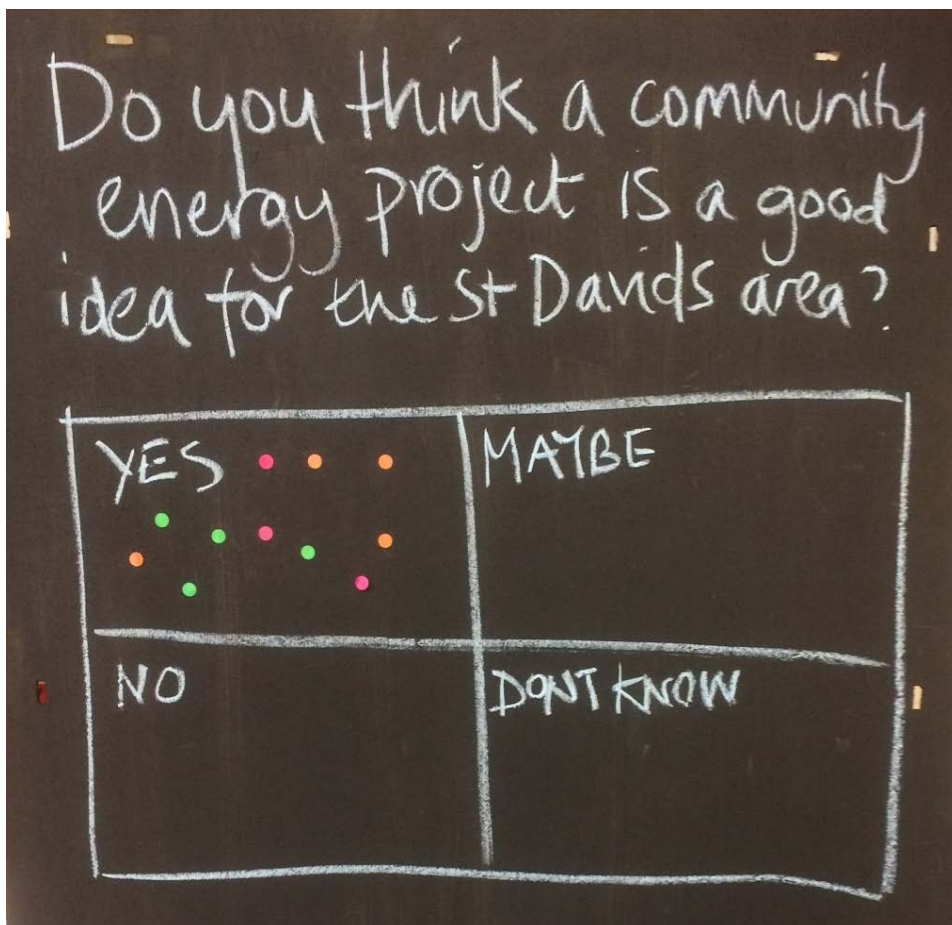




## LOCAL ENERGY ACTION FORCE PROJECT

### EVENTS EVALUATION REPORT



**APPROVAL BY CEP 04.12.20**



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## Llythrenwau a ddefnyddiwyd / Acronyms used

**LEAF** – Local Energy Action Force

**LEAG** – Local Energy Action Group

Please see main evaluation report for background information on the LEAF project and the LEAGs.

## 1. Introduction

Community Energy Pembrokeshire's Local Energy Action Force (LEAF) project aimed to support five communities in Pembrokeshire to develop projects generating, selling and buying sustainable energy by establishing Local Energy Action Groups. Funding was provided by Arwain Sir Benfro's EU LEADER fund, with match funding contributed by local and national delivery partners.

This document summarises the evaluation of the community events that took place as part of the LEAF project. It is complementary to the main evaluation report.

Eight community events were organised as part of the LEAF project, one of which was held online after the onset of the coronavirus pandemic.

Events were planned to be a big feature of the LEAF project, so the monitoring and evaluation contract brief included a requirement to evaluate individual events. Evaluation notes were provided to the team after each event that was evaluated.

At the start of the project the evaluation team committed to attending up to four events, with evaluation support being provided to assist the project team to collect evaluation data at the other events.

In the end the evaluation team attended one event in person (St Davids Oriel y Parc event, October 2019) and one online (energy café event July 2020). Attendance at further events was not possible as the event timetable was curtailed by the coronavirus pandemic.

## 2. Evaluation methods used

A number of evaluation methods were used including

- Completion of 'welcome questions' using an iPad
- Feedback boards / comment walls
- Paper forms
- Online forms
- Mentimeter online poll (at the online event)
- Project officer conversations
- End of project LEAG members survey

## 3. Observations and challenges

### Event outcomes

'Successful gatherings with a purpose' is one of the outcomes included in the Theory of Change for the LEAF project.

The LEAF events were intended to contribute to increased awareness of the project in the community, and group development (by attracting new members and by acting as a 'quick win' that a group can deliver).

## Evaluation headlines

- Many of the LEAF events were successful in terms of achieving good turn-out, raising community awareness and/or recruiting group members. The events in Tiers Cross and Llanteg Park in September 2019, and in St Davids in October 2019 and March 2020, were well advertised within the community and well attended.
- Although potential new LEAG members were identified at the events in Milford Haven in July 2019, the events were poorly attended so the impact on 'increased awareness of the project in the community' was limited. The low levels of attendance at the event could have been due to a contrast between the project teams' vision for the events, and that of the newly appointed project manager. The event was modelled on a similar event in a community with different characteristics, and there had not been much previous activity to stimulate interest in energy as a topic in Milford Haven.
- The online energy café event in July 2020 was also poorly attended. It was not promoted outside of the LEAGs.
- Two active LEAG members who completed the end of project survey found out about the project through a community events.

## Event planning, marketing and organisation

The intended outcomes / measures of success for events were not always clearly set out / shared by the project team in advance of the events (indeed sometimes the evaluation team was not aware of events before they happened). This made it difficult to plan appropriate evaluation and measures of success. Evaluation of some of the events was based on project officer feedback rather than information collected from participants.

Prior to the Coronavirus pandemic the project team had been planning a series of informal 'energy café' drop in events. These were designed with the Milford Haven, Hakin and Hubberston community in mind and were intended to offer a gateway to start conversations with and engage interested residents in the LEAF project. It was not possible to hold these events as designed due to the pandemic, so the team instead developed an online energy café session which was a simple introduction to energy saving and renewable energy. It was not clear to the evaluation team what type of person the session was targeted at and it appears very little marketing was conducted for it. Just two existing LEAG members attended the session. The session was recorded however, so could be edited to form a useful introduction to energy saving and renewable energy in the future.

Many of the LEAF events were scrupulously planned and organised, but some event attendees and potential project partners did pick up on the fact that organisation could have been better at one event.

Marketing for events ranged from a whole community 'blitz' approach in smaller communities like Tiers Cross and Llanteg Park to a combination of posters, word of mouth, partner support and Facebook posts in St Davids. Reaching a reasonable number of people and encouraging them to attend the events and meetings in Milford Haven, or the online event, was a challenge.

## Evaluation methods

The paper forms provided the most useful and objective evaluation feedback.

Conversations between the evaluation team and the project officers provided additional information to support the evaluation of events (in some cases this was the only information available) and helped them to reflect on the events.

Feedback walls or comment walls were useful to gain some simple visual feedback but no detailed feedback was provided via these methods.

A Mentimeter online poll was used to collect feedback from the online energy café session. There were only two LEAG members at the session – they rated the event from 1-5 in various categories (average score 3.7 out of 5 for a range of statements). However they didn't answer other questions, perhaps because the small nature of the group meant that they felt uncomfortable providing real time feedback that would be visible to the event organisers.

Using an iPad and an online survey tool to collect evaluation data at the first event in Milford Haven in July 2019 seemed too formal and not appropriate for a community event, so was not repeated.

Although evaluation notes were provided to the project team after all events they helped to evaluation, it isn't clear whether these were used to inform planning of subsequent events.

## **4. Recommendations for future events as part of a community energy support project or programme**

- Ensure intended outcomes for events are clear from the outset, and that a marketing plan is developed based on those outcomes
- Reflect on success with achieving desired outcomes after each event and consider what could be improved on in the future. This could also take place individually, in a pair or within the group. Record and share this information and refer to it each time an event is organised.
- Consider mentoring support for teams organising community events (particularly where this is a new experience for them). Support could include ensuring everything is thought through in advance and guiding them through post event reflection.
- Consider whether the energy café session can be edited to provide a useful ongoing resource
- Give someone responsibility for evaluation of each event. A mentor may be helpful to support this if the group member nominated is inexperienced. If the person responsible for evaluation is outside of the core group, ensure they are aware of the timing of events and intended outcomes well in advance so they can work with the group or team to design appropriate evaluation.
- Use confidential feedback methods such as paper evaluation forms or a confidential online poll whenever possible

A list of specific recommendations from individual events, in addition to the general recommendations, is included as an appendix to this report. Although some of these relate to individual events, they may be useful to consider for future community energy events.

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## Appendix 1: List of events, evaluation methods and results / outcomes

Date	Location and time	Type of event	Evaluation methods	Notes	
Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> July 2019	Milford Haven Rugby Club 2-7pm	Drop in session with LEAF info, games, map, refreshments, WGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome questions</li> <li>• Contact details form</li> <li>• Comment / feedback wall when leaving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 attendees (including 2 existing LEAG members).</li> </ul>	Both events were rated positively by those that did attend, although a number said they weren't sure what to expect of the event.  The energy 'play your cards right' game was fun, and could be used as a welcome / team building activity at future events.
Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup> July 2019	Nantucket Church Milford Haven 2-7pm	Drop in session with LEAF info, games, map, refreshments, WGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact details form</li> <li>• Comment wall</li> <li>• Project officers information collection sheet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 attendees (including 4 existing LEAG members)</li> </ul>	
Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> September 2019	The Wanderers Rest Inn, Llanteg 12.30-2.30pm	A gathering in the local pub, with catering, after the Management Committee AGM and Shareholders Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact details form</li> <li>• Comment wall</li> <li>• Online form circulated after event</li> <li>• Project officer conversations and feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19 people attended, around one third of the community</li> <li>• Event was effective in raising awareness and addressing some negative attitudes and perceptions</li> <li>• 13 out of 19 attendees provided feedback on the comment wall</li> <li>• 2 people filled out online form</li> <li>• Everyone who provided feedback rated the event as excellent or very good</li> <li>• A chair would have been useful to manage the group discussion</li> </ul>	
Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup> September 2019	The Old School Building, Tiers Cross, 5-7pm	Arrivals and buffet, followed by presentations and discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact details form</li> <li>• Comment wall</li> <li>• Project officer conversations and feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14 people attended, a good turn out for a small community like Tiers Cross, with everyone who provided feedback saying it was excellent or good</li> <li>• 4 potential LEAG members identified, 9 people left contact details</li> <li>• Raised awareness of community energy report</li> <li>• High quality discussion and a thirst for more information</li> <li>• Project officer felt there could have been a bit more visual information</li> </ul>	
Saturday 28 <sup>th</sup> October 2019	Oriel y Parc Visitor Centre, St Davids, 11-5pm	Open exhibition with presentations lunch and panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact details from</li> <li>• Comment walls</li> <li>• Evaluation form</li> <li>• Evaluation officer attendance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A good turn out (almost 50 including project team) of interested and knowledgeable people</li> <li>• Venue, catering, presentations, facilitation / discussions and the event overall were all rated highly</li> <li>• New contacts for mailing list and LEAG</li> </ul>	

		discussion from 11.45-2.34		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Event logistics could have been better</li> <li>• There was some confusion about the event style (with people arriving late for presentations)</li> </ul>
16 <sup>th</sup> January 2020	Lawrenny	Presentation and discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project officer feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Around 30 people attended the event</li> <li>• Session drew lots of questions and interest but also some clear distrust and concern</li> <li>• Planned follow up meeting in February was postponed at last minute due to issues with availability and not rearranged after pandemic hit</li> </ul>
Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> March 2020	Meadow Café, St Davids 7-9pm	3 speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project officer feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 29 people attended, of which 19 were new contacts, 4 were speakers and 6 existing contacts</li> </ul>
Energy Café 30 <sup>th</sup> July 2020	Online	Online introduction to energy efficiency and renewable energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation team attendance</li> <li>• Mentimeter poll</li> <li>• Project officer feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Just two attendees, who were both existing LEAG members</li> <li>• Mentimeter poll results were fairly positive, but could have been better <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The following statements had the highest level of agreement 'The length of the event was sufficient' (av. 4.5 out of 5), 'the content and materials provided were helpful', 'questions were encouraged' (both av. 4 out of 5)</li> <li>○ The responses to the following statements were neutral or one of the two attendees agreed 'The workshop was relevant to my needs', 'speakers were engaging, clear and audible', the event met my expectations (all av. 3.5 out of 5), 'the session was well organised' (av. 3 out of 5)</li> <li>○ No negative feedback was received</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



**Appendix 2: list of other recommendations provided in event evaluation reports produced throughout the project (recommendations relating to the themes outlined in the report above are not included)**

- The energy 'play your cards right' game was fun and could be used as a welcome / team building activity at future events.
- The post it notes for the map could have been smaller to allow better pinpointing of locations, and/or use a pencil to write or draw arrows on the map.
- Ensure Facebook posts and posters clearly indicate the format of the event (e.g. feedback was provided that a post about a drop in could have been interpreted as if the event would be 5 hours long [i.e. that you would be expected to be there for the entire time], and a poster about an event with presentations at set times seemed to suggest it was an event where you could drop in at any time)
- All team members need to be aware of the need to try to get people to complete evaluation before they leave at this style of event as if the designated person / lead is in a conversation they can't break off to speak to people before they leave
- No people left suggestions for how to improve events on comment walls – this may be due to the public nature of the feedback (sheets on the wall)
- Attend a higher footfall event and see how that compares in terms of achieving stated aims to organising your own
- Have a flag or something else at entrance to attract attention
- How people found out about the event is useful information that should be collected at all events if at all possible
- A chair is useful to field any interruptions and questioning of issues during the group discussions
- Clicker can help to help monitor numbers
- Evaluation forms on seats
- Refer to evaluation forms and feedback boards in introduction
- Ask people to complete a form or provide feedback on the boards (more detail on forms – tell people the detail in the forms is really useful to us so please complete one if you can. Also ask people to make sure they leave contact details on a sheet if want to be kept informed but don't fill out a form).
- Collection of evaluation information worked well with an independent member of the team responsible for that task but even then it can be difficult to coordinate at an informal event. It is also time consuming (and therefore expensive if you have to pay someone to do it).
- Clear, focussed, visual information was highlighted as an area for improvement at one event

- Make sure everything has been thought through in advance of events (e.g. the amount of time required / tasks that need completing before event opening to make sure everything is ready on time
- Make sure you have back up support if one of the organising team is unable to attend at short notice.