



Steering Group Members 2025-26

Pete West, Energy Local Bridport

I am currently the WCEN joint treasurer (with Cara Naden). My background includes Renewable Energy Development Officer at Dorset County Council 2008-16, a founding director of Dorset Community Energy in 2013 and one of the founders of the Wessex Community Energy Network in 2018. I stepped down as a director and secretary of Dorset Community Energy in 2021 and I'm currently a director and secretary of Energy Local Bridport, the first Energy Local club in England set up in early 2020.

Cara Naden, Avalon Community Energy & Somerset Council

Cara Naden has been involved with community energy in Somerset for 20 years since investing in the first community energy Industrial and Provident Society in West Somerset - Brendon Energy. Cara was also instrumental in the creation of Avalon Community Energy in Mendip of which she is currently the chair, and over the years has engaged with all the 7 community energy organisations active in Somerset, along with the South Somerset Hydropower group and Mendip Community Energy hydropower. Cara works for Somerset Council supporting decarbonisation and is very passionate about energy efficiency and renewables to stop fuel poverty, create resilient clean energy and reduce climate change impacts. Cara sees the importance of networks and collaboration to deliver action on the climate & ecological emergency so being part of Wessex Community Energy Network is an important way to bring together Community Energy in the SW, engage with Councils and work out ways to share resources and overcome barriers to continue to deliver clean green energy for the community.

Vince Adams, Energise Stur Valley IPS

Vince Adams has been supporting renewable energy development for over 15 years. Currently Chairman of a small Dorset based community project, ESVIPs based at the Springhead Trust, Fontmell Magna and started 8 years ago. He helped form a small group of hydro enthusiasts to push forward the case for water energy. Within a very short time we have a project being supported by a new UK turbine manufacturer moving forward to planning stages.

Lucy Rothwell, Centre for Sustainable Energy

Lucy is currently the co-ordinator and secretariat for WCEN. An experienced Project Manager with a background in IT, she joined the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) as a volunteer in 2022 and subsequently joined the Local and Community Empowerment team at CSE. Lucy has worked on a variety of community energy projects at CSE including the Energy Learning Network and North West Community Energy Pathways project, a series of webinars and resources designed to help community groups on their community energy journey.



Steering Group Members 2025-26

Helen Martin, Bristol Energy Cooperative

Helen is the CEO of Bristol Energy Cooperative (BEC), one of the region's largest community energy organisations with 25 clean energy projects totalling over 12MW in capacity: from solar rooftops to solar farms to integrated microgrid projects. BEC has raised £15 million to finance these investments via community share and bond offers, commercial and blended loans, and channelled £440,000 of revenues into local community projects. Before joining BEC, Helen spent 15+ years working internationally in infrastructure policy and finance, as well as a brief spell in UK politics.

Alex Lockton, Empowered

I have almost 20 years experience in the renewable energy sector with background in design, construction and development of projects of all kinds of technologies. Specifically in the community sector, that would include design and construction of many rooftop sites for a number of community energy companies prior to starting Empowered 5 years ago (was RenewEV until recently). Empowered itself has a dedicated community energy development team and works with community organisations such as BWCE, BEC, West Mendip, Freco and many others developing wind, solar and battery projects and rooftop solar projects. Our business also has an in house technical consultancy and represents landowners on utility scale development schemes. Through these connections and through my work in lobbying for the sector and working with community energy clients, stakeholders and supply chain I can offer an in depth insight into the needs of the sector.

Iris Partridge, Resilience Network CIC

I am the (co)founder and one of the directors of [Resilience Network CIC](#) (ResNet) as well as a founding director of [We Can Make Knowle West](#) (WCM)). Both ResNet and WCM have a theme of working with communities to increase their climate resilience, in relation to the challenges that the (fair) transition to net zero and the advent of the effects of climate change will bring. However, I have supported community based social enterprises and charities in Bristol, both as a senior staff member and as a director and trustee since 2001. With a strong emphasis on supporting Bristol's more vulnerable neighbourhoods, I have led a number of organisations, supporting equity of opportunity within climate action. I was the Project Manager for the CHEESE Project in 2022/23 and before that ran Easton Community Centre for nearly three years, trialled urban food production (aquaponics) as part of Bristol Fish Project CIC and was the CEO of Re:work Ltd in Knowle West for 9 years. I am really looking forward to being part of the WCEN Steering Group & working with everyone!