director, Mary Gillie. "This extra power is priced at three rates during the day to encourage the club members to use it when it's cheapest and greenest. It encourages the use of local electricity wires in an efficient way too.

“It’s an all-round win - more, cheaper local power, along with reduced carbon. At a time of rising energy prices, Energy Local gives people a degree of shelter from global energy price volatility and a degree of control over power costs.

“It has been a long road to get here. We are grateful for the huge patience that our fledgling clubs have had shown. We are now ready to take the benefits to more areas and it will be great to work with The National Lottery Community Fund on this.”

Amy Charnley-Parry of Energy Local says, “We are really excited to be working with The National Lottery Community Fund and other grant holders to help build and strengthen community ‘ecosystems’ of different organisations. As we attempt to achieve a zero-carbon electricity system, the danger is that the benefits are not shared with communities and they feel used. This can create resentment and it is likely to make the task harder.”

Energy Local is working to find a balance of providing increased income to renewables, a practical means for households to help reduce carbon whilst reducing their bills, but also maintain the customer support and benefits of the national license energy suppliers.

John Rose, Wales Director at The National Lottery Community Fund, said, “We believe that community action is a powerful way to engage people to play their part locally in addressing global environmental problems, and to protect the climate for future generations.

“By taking climate action we are not only making significant environmental improvements, but also helping people and communities thrive, as demonstrated by the great work Energy Local is doing. We are delighted that what started here in Wales by this group can now expand further and roll out to more areas across Wales and England, thanks to National Lottery players.”

The door is now open for more clubs to go ‘live’, and for the model to be rolled out further. The model has benefits all round. It can help unlock a huge amount more local, especially community-owned, renewable generation by providing a long-term income. It supports local economies, nudges people to use low-carbon power and helps run our electricity system more efficiently. It’s a step towards the electricity market everyone needs to achieve zero-carbon.

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Further information: www.energylocal.org.uk

Contact: amy@energylocal.co.uk

Photos: available from amy@energylocal.co.uk

Energy dashboards for each club at dashboard.energylocal.org.uk

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About The National Lottery Community Fund

We are the largest funder of community activity in the UK - we support people and communities to prosper and thrive.

We're proud to award money raised by National Lottery players to communities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and to work closely with Government to distribute vital grants and funding from key Government programmes and initiatives.

Our funding has a positive impact and makes a difference to people's lives. We support projects focussed on things that matter, including economic prosperity, employment, young people, mental health, loneliness and helping the UK reach net zero by 2050.

Thanks to the support of National Lottery players, our funding is open to everyone. We're privileged to be able to work with the smallest of local groups right up to UK-wide charities, enabling people and communities to bring their ambitions to life.

National Lottery players raise over £30 million each week for good causes throughout the UK. Since The National Lottery began in 1994, £43 billion has been raised for good causes. National Lottery funding has been used to support over 635,000 projects - 255 projects per postcode area.