

Empower Danbury Community Energy Guide

Essex County Council (ECC) is bringing an exciting project to Danbury that will help the local community to take action to reduce its carbon emissions and become more empowered with how it uses energy. The project, called [Empower](#), is all about helping local communities to become more active in the energy market and develop low carbon, locally produced energy.

ECC would like to let the community know about progress with the project so far and involve anyone interested in its next steps. The project includes:

- ❖ Solar panels at Danbury Park Community Primary School and Essex Outdoor Centre to show how solar electricity can reduce costs and carbon.
- ❖ Information on taking first steps in saving money, energy and reducing carbon emissions.
- ❖ Supporting the local community to establish more community-led energy projects in the village.

Where are Danbury's new solar powered community buildings?

Solar panels will be installed on two buildings at Danbury Park Community Primary School, shown below. The solar panels are expected to produce around 42,000 kWh of electricity in their first year. That's roughly the same as the electricity demand for around fifteen average homes. The solar panels will continue to produce electricity for more than 25 years.



Solar panels will be installed at the Essex Outdoor Centre that will produce around 21,000 kWh of electricity in their first year. That's around the same amount of electricity needed to supply seven average homes. Essex County Council is also looking at other building at the Essex Outdoor Centre that would be suitable for installing solar panels on.



Essex County Council would like the new solar powered buildings to be the start of more community energy projects developing in Danbury. As well as renewable energy projects ECC want to help empower energy efficiency projects and those that help people on low incomes to pay their energy bills.

What is Community Energy?

Community energy is all about drawing on local skills and people power to create ground level, community-based solutions to the climate crisis. It's about people wanting to act now to secure a low carbon future, local green jobs and ethical investment. It's about making our energy work for us and the environment in our communities.

Community energy organisations look to initiate renewable energy and energy efficiency projects that benefit their local community and may also manage projects to reduce fuel poverty in their local communities. Many groups manage local investment in their projects and secure grant funding to start projects.

There are 275 community energy organisations throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland. They are typically Co-operatives or Community Benefit Societies. Together they employ 205 full time equivalent (FTE) staff with 46,000 members.

As of December 2018, community owned renewable energy projects in England, Wales and Northern Ireland generated 168 MW electricity, enough to power around 50,000 homes every year. The sector also owns 1.96 MW of heat generation capacity and has initiated low carbon transport projects in 29 communities.

You can find out more information about Community Energy through [Community Energy South](#) and [Community Energy England](#). Community Energy South, in partnership with Essex County Council have also produced a [first steps 'pathway' guide to community energy in Essex](#).

Join the discussion!

[Empower Danbury Online event](#)

Thu, 12 November 2020 - 18:00 – 19:30

Community Energy South and Essex County Council will be hosting an online event in November to bring people together in Danbury that are interested in community energy. The event will:

- ❖ Explain what Essex County Council is doing to support community energy projects in Essex;
- ❖ Show you the benefits of the new solar power community buildings in Danbury;
- ❖ Inspire you with examples of how communities can benefit from community energy;
- ❖ Invite ideas to be shared on community energy projects;
- ❖ Start the conversation about getting more community energy projects going in Danbury.

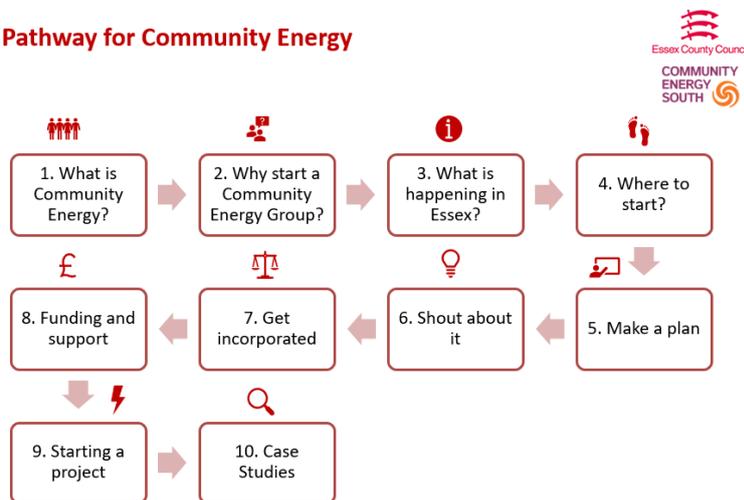
Please register to take place [here](#)

What can you do now?

Here are three things you can do now if you are interested in renewable energy, energy efficiency or saving money on your energy bills.

1) Take a look at the Essex Community Energy Roadmap Guide

Pathway for Community Energy



The [Pathway for Community Energy Guide](#) for Essex will tell you all about community energy and how you can start a project.

2) Claim the Green Homes Grant

The Green Homes Grant will provide homeowners with vouchers for energy efficiency improvements and the installation of low carbon heating measures

The government will provide a voucher that covers up to two-thirds of the cost of installing a heat pump and insulation. The maximum value of the voucher is £5,000. You may be able to receive a higher level of subsidy if you are a homeowner and either you or a member of your household receives one of the qualifying means-tested benefits, covering 100% of the cost of the improvements. The maximum value of these voucher is £10,000. Landlords cannot apply for the low-income part of the scheme. You can [check the eligibility for the low income scheme](#).

You must redeem the voucher and ensure improvements are completed by 31 March 2021, so there is a short window to benefit. You can apply for the voucher here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-the-green-homes-grant-scheme>

3) Make sure you are not paying too much!

Three out of four households in the UK could save an average of £300 on their energy bills each year by switching energy supplier or energy tariff!

Unless you review the energy tariff you are on each year you are likely to be spending too much. You may also be able to switch to a renewable energy tariff and still save money. Take a look at the [Citizen's Advice guide](#) on switching energy suppliers. You could also save money by and sign up for the [Essex Energy Switch](#).

Any questions?

If you have any questions about this project please contact:

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