

ENERGY

Plymouth City Council

Plymouth Energy Community (PEC)

The highly successful Plymouth Energy Community (PEC) is a perfect example of how the co-operative approach leads to real action on energy efficiency and sustainability at all levels in a local community. In line with its co-operative ethos, Plymouth City Council (PCC) recognised the potential for a community organisation to play a key role in delivering local solutions around advice on bills, affordable warmth and renewable energy.

PEC is a big-thinking, multifaceted Community Benefit Society, aiming to give Plymouth residents the power to change the way they buy, use and generate energy. Established in 2013, PEC has grown from a council initiative into a large community-led operation offering many different services addressing fuel poverty and carbon emissions.

Plymouth City Council's support through provision of start-up finance and access to funding streams, sourcing of founder members and volunteer Directors and provision of invaluable commitment of staff through an innovative shared services agreement means that PEC has acted at an unprecedented rate for a community energy group. Groups and local authorities all over the country are striving to replicate this co-operative collaboration.

With over 1200 individual and organisational members, PEC has been able to skip lengthy procurement processes and work with a range of organisations to provide and achieve the following:

- Helped 170 households clear over £115,000 fuel debt through a dedicated fuel debt advice service
- Provided free training to 48 volunteers and enabled four to complete Level 3 City & Guilds in Energy Awareness
- Provided bespoke home advice visits by a volunteer 'Energy Team' to 55 households; saving them a total of £27,000 over the next year (average £203 a year by switching and £141 through advice)
- Provided advice and support to over 3000 households through attending over 250 community events and presentations
- Helped 700 households access grants for external wall insulation

- Employed two energy marketing apprentices
- Assisted 700 households to access grants for external wall insulation, saving £4.5million and 19,000t CO² over the lifetime of the measures

In 2014, PEC launched a second Community Benefit Society, PEC Renewables, to enable community-owned renewable energy installations. These benefit local organisations, generate community investment and drive an income to provide long-term support for PEC's services addressing fuel poverty and carbon emissions. Through two share offers, £1.45 million community shares have been raised from 319 local, national and international investors. In addition to £1 million loan finance from PCC, this has led to 28 schools and community buildings receiving free community-owned solar on their roofs at total generation capacity of 2MW. This has empowered the local community to own their own clean energy supply and boosted income in the city by offsetting what would otherwise have been spent by schools, businesses, households and PCC.

For further information contact:

Giles Perritt

Assistant Chief Executive – Plymouth City Council

giles.perritt@plymouth.gov.uk | 01725 398618



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