

Session 5: Delivering solar partnerships

How communities and the public sector can work together?

14.00 - 14.55
(networking/stalls next)

Development Officers
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Agenda

Learn about how community and local authority partnerships work in practice to deliver win-win solar projects. This session will delve in to the partnerships, roles and responsibilities that have made this a successful model.

- Jessica Hogan, Regen
- Case study examples
- Q&As and Discussion

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Rooftop Solar PV Guide

Roles & responsibilities of community energy organisations and site owners

About Regen

Regen works to identify and overcome the strategic challenges to decarbonising power, heat and transport.

We apply our expertise to the whole energy system to advocate for a fast and fair transition to net zero.

Acknowledgements

This guide builds on SPEN's Solar PV guide and benefited greatly from the support and assistance of Alan Roseweir, Calum Watkins, Richard Witney and Jim Lee, whose extensive experience in delivering community solar projects provided invaluable insights.



Experts



Pioneers



Convenors

Why rooftop solar?

Benefits for community energy organisations

- Access to larger commercial roofs
- Stable income through long-term electricity sales
- Funding for local projects through surplus profits

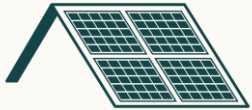
Benefits for building owners

- Lower energy costs with no upfront capital investment
- Reduced emissions
- Delivers direct local wealth-building





Community energy organisation



Building owner (third-party partner)



Distribution Network Operator (DNO)



Planning authority



Support providers (if engaged)



Funders and investors

9-step guide to rooftop solar

Stages 1–2: Early stages – building the foundation

- Finding a site and partner
- Feasibility study

Stages 3–5: Getting permissions right

- Secure the site
- Planning permissions and building warrants
- Grid connection

Stage 6: Finance

- Finance (should be threaded throughout the project)

Stages 7–9: Long-term success – Construction, operations and end-of-Life

- Build and installation
- Operations and maintenance
- End-of-life planning

Note: These stages overlap or may not occur in the same order.

Early Stages – Building the Foundation (Stages 1-2)

Stage	Community organisation	Building owner
1. Finding a building and partner	Identify sites, initiate contact, conduct pre-feasibility check, present opportunity and build relationship.	Provide building information, indicate interest and carry out due diligence.
2. Feasibility study	Apply for funding, select and manage consultant, liaise with building owner/DNO/local authority, review findings.	Provide site access and technical data, share building information and structural assessments, clarify restrictions.

Key tips

- Before approaching anyone, draft a clear value proposition
- Build your relationship over time – consider establishing early a joint working group
- Conduct a pre-feasibility study ahead of committing to full feasibility
- Ask the building owner early about possible hurdles

Technical Stages – Getting Permissions Right (Stages 4-5)

Stage	Community organisation	Building owner
3. Secure the site	Negotiate lease and PPA terms, seek legal advice, manage negotiation process.	Engage in negotiations, sign legal agreement.
4. Planning and building warrants	Submit planning application if required, determine building warrant requirements.	Provide building information, support roof structural survey.
5. Grid connection	Engage DNO early, submit connection application, review offer, coordinate installation.	Confirm building ownership/Heads of Terms, support DNO site access.

Key tip

- **Contact your planning authority and DNO early!**

Finance (Stages 6)

Stage	Community organisation	Building owner
6. Finance	Establish legal structure (if not already done), identify and secure funding, manage funder agreements.	Provide letters of support, consider co-investment opportunities.

Types of finance:

- Equity (community has or can raise)
- Debt (borrowed)
- Grants (Public or charitable funding)

Key tips

- Finance needs attention from pre-feasibility through to operations
- Speak to LES early to help get access to CARES

Getting support with raising finance

- **CARES** (Community and Renewable Energy Scheme) – provides funding and development support for community energy projects
- **Community Shares Scotland** – free support and guidance to anyone interested in learning more about community shares.
- **Ethex** – crowdfunding platform specialising in community energy investment offers
- **Energy4All** – end-to-end project support, including on setting up community share offers
- **DNOs** often have small funds – e.g. SP Energy Networks' community funding.
- **Local authorities/combined authorities** – may have dedicated community energy funding schemes or can signpost to regional opportunities.
- **Younity** – supports community energy groups with funding opportunities, PPAs and volunteer matching services.

Construction, operations and end-of-life (Stages 7-9)

Stage	Community organisation	Building owner
7. Installation	Procure contractors, manage project schedule, oversee quality and compliance, manage health and safety.	Provide site access, coordinate around building operations, share safety requirements.
8. Operations and maintenance	Set up monitoring systems, manage finances and invoicing, arrange maintenance, report to funders, manage insurance.	Pay for electricity per PPA terms, provide access for maintenance, track benefits, notify of planned closures.
9. End-of-Life planning	Plan decommissioning timeline and costs, review lease duration, decide on replacement/removal and recycling.	Confirm lease terms and restoration expectations, decide on ownership transfer or removal.

Roles and Responsibilities Guide for Rooftop Solar

What's in the guide:

- Detailed breakdown of all 9 stages
- Clear responsibilities for community groups and building owners
- Templates and checklists for different stages (in appendix)
- Examples of key agreements (leases)
- Suggestions for funding and who to ask for support
- Glossary of technical terms

Who it's for:

- Community energy organisations developing solar projects
- Local authorities and public bodies considering partnerships
- Building owners exploring community energy opportunities

How to access:

- Available soon from Local Energy Scotland
- Contact Local Energy Scotland for support and CARES funding

Key takeaways for community energy groups



1. Community organisations lead

- Lead proactively through all 9 stages - from site identification to operations. Building owners support, but **you drive delivery**.



2. Early planning & relationships are critical

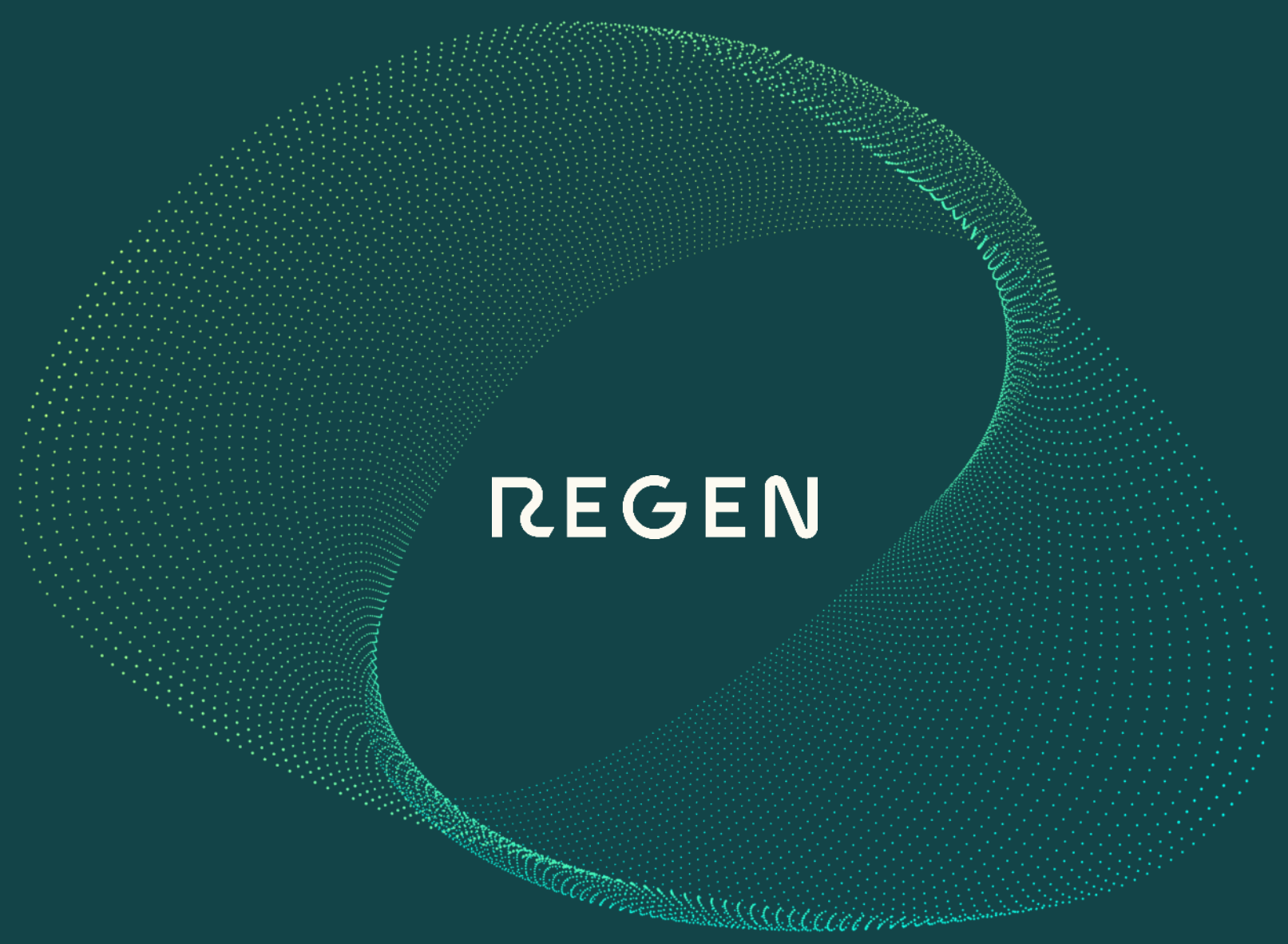
- Engage building owners early, secure funding (e.g., CARES) and try and plan the full lifecycle from day one - including end-of-life costs.



3. Legal agreements must be thorough, but manageable

- Lease agreements and PPAs must cover rights, responsibilities, maintenance, and decommissioning. **Budget for legal support early.**

Remember: Don't do it alone - use support organisations (Local Energy Scotland), learn from other groups, and invest in expert help where needed.



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Edinburgh Community Solar Co-op



- Edinburgh Community Solar Co-op set up in 2013 by people in Edinburgh who thought citizens should take responsibility for their energy needs
- Working in partnership with City of Edinburgh Council since 2015
- Raised £2.1 million over two community share offers in 2015 and 2020
- Nearly all the money raised within Edinburgh

Edinburgh Community Solar Co-op ('ECSC')

Edinburgh Community Solar Co-op ('ECSC'). ECSC is a Community Benefit Society (a Registered Society, with the UK Financial Conduct, set up to provide the opportunity for people in the City of Edinburgh and the surrounding area to become members of the Society.

- Generate renewable energy, helping tackle energy security and climate change. Address Fuel Poverty*
- Reduce demand for grid electricity in public buildings and support educational and sustainability work. Make renewable energy more commonplace in our city.*
- Support sustainable development in Edinburgh and contribute towards reducing CO2 emissions.*
- The more money ECSC raises, the more panels they can install on more buildings and the more profit they make to deliver their objectives*
- The business model is simple and modular. ECSC provides free Solar Panels and long term competitively priced electricity to Host Buildings.*

Edinburgh Community Solar Co-op ('ECSC')

- *A Community Benefit Society (a Registered Society, with the UK Financial Conduct Authority Number: 32277R) is a legal form providing the structure of this Society.*
- *It is owned by its members and operated for the benefit of the community.*
- *Members elect directors and each member has one vote in a members' meeting regardless of the number of shares held.*
- *Members are protected by limited liability and are only obliged to contribute the initial cost of their shares.*
- *A society operating for community benefit is governed by Rules, largely in standard form, which are approved by and registered with the Financial Conduct Authority.*

Edinburgh Community Solar Co-op ('ECSC')

- *CEC was made and a Memorandum of Understanding was agreed to investigate the benefits of installing Solar PV on public buildings.*
- *With support from Co-operative Development Scotland, ECSC was created to take the project forward. Energy4All had worked on similar school projects in England and with the support of its development staff and CARES funding, Energy4All was engaged to help develop the project.*
- *Initially ECSC selected approximately 100 public buildings with a community function. A short list was then produced based on roof orientation, size, electricity consumption and condition.*
- *A desktop study by On Site Generation was made of some 47 buildings, of which 33 underwent a preliminary survey visit and 29 were considered viable.*
- *ECSC signed a licence with CEC to install solar panels on these buildings with a Power Purchase Agreement ('PPA') for 20 years. The agreement allows CEC to purchase the generated electricity at a fixed price for the next 16 years based on 2015 rates. A share offer was launched in September 2015 and £1.46m was raised.*
- *Structural surveys of the buildings were then undertaken and of the initial batch of buildings 24 were installed with solar panels.*

Edinburgh Community Solar Co-op



- Solar pv panels installed on 30 council roofs over two phases
- Citizens of Edinburgh have paid for the solar panels on council roofs
- Solar Co-op supplies electricity to the council below grid price at fixed rates
- Solar Co-op deals with operation and maintenance
- All financial surplus goes to community benefit.

Edinburgh Community Solar Co-op



- Third phase of 16 buildings now agreed with council
- Planning £2.6 million community share offer in early 2025
- Includes Royal Commonwealth Pool and International Climbing Centre (EICC)
- Planning to include four community-owned properties

Edinburgh Community Solar Co-op

Community Fund, ECSC profits are allocated as grants to community causes that both align with the co-op's objectives and benefit the people of Edinburgh.

Eric Liddell Community: £2,050

To make the community garden more accessible and dementia friendly. Plant sensory plants, increase colour contrast; disability accessible furniture; raised beds. Purchase accessible gardening tools.

Edinburgh & Lothians Regional Equality Council: £2,000

C3R (Community Reuse Reduce Recycle) towards the cost of a marquee where events can be delivered at various festivals.

Tinderbox Collective: £4,000

To provide access to musical instruments & tuition for young people. Shared instruments on loan through public libraries.

Southside Community Centre Association: £1,882

Warm Space initiative – one day a week provide a heated space, hot drinks and activities (craft, films, games). Help reduce isolation.

Edinburgh Community Solar Co-op



Why has Edinburgh seen this success story?

- Co-operative Council
- Strong leadership
- Co-op Values and Principles
- Partnership
- Trust in community

Community electricity generation



Glasgow Community Energy

- 91kW solar PV installed on the rooftops of 2 Glasgow schools in 2020.
- Now looking to progress up to 629kWp of community-owned rooftop solar PV on buildings across Glasgow.
- Income generated is distributed to local community organisations for climate and social justice projects.



Community owned electricity generation



Dundee Renewable Energy Society

- 2.6MW solar PV meadow
- Community (BenCom) own the PV and the James Hutton Institute own the land and now purchase the electricity generated.
- Raised more than £2.7 million in community share offers.

Arran Community Renewables, Glenkiln Solar Farm

Location: Lamlash, Isle of Arran

Project: 4 MW ground mounted solar farm on 20 acres of land

Supporting: Grid connection, a planning application and project management costs.



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Q&As and Discussion



- Importance of relationships and bringing people together.
- Key learnings from partnerships and roles that have helped overcome challenges and led to success.
- Key agreements needed and what to consider for both parties in these.
- Challenges and how these have been overcome.

Contact Us



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