

Edited highlights of questions and comments from the Zoom chat at SE24 public meeting 6.7.21

Political context and COP

- Why does government seem disinterested in engaging community groups in the climate change campaign? Is it insufficient scale (in their terms) or is it more political?
- Who will hold the government to account for the formation of the OGA - Oil & Gas Authority who's legally binding brief is to maximise the economic recovery of Oil & Gas on the continental shelf, currently on the 32nd round of licence permissions granting 113 of them!
- What can be done to encourage more financial support for fuel poverty work delivered by CE groups? The Big Energy Saving Network proffering is neither, big, energy saving focused nor even a network!
- Community Energy England sadly didn't get a place for COP but we in the community energy movement still need to contribute, using the attention on COP to increase support for our cause and amplify our needs!
- Whitehall & Westminster remain impervious to the successful experiences of community energy in Scotland, Denmark & Germany. In Helen's opinion, what is the role of personal greed among top civil servants & politicians in this failure, and expectations of post-career enormous earnings at major energy utilities? Mafia whistle blower Roberto Saviano told the Hay Literature Festival five or so years ago that Italy was not Europe's most corrupt country; England is, said Saviano".

Heat pumps

- Water, including wastewater, is a great heat source if available.
- Any prospect of policy support for non-domestic heat pumps? Eg Community buildings
- Need to bring down the upfront cost of HP. Octopus have said they want to halve the typical £10k cost of domestic HP.
- I think the CCC is assuming that the likes of Octopus will be successful. Let's hope they are correct!
- Be interesting to know installation costs in countries where heat pumps are much more common and supply chain is more developed (it's not an innovative technology after all). There's always a rarity premium in new markets (plus grants/subsidies tend to push up install costs as supply chain prices to value)
- Anecdote from a neighbour in Beckwith Rd. Octopus were doorstepping and got six conversions on our road to their renewables contract but only got interest from people already on renewable energy! Otherwise, there was no interest at all. We need a consumer awareness campaign - any ideas?
- Can we launch a retrofit 'community information hub' in SE24? Conveying information and matching qualified installers and contractors with 'uninformed but curious' residents?
- We need to be part of stimulating the builders to get retrofit active.
- Question for Crew: how easy is it to get planning to bore a 50m deep hole under your property considering that the state technically own everything 1m below your freehold ground? Just interested!
- Agree, we need a local information (sales) initiative to get all this information out of the 'sustainability bubble' into mainstream mindsets (driving 'social norms').

Fuel poverty

- In general, electricity costs are high because of policy costs. It would be great to level up across gas and electricity.
- Lambeth Council sell on debts to holding firms, then bailiffs every hour of each day, for civil offences often improperly administered. Debts should not be a commercial product. Selling debts is immoral - essentially it's trading misery. For example, a 60.00 PCN quickly becomes a 1k + fine - calling a holding firm can cost £8.00/minute. Fines escalate by the day. People become trapped.
- My personal feeling is that energy retrofits in social housing are relatively well funded (emphasise relatively). Very often the worst fuel poverty issues arise for people living in poor quality private rented properties.
- There needs to be more collaboration between community energy and agency with specialist skills and know-how with income and debt expertise.

Collaborative working among community energy groups

- Question to London community energy groups. How far did you go it alone or get going with Repowering London/a similar development group?
- Answer from SE24: we started with mentoring from OVESCO, thanks to a grant. We have also learnt so much from CREW and SELCE and now partner with Repowering on fuel poverty.
- We (Croydon Community Energy) are being mentored by the wonderful Toby from CREW energy
From Connie Muir to Everyone: 07:40 PM
- It would be great for all Community Energy London members to hear from the Black and Green project Simon. How can we make that happen? Link is: www.blackandgreenambassadors.co.uk.
- Perhaps CEL could organise a session with Green and Black Ambassadors
- A revived Urban Community Energy Fund from central Government would make a huge difference to LAs' ability to work with communities and Community Energy. It was one of the points we all raised at the Environmental Audit Committee.