

Kerry Sustainable Energy Co-op Feedback for Kerry PPN Climate Conversation

Current KSEC led Initiatives

Bulk purchase scheme of local wood

- KSEC sells 1 ton bags of local wood from sustainably managed sources to members.

Wood Moisture Meters and Energy Meters in Local Libraries

- KSEC has provided libraires in Kerry with a wood moisture meter and an energy meter that people can borrow from the library the same way they borrow books

Operation Kerry Renewable Energy Transformation

- A LEADER funded project that is delivered in 3 parts
 - A) Initial introduction workshops in several towns across Kerry providing people with a general overview of the different renewable energy technologies there are and information about energy efficiency and retrofitting
 - B) Workshops that go into more detail and specifics about the technologies and what is involved in installing different renewable technologies and in the retrofits and about grants
 - C) Home visits to workshop participants homes to talk through the measures suitable for their property.

Projects we'd like to develop include:

- Community owned solar farm
- Solar PV bulk purchase scheme
- Setting up an ESCO with peer to peer selling of electricity
- Energy Allotments

Suggestion for Climate Action Fund

Community and volunteer effort can only go so far, people have busy lives and although there is huge willingness, ultimately people can only give up so much time. Community groups could really do with a paid worker who can help with the mountain of admin that is involved in applying for funding and managing those projects.

Broader Suggestion For Climate Action Fund

- **Use money to properly resource local authorities to take a leading climate action role in their counties and communities.** In countries abroad where community action has been successful

there is often strong collaboration and support with the local authority. Unfortunately, the local authorities in Ireland are underfunded and under resourced and in some cases also lack the experience and expertise they need to be effective community leaders. The climate action fund should be used to address this.

- **Create local energy agencies or enlarge/create an energy system department in the local development agencies**

In Ireland a lot of great community development work is done through the local development offices like NEWKD and SKDP. Energy Agencies like Tipperary Energy Agencies and Codema have been and continue to be very effective. We need local agencies with responsibility for coordinating energy work in their locality/regional area. The CAROs while good cover too large an area to really effect fast change on the ground.

We need to recognise that we have an ENERGY SYSTEM, made up of multiple nodes and aspects. It needs support to make sure all the different parts are communicating and that there is feedback between them to make sure it is working as effectively as possible. We have things going on at national level and household level but there is a gap at county level.

Response from Individual Members

Current actions and Ambition: <i>What community-led, climate action initiatives are happening in our area that work well? Any new ideas or existing actions we'd like to develop?</i>	
Member A	Operation Kerry renewable energy transformation. While this is currently on hold due to lock down, the information sessions and workshops will give participants information and increase confidence about making decisions in relation to renewable energy and home upgrades etc.
Member B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Faith based Communities' responses eg move to renewable energy in church buildings eg heat pumps , LED lighting and other conservation measures; awareness raising and education particularly during Season of Creation (1 Sept-4Th Oct) to extend all initiatives to people's homes. schools etc.; green /care of creation groups in parishes; some religious communities/divestment from fossil fuels; promotion of all activities on dedicated church programme on Radio Kerry (Horizons & Just A Thought); public talks -KSEC Firewood Purchase Scheme for its members ie good quality soft and hard wood and local employment -provision of energy and wood moisture meters in local libraries by KSEC for awareness raising of general public -KSEC –public talks on retrofitting and move to renewable energy solutions and support of SEAI BEC scheme for its members. -KSEC using LEADER funding for County wide series of info sessions, workshops and home visits for heating and conservation solutions & SEAI funding for Energy Master plan in Killorglin. -Close networking with the related groups eg SECs in Kerry and region -District Heating System in Tralee is an excellent example of what's possible. -Green Arts Initiative

Member C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The wood purchase scheme by KSEC is a great programme, as it enables people to source better quality wood at a cheaper price. It also works to educate people on how the quality of timber affects the environment and the quality of the fire. - Perhaps district heating programmes could be developed and expanded. - Encouraging biogas use in rural areas and in the private home setting. People could be encouraged to come together and build their own biogas tanks (eg http://www.solarcities.eu/) - Providing access to low-cost sustainable and innovative home energy renewables in wind and solar also - like the water and wind lilly, and legion solar. - Wolfgang reforest and hometree.ie are interesting social enterprises/charities which involve the community in tree planting days. Perhaps community forest funds or similar initiatives could be developed which enable communities to purchase cheap tracts of land or businesses could contribute to offset their carbon footprint. - Encouraging and promoting cycling and walking to school and work days and further development of cycle paths, etc, - Hydrogen energy programmes in Valentia is another good programme.
Member D	<p>Local Graveyard : Improving biodiversity with planting schemes and altering management of old graveyard for a meadow over spraying</p> <p>Eco-Shelter : building an eco-shelter bus stop with a Green roof</p> <p>Tidy Towns : focus on biodiversity in planting and maintenance</p> <p>Sustainable Energy Community : Trying to promote home retrofits and renewable energy in area</p> <p>Rhododendron eradication : applying for funds to start controlling Rhododendron in the area</p>
Member E	<p>Talks explaining energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades and how best to achieve this as a community utilizing SEAI and Government grants. Supports for Communities to work together to achieve best results and value for money.</p>
Member F	<p>WhatsApp gardening/forestry/seed share/lift share groups.</p>
<p>Enabling Community Action: <i>Thinking about what we'd like to do more of, or start doing, what are our recommendations for the design of the Climate Action fund?</i></p>	
Member A	<p>The Operation Kerry renewable energy transformation project is funded by Leader. It required a lot of work preparing submissions and other paperwork. This work was done by volunteers with minimum experience and limited time for preparing such submissions. Financial help for admin work would make it easier for groups to develop and carry forward ideas and projects related to renewable energy.</p>

Member B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Support moves for Community owned energy solutions (i.e. clean energy and opportunities for retailing of clean energy) -Always aiming to reduce fuel poverty -avoiding the saturation of a particular area with eg externally owned windfarms. -ensuring protection of SACs in location of windfarms or other. -anaerobic digesters on most farms or at least supporting groups of farms. -Supporting groups and communities to reduce turf cutting for home fuel.
Member C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There could be three pillars - transition, sequestration and innovation. And public and private goals in all pillars. - Carbon sequestration needs to be a big component of any climate action plan. - Growing algae (spirulina) at home for example could help offset home emissions (maybe tax credits for the purchasing of such equipment e.g. https://www.photosynthetica.co.uk/biobombola). - Aquaculture or sustainable harvest of seaweed could be encouraged to enable farmers to reduce methane emissions on farms and another potential revenue stream for coastal communities. - Encouraging (or incentivising) farmers (or private homes) to let some of their land go wild for flora and fauna biodiversity (like the councils are doing) or following the latest regenerative farming techniques such as those outlined in https://carboncowboys.org/ which sequester more carbon in the soil and make the land more productive and profitable, or grants for rewetting boglands etc. - Community gardens or mini forests on disused tracts of lands in towns and cities. - And transition to renewable energy should be the other pillar, and potentially exploring nuclear power. - Data gathering and analysis should also be a major piece. Perhaps setting up a national research centre with branches in all counties /provinces that can come up with a 'green rating' for counties and businesses. - It would also allow for the identification of potential points for energy savings. - Maybe a competition for 'green towns' similar to tidy towns, using the ratings as a metric. - Developing or sourcing low-cost community purchase schemes for green equipment (home solar, wind, biogas etc). - Methods should be developed to quantify methane emissions of individual farms. - Educating primary school children on home biogas, composting, sustainable energy etc.
Member D	<p>Matched funding requirements and the 'Pay up front – Reclaim Grant after' system is very onerous on small community groups. A lot of effort is diverted from the primary job at hand to raising funds / applying for bridging loans / paying for bridging loans.</p> <p>If government funding organisations paid contractors directly on evidence of completion of tasks it would be a better use of limited voluntary time.</p>

Member E	Assisting homeowner to produce more of the own energy needs, accelerating battery storage of energy produce in homes and businesses. Allow producers to export to neighbours/businesses via micro grids.
Member F	Local recycling campaigns/anti-littering campaigns/Zero plastic campaigns.
Informing National Policy: <i>Reflecting on our local concerns and ambitions, what broader suggestions do we have for the Climate Action Plans?</i>	
Member A	N/A
Member B	<p>Public <i>One stop shop</i> for homeowners and SME's to get retrofitting advice</p> <p>Targets for reduction of cars on the road and the shift to good reliable and energy efficient public transport.</p> <p>Further exploration of use of hydrogen for public vehicles, tourist buses in Kerry and rental cars.</p>
Member C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The climate action plan could/should be based on the doughnut economics model. - There is also an Irish doughnut economics network that could possibly be leveraged to help kick start climate actions on Ireland and foster relationships with community energy groups. - Instead of having to buy electric cars, a national programme could be developed to retrofit older petrol/diesel cars similar to https://transition-one.eu/ in France or https://www.electrifidreams.com/ here in Ireland but that focuses on expensive cars. - Digital or remote working hubs should be developed and expanded to reduce the need to commute, and provide facilities for people to move out of cities if their jobs enable it similar to https://www.sneemdigitalhub.ie/remote-worker-employee. It would also mean less commuting and traffic pollution and improvement on quality of life and the regeneration of rural areas. - Businesses should be incentivised to allow workers to (fully/partially) work from home where applicable. - Investment in rail networks. For example reopening disused tracks on the west coast - would provide a green means of travelling on the west coast, which would also benefit the tourism industry - could be called something like the Wild Atlantic Railroad. - Ireland is also uniquely suited to camping and eco-tourism, which could be further developed and encouraged. - A transition away from single-use plastics to compostable alternatives. - Educating people on buying locally sourced high-quality produce - which would reduce emissions from international imports. - Education in alternatives to heat pumps where not applicable like wood pellet stoves.
Member D	<p>Recognition of differing requirements for dispersed rural communities to village/urban. For instance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - focus on cycling when the nearest shop may be over 10km away up steep hills in bad weather.

	- One off houses being discouraged stops young family members building on family land and so staying in the area, going to local schools etc
Member E	N/A
Member F	Afforestation projects/electric car charge points