**This Community Energy Fortnight we’re asking CEE members to engage with their local MP and encourage them to support our call for Social Investment Tax Relief to be made available for anyone investing in community energy projects. There’s a template letter that you can use to contact your MP. If you’re able to do this, then it’s also a good idea to share the fact that you’ve made the ask of your MP with local media, and share any events you’re hosting as part of Community Energy Fortnight too. The template press release is intended to help you write your own, personalised version appropriate to your group.**

**\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\***

**[INSERT DATE OF RELEASE]**

**[INSERT LOCAL GROUP NAME] ASK [INSERT LOCAL MP] TO SUPPORT THEIR CALL FOR HELP DURING COMMUNITY ENERGY FORTNIGHT**

**[insert local group name] is one of more than two hundred community energy groups across the UK celebrating Community Energy Fortnight, 22 June – 7 July 2019.**

Community Energy Fortnight is an opportunity to showcase inspiring examples of communities who are actively reducing carbon emissions with renewable energy and efficiency technologies whilst helping people in their local area at the same time.

[insert paragraph describing your group/scheme/project and add any events you are running during CEF19 or how people can get involved locally]

XXXXXX, chair/member of [insert local group name] said: “We’re proud of the work that we do to generate clean, green power in [insert area]. We think it’s really important for the environment that we all do what we can to help reduce carbon emissions.

“Unfortunately because of changes made to government policy it’s getting harder for groups like ours to develop local green energy schemes – just at the time when we know more people want to get involved. That’s why we’ve invited [local MP] to come and find out more about our project [OR IF YOU HAVE AN ONGOING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MP – to meet with us so we can update them on the work of [group name], and our plans for the future. We’ve also asked him/her to support our call for the reinstatement of Social Investment Tax Relief. We think this will help groups like ours to attract more investors, and help finance more community energy schemes across the UK.”

[insert local group name] is a member of Community Energy England (CEE), who represent over 200 community energy groups. CEE, supported by Co-op Energy, has released new polling, conducted by ICM, which shows that among a representative survey of adults in Great Britain, eight in ten (82%) think the Government should do more to help local communities generate their own energy; and two in three (69%) think the Government should change its mind and once again offer tax relief to those individuals who take the risk of investing in community energy. This includes a sharp increase in support from those who identify as Conservative Party voters, with support for a reinstatement of tax relief leaping 25 percentage points, from 43% in 2017 to 68% in 2019.

Respondents also indicated that they are supportive of contributing financially to help develop more community energy schemes, with 74% stating that they would be prepared to pay a small 25p surcharge each year on their energy bill to fund a massive expansion of community energy, with the profits staying in the local area.

David Bird, chief executive, Co-op Energy said: “The polling data shows growing support for community energy.

“In our role as an energy supplier we have a powerful role to play in helping the public understand that our energy landscape is changing. Promoting renewable energy, and being clear about how and where it is produced and who benefits, can encourage customers to change their energy consumption habits as we move to a digital and decentralised power system.

“Community energy groups can help us do this as they are the local, trusted and visible groups that are showing how clean, green energy can benefit neighbourhoods up and down the country.”

[insert local group name] is joining Community Energy England to make the call for better support from government for community energy after it was reported that 2018 was the toughest year yet for community energy. New generation capacity has fallen steeply in comparison to previous years. In 2018 7.9 MW of new community energy capacity was installed, including 0.7 MW across 4 micro hydro schemes and 7.2 MW across 47 new solar sites, (compared to 33.5 MW of new community energy capacity in 2017).

XXXXXX, chair/member of [insert local group name] said: “We want more people to benefit from community energy. We hope that if lots of small groups like ours take action, speak to their MPs and involve more people in generating clean, green energy, then we can make a real difference where we live.”

**ENDS**

**For more information,** please contact:

[insert local group contact]

**Notes to editors**

**Polling data**

ICM Unlimited interviewed a representative online sample of 2,027 adults aged 18+, between 29th – 31st May 2019. Interviews were conducted across the country and the results have been weighted to the profile of all adults. ICM is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules.

**About Community Energy England**

[Community Energy England (CEE)](https://communityenergyengland.org) is a not for profit organisation that represents and supports those committed to the community energy sector. CEE was established by the sector to provide a voice for community energy and to help create the conditions within which it can flourish. This is done by increasing the profile of community energy, sharing best practice and by advocating for supportive policies at national and local levels.

Events happening during Community Energy Fortnight 2019 will appear at [hub.communityenergyengland.org/community-energy-fortnight/](https://hub.communityenergyengland.org/community-energy-fortnight/) and [@CEFortnight](https://twitter.com/CEFortnight)

**About Co-op Energy:**

Established in 2010, Co-op Energy, which is part of the UK’s largest independent co-operative, The Midcounties Co-operative, has more than 370,000 customers across the UK, making it one of the largest firms to offer 100% green electricity as standard. As a co-operative, it shares its profits between its members, community projects and reinvesting back into the business.

Co-op Energy is a proud supporter of community generated renewable energy and purchases green electricity from over 70 community projects nationwide.

You can find out more about Co-op Energy on Facebook /cooperativeenergy and Twitter @CoopEnergy