

Going to Scale: Help us to grow community energy in Camden & Islington

Community Energy: a practical response to the Climate Emergency

We have 11 years to reduce emissions in order to remain below +1.5 degrees¹. The UK Government has committed to reach net zero carbon by 2050². The UK Parliament has declared a climate emergency³. Many local Councils have followed suit. Islington Council declared in June 2019. Camden Council has launched a Citizens' Assembly to inform its response to the emergency, and will issue a Climate Action Plan shortly.

The transition to renewable energy is a key part of the transition to a more sustainable economy, but it is not happening fast enough. A recent analysis of Camden's route to decarbonisation concluded that: "a vast increase in solar PV capacity would be needed"⁴. But too often, there is not enough capital available to help public buildings install the renewables they and the community want. That's where Power Up North London (PUNL) comes in – connecting people with renewable energy projects in their communities. But we need your help.

Power Up North London – who are we

"Power Up North London (PUNL) is a fantastic, independent grass roots organisation in Camden, which is pioneering a new model for combatting climate change by empowering local residents to play a part in reducing carbon emissions and developing strong community resilience." **Sir Keir Starmer QC, MP for Holborn & St Pancras**

PUNL is an exciting community-based social enterprise with a vision for Camden & Islington to become carbon neutral boroughs, driven in part by a resilient, independent & collaborative community of local residents harnessing clean energy. Our mission is to empower North London residents with ownership & understanding of clean energy generation & reduced energy consumption. We do this by connecting residents with clean energy technologies, and by providing information and education on energy usage. Our activities promote community benefit, community ownership, sustainability, independence and resilience.

Our aims are:

- To enable people in North London to access / invest in clean technologies, leading to a reduction in carbon emissions;
- To run workshops that enable North London communities to reduce their energy use and better manage their electricity bills, leading to a reduction in fuel poverty;
- To invest surpluses from energy generation in the communities that generate them;
- To give our volunteers and members fulfilling and meaningful opportunities to contribute to reversing climate breakdown.

We have a 100 local investors in our two community PV solar installations and 59kWp of installed capacity. Our first PV solar installation was on a church in Highgate in 2016. In 2019, our second share offer supported the installation of solar power on a GP surgery in Kentish Town: the offer sold out within a fortnight, signalling the strong demand for this work. We have also delivered three LED lighting projects and run fuel poverty workshops. But we want to do more so that we can have a much bigger impact.

¹ <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/chapter/summary-for-policy-makers/>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-announcement-to-end-uks-contribution-to-climate-change>

³ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48126677>

⁴ <https://www.camden.gov.uk/documents/20142/0/Carbon+Scenarios+to+2030.pdf/215aa878-c657-10c7-4119-7a9f92dbb0f5>

Our plans (2019-2022)

Given our track record, our excellent reputation, the strength of our team, and the political will to act nationally and locally, we believe now is the time to significantly scale up our activities. Aligned with this, we have the following objectives:

- Scale up delivery of community solar projects; a further two sites in 2019, totalling an additional 100kWp, followed by 3-4 in 2020, and increasing again in 2021;
- Test feasibility of and develop a portfolio of renewable heat, electric vehicles, batteries, lighting and fuel poverty projects;
- Develop partnerships with 2-3 key suppliers and specialist businesses to support this broader range of projects;
- Target 100 tonnes of carbon savings a year by 2022;
- Develop a Community Fund of £50k by 2022 for investment in local projects as determined by our members;
- Raise grant funding to pay for employment of part/full time staff

PUNL is staffed by a small band of skilled and committed volunteers who do an amazing job, but if we are to scale up we need more time and expertise to help us with:

- **Business development;** including identifying and developing new sites, sourcing feasibility funding, and building our network of delivery partners. This will give us the ability to launch more projects concurrently.
- **Project management;** as we scale up our activities and move into new technologies, we will require a larger team of paid and voluntary staff to roll out our successful delivery approach across solar and new technologies
- **Feasibility studies;** to date we have accessed grant funding to cover the cost of feasibility studies for projects. Whilst we believe we will continue to be able to access this, the timing of such funds may not always align with when we have the opportunity to develop projects.

How you can help

To help us to achieve these ambitious goals as quickly as effectively as possible, we are researching a range of funding opportunities to help us to develop our paid employment and feasibility cost needs. Part of this process is approaching existing investors and supporters to see whether there is appetite to make a contribution to the society to accelerate its development. We are looking to raise ~£80k over two years to allow us to invest in paid staff and for feasibility studies. We believe that this upfront investment would help us to unlock a further ~£300k in investment, and more importantly, reach our target of delivering savings of 100 tonnes of carbon the next 3 years.

Get in touch

If you would be interested in supporting PUNL as one of our first Donor Funders, to help us get to the next stage of our growth, we would be delighted to speak further with you to explain our plans in more detail and understand your own aims.

Contact: Ben Pearce, Chair, b.r.pearce88@gmail.com / 07793732518