COMMUNITY ENERGY

WaterCAN members recently met with Laura Wilson of Community Energy South (CES). CES was established in 2013 with the aim of supporting community energy groups in South- East England. They are currently collaborating with the New Forest District Council (NFDC) and other local authorities in Hampshire to promote community-led projects focusing on renewable energy development, energy efficiency and the reduction of fuel poverty.

One notable project under this partnership is the West Solent Solar Cooperative, which has been operating successfully in the NFDC area for several years. This cooperative generates funds for its investors and for community initiatives, with its solar panels situated on reclaimed land on Pennington Marshes.

WaterCAN is now actively seeking to engage with like-minded organisations in the NFDC region to collaborate with CES in establishing a community energy scheme in the Waterside area. We are also planning to meet with the West Solent Cooperative to gain insights from their experiences.

Community energy groups like ours are typically funded through a combination of grants, philanthropic investments and community financing. These groups have various options for energy generation, including wind turbines and ground sourced heat systems. However, the most straightforward approach is through solar energy, namely solar panels, utilising either rooftop or ground-level solar panels.

WaterCAN would warmly welcome any suggestions or offers of local community buildings or unused land that may be suitable for solar panel installations. We are also open to hearing from individuals interested in getting involved in this project. Feel free to contact us at watercan2024@gmail.com to explore opportunities for collaboration.