

Northumberland Solar Powered Community Buildings project

Northumberland Community Energy Ltd (NCEL) is a not-for-profit Community Benefit Society operating as a cooperative. Any surplus revenue generated by the society goes to service the community buildings that are part of the project.

NCEL's aims are to:

1. Reduce energy costs for community buildings
2. Support resilience in response to long term climate change and short term events such as storms and power outages.
3. Reduce carbon footprint of community activities
....all whilst limiting risk and maximising reward for community groups



How it Works

- a. NCEL purchases and installs solar panels and battery storage at participating community buildings covering all capital and revenue costs associated with the installation. NCEL partners with trustees and committee members and consults at all stages of the process.
- b. The community building will go through a first assessment and then a full feasibility study. If that is positive and the managing body wish to proceed, they become a member of NCEL for £1. This gives them a stake in the cooperative and a vote.
- c. NCEL will take the building through planning.
- d. If planning is approved the community building's managing body will lease NCEL the roof space for the solar panels and space in the building for the battery storage for a period of 20 years. NCEL will appoint a solicitor to act on behalf of the community building's managing group to agree the lease.
- e. Once the lease is agreed NCEL will instruct their approved contractor to install the panels, inverter and battery storage. There will be training on how the system works, monitoring and billing.
- f. Any uplift on the building's insurance to cover the panels, batteries and associated kit, for the duration of the lease, will be covered by NCEL.

- g. Any renewable electricity generated by the solar panels and used in the building will be bought by the community building's managing body at a fixed, low-cost rate of £0.15 /kwh for the term of the 20-year lease. Any revenue generated from the export of solar electricity to the grid through the Smart Export Guarantee will go directly to NCEL.
- h. There will still be a need to import mains electricity when solar generation and battery storage cannot meet the building's needs. The community building's managing body, through their membership of NCEL, can access competitive mains electricity tariff through the North East Purchasing Organisation (NEPO). This can be arranged when appropriate.
- i. NCEL carry out all maintenance, repairs and replacements over the 20-year agreement. At the end of the agreement, the equipment passes to the building or will be removed by NCEL if preferred.

For more information, please contact **Fiona Knox** -
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View a short video on the project at:
[Solar-Powered Community Buildings | Village Halls & Community Buildings | Empowering Organisations | Community Action Northumberland \(ca-north.org.uk\)](#)

