Film Hub North

DIY Retrofit Guide for UK Film Exhibitors

December 2025

With rising energy prices and an urgent need to reduce our carbon emissions, retrofitting our buildings offers a powerful way to act on climate while saving costs long term.

However, film exhibitors across the UK face many challenges to retrofitting their buildings:

1. **Retrofitting is complex, long-term work and it is hard to know where to start, especially without dedicated staff and resources.**
2. **Cinemas, especially those in older buildings, face unique challenges when retrofitting with modern technologies – cinemas are designed with very specific acoustics and any structural change can negatively affect audio performance.**
3. **Many smaller film exhibitors may want to adapt their buildings but are tenants, so lack the power to make changes.**
4. **Even those who do own their buildings can't afford the operational disruption that comes from extended retrofit works.**
5. **Post-pandemic, margins in the film exhibitor space are often slim, and the high costs of changes to buildings can seem overwhelming.**

This unique set of challenges can act as a barrier before you even start thinking about building retrofit.

This handy guide is for film exhibitors in the UK wanting to start their retrofit journey, who have limited resources and capacity for large capital works.

Whether you own your building or not, there are many actions you can take to increase the energy efficiency of your building. We recommend that you consult the funding resource commissioned by Film Hub North and BFI for Julie's Bicycle Sustainable Screen Resource Hub: The resource provides a listing of funding sources for environmental initiatives that exhibition and screen heritage sector organisations across the UK may be eligible to apply for.It has been developed with smaller organisations in mind, and as a result focuses mainly on grant funding, and/or funding which isn't too burdensome to apply for.

The resource provides:

- **A directory for free services for energy audits to start your journey**
- **A checklist of low cost DIY actions (under £500) and mid-range actions (under £5,000) to reduce your energy usage**
- **Guidance on building a business case for larger scale projects, how to negotiate these changes with your building owner, and on community energy schemes to lower up front costs**
- **Alongside exciting case studies across the UK proving the impact of project-based retrofit and different approaches to funding and partnerships.**

What is retrofit?

The Centre for Sustainable Energy describes retrofit as:

> **“ any improvement work on an existing building to improve its energy efficiency, making it easier to heat, able to retain that heat for longer, and replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy. Making buildings more self-sufficient, through energy-efficiency measures like insulation and renewable energy, helps to protect against rising energy costs.”**

More ↓

What is Retrofit?
Centre for Sustainable Energy

Their retrofit experts recommend a three-step approach:

1. **Energy Conservation**
   Start by reducing the amount of energy needed in your building like blocking up draughts, more efficient appliances and smarter ways to manage energy like closing curtains to retain heat. These are the small actions that add up to save energy and money.

2. **Energy Efficiency**
   Make the ‘fabric’ of your building more efficient through insulation and secondary glazing on windows.

3. **Renewable Energy**
   The final stage is replacing energy sources with lower carbon options. Reducing energy demand in the first two stages will cut down the amount of energy you need. This will help determine which renewable energy system will be most suitable in your building, which may have been larger and more expensive if you hadn’t completed the first two steps.

Of course, this can take a lot of time and money – every building and community of users have different needs. There is no one-size-fits all approach, but this resource provides a crowd source checklist of low-lift, low cost actions and provides advice for starting your retrofit journey on a budget and with limited time. Key to this is understanding your building and making a financial case for the retrofit. Retrofitting measures can often be added into existing building maintenance and upgrade plans.

Contents

1 Understanding Your Building Needs: Free Energy Audit Directory

The best way to start your journey to identify and prioritise actions that can make your building more energy efficient, is to get a free building audit or carbon survey from a local provider. Many local authorities and green business networks provide services where an expert surveys your building to provide a list of actions, alongside estimated costs and carbon savings.

Below is a list of different providers in areas across the UK who can help you get your head around the technical aspects of building retrofit.

Organisation	Description	Area
West of England Combined Authority	Regional combined authority providing business support and energy efficiency programs. Carbon surveys are a necessity to apply for their green business grants which can fund retrofit works.	South West
Energy for Business Scotland	Business Energy Scotland is funded by the Scottish Government to provide free, impartial support and access to funding to help small and medium-sized enterprises save energy, carbon and money.	Scotland
Carbon Trust	The Carbon Trust is a government-funded organisation that provides free advice to businesses and the public sector on saving money through energy efficiency. It provides site energy surveys, interest-free loans and information on energy efficiency.	National
Centre for Sustainable Energy	Guidance to support DIY energy survey for community buildings: 2 documents to identify the most effective options for energy efficiency improvements. They also provide paid community building energy surveys and support starting at £1.2k.	Online
Coventry City Council Business Energy Advice Service	Free energy audits are available to small to medium sized organisations in West Midlands and Warwickshire with fewer than 250 employees. They carry out an energy audit of your building, detailing the improvements that could be made and energy and financial savings. They also offer capital grants of between £1,000 to £100,000, to fund up to 50% of the cost of installing energy efficiency measures.	West Midlands and Warwickshire
Basingstoke and Deane Green Business Review	Free sustainability audit: how to use less energy, reduce waste, and more eco-friendly practices.	Basingstoke and Deane
Sustainable Ventures	Sustainable Business Consultants provide free energy audits and advice to businesses and community organisations in Stoke-on-Trent thanks to the support of Stoke-on-Trent Council and funding from the UK Government.	Stoke on Trent

Organisation	Description	Area
Islington Council	Free Sustainability audit for businesses to all organisations in the borough of Islington.	Borough of Islington
Energy Solutions Oxfordshire	Free energy assessments for SMEs in Oxfordshire and access to £10,000 in match funding once completed.	Oxfordshire
Green Business Action	Delivers free actionable sustainability advice and energy audits to businesses across London. Since 2021 Green Business Action has empowered over 1,000 businesses across London's 32 boroughs.	Greater London
East Midlands Growth Hub Accelerator	“Accelerator” project offering premises energy audits and decarbonisation planning, fully-funded, for local businesses. A range of other resources such as £2,000 in vouchers towards energy efficiency consultancy, training, and energy reduction workshops are available.	East Midlands
Alliance Energy Consultants	Alliance Energy Consultants provide free energy audits for small charities based in the UK.	National
Blue Renewables	Free resources for a DIY energy audit to identify inefficiencies in current energy use and highlight practical action to address.	Online
Northern Ireland Chamber – “Green for Business” Pilot Programme	A programme aimed at small / micro-businesses to reduce carbon emissions and energy costs: includes free carbon assessment, carbon reporting tools, decarbonisation roadmap, and more.	Northern Ireland
Cobra (Lisburn, Northern Ireland)	Free energy audit to help identify which cost saving measures and renewable technologies will work best for each business.	Northern Ireland
GM Chamber of Commerce / Chamber Utilities	Free energy health check / assessment for Greater Manchester Chamber members.	Manchester
Business Energy Saving Team (BEST)	Free energy-efficiency support for SMEs and VCSEs. Offers free energy audits, advice, and sometimes grant support for implementing energy-saving measures.	Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Gateshead
BEEP – Business Energy Efficiency Project	Fully funded / customised energy audits for businesses in County Durham.	County Durham

Case Study

Campbeltown Picture House

Visit Website

Photo by Keith Hunter

The Campbeltown Picture House in Scotland underwent a significant £3.5 million restoration and extension, completed in late 2017, transforming it from a failing cinema into a thriving community and heritage hub. The project restored the Grade A-listed building's historic 1930s "atmospheric" cinema interior, while adding modern amenities like a second screen, café, and education spaces. Funded by various sources including the National Lottery and local fundraising, the cinema now serves as a cultural centre for the town, showing films and hosting live events, while also providing training and employment opportunities. As part of a much larger cultural restoration project of this heritage space, the Campbeltown Picture House installed 30 solar panels, full insulation and a biomass boiler.

What can we learn?

Campbeltown Picture House insists the key way to start your journey is to get a full energy audit from experts. Campbeltown Picture House used Energy Business Scotland's building audit service and free advice to begin their energy efficiency journey. **It helped the team prioritise actions and not get overwhelmed by the scale of change needed**, connecting with experts in their area to guide them through the planning phase.

2 Immediate DIY and Low-Cost Actions Checklist (Under £500)

Every journey has to start somewhere, and the checklist below has actions under £500 that can start your energy conservation and efficiency journey. Most of these actions are doable whether you own your building or are a tenant.

Area	Action	Cost	Need to Own Building?	Read More
Energy Management and Monitoring	Install smart meters (free from suppliers for peak load under 100kW)	There are usually no upfront fees to smart meter installation – you can book a free installation with your energy provider.	No	Smart mete installation explainer for small businesses
	"Vampire energy" is the small amount of electricity drawn by appliances even when "off" (but still plugged in / in standby). Use smart advanced power plugs with switches to eliminate standby consumption	Ranging from £20–£100 based on the amount of power needed.	No	D-Link mydlink 4-UK-Socket Smart Power Strip + Energy Meter
	Install programmable timers on non-essential equipment	Devices range from £8–£100 based on device. Electrician costs £40–£60/hr depending on area.	No	Hombli Smart Power Strip 8-socket
Lighting Upgrades	Replace all bulbs with LEDs (8 pounds annual saving per bulb, 2-year payback)	Basic LEDs range from £5–£8 – smart LED bulbs with more features cost more upfront. Depending on the number of bulbs and type of installation, it could cost between £100–£2,000, but costs are usually recovered within 2 years.	No	Energy Institute. Good Practice for energy efficient lighting.
	Install light motion sensors in staff areas, toilets, and storage spaces	Dependent on size of venue. Devices cost between £20–£50 and Electrician costs £40–£60/hr depending on area. Increases in costs if there is a need for rewiring.	No, but can depend on the lease terms and the nature of the installation	Sustainable Buildings Initative Emissions Reductions Toolkit: Install motion Sensors for lighting
	Maximize natural light by rearranging furniture, cleaning windows, using mirrors strategically	Free!	No	

Area	Action	Cost	Need to Own Building?	Read More
Water Conservation	Install low-flow taps and showerheads in staff facilities	Low-flow taps: £15–£40 each. Low-flow showerheads: £10–£30 each. Installation by plumber: £40–£80/hr if professional fitting required.	Usually no – most lease agreements allow water-saving fixture upgrades, but check lease terms for bathroom modifications.	Installation tips for water tap systems in modern offices
	Add dual-flush toilet mechanisms where possible	Dual-flush conversion kits: £15–£40 per toilet. Professional installation: £50–£100 per toilet if plumber required.	Usually no – water-saving toilet upgrades are typically permitted under commercial leases.	What is a dual flush system and how does it work?
	Fix leaks immediately – even small drips waste significant water	Cost varies by leak severity. Basic washer/seal replacement: £5–£15. Professional plumber callout: £60–£120.	No – emergency repairs and maintenance are usually tenant responsibilities regardless of ownership.	
	Install water butts for rainwater harvesting (if external space available)	Water butts: £30–£150 depending on size (100–500 litres). Installation kit: £10–£25.	Yes – requires external space access and potential modifications to guttering/downpipes.	The Ultimate Guide to Water Butts
Heating and Cooling Quick Fixes	DIY draught-proofing around windows, doors, and service entries	Draught excluder strips: £2–£10 per door/window. Foam sealant: £3–£8 per tube. Door brushes: £5–£15 each.	No – draught-proofing is considered maintenance and improvement that most leases permit.	DIY Draft Proofing
	Install radiator reflector foils on external walls (up to 50% heat loss reduction)	Radiator reflector foil: £10–£25 per radiator depending on size. Self-adhesive backing for easy DIY installation.	No – temporary improvement that doesn't alter the building structure.	How to make a radiator reflector
	Seal gaps around pipes, and cables	Expanding foam: £3–£8 per tube. Caulk/sealant: £2–£6 per tube. Pipe insulation sleeves: £5–£15 depending on length.	No – sealing gaps is considered maintenance and energy efficiency improvement.	Pretty Handy Girl: How to Fill Gaps Around Pipes
	Adjust boiler settings following Heating Hub guidance (9% gas savings possible)	Free – just requires adjusting existing controls and settings.	No – adjusting heating controls and schedules doesn't require ownership.	
Ventilation and Air Quality	Clean and maintain existing ventilation systems	DIY cleaning supplies: £10–£25. Professional vent cleaning: £100–£300 depending on system size.	No – maintenance of existing systems is typically tenant responsibility.	Swiftclean: Essential Guide to Cleaning Ventilation Systems
	Install extractor fans in kitchens and staff areas	Basic extractor fans: £20–£80 each. Professional installation: £80–£150 per fan including electrical work.	Usually no for like-for-like replacements, but check lease terms for new installations requiring electrical work.	
	Open windows strategically for natural ventilation during appropriate hours	Free!	No – operating existing windows requires no permission.	
	Keep furniture away from walls to improve air circulation and prevent mould	Free!	No – furniture arrangement is entirely within tenant control.	

Photo courtesy of Edu-Lettings

Case Study

Waterside Academy

Visit Website

Waterside Academy is a school based in South East London. Working together with South East London Community Energy, they applied to Hackney Community Energy Fund and replaced all of their lightbulbs with LED lightbulbs. **This will save the school up to £8,500 a year and is projected to save 10.6 tonnes of CO_2 per year, the same as planting 427 trees.**

The school has also integrated a dedicated energy advice programme for pupil parents and community members, helping tackle fuel poverty through community energy cafes and guidance on many of the measures mentioned in the checklist above. This advice and measures are designed to reduce energy usage in the building, with the potential to save each household over £100 per year on their energy bills.

What can we learn?

- Collaborating with community groups can help fund energy saving initiatives and advice programmes: many areas have community energy groups that can provide advice and support
- Much like local schools, cinemas are often located in the heart of the community and are well-placed to model energy saving initiatives, and provide information and advice through film and events
- Check out your local councils climate funding programmes for small quick release funds that can tackle some of these actions above.

Case Study

Saltford Scout Group

Visit Website

Photo courtesy of West of England Combined Authority

The Saltford Scout Group had a difficult building to retrofit and limited funds to address the energy and heat inefficiencies – the hut is a 1950s build with a curved roof, solid concrete walls and no insulation, making it difficult to keep both warm and cool.

After a free carbon survey, they identified several low lift interventions with support of £5,000 from West of England Combined Authority. Firstly, they used spray on insulation for the curved ceiling and installed LED lighting. They then installed a solar air collector, a device which brings in fresh air, heating it using solar energy.

This resulted in a **50% decrease in electricity use and reduction of 1 tonne of CO_2e in annual carbon emissions, equivalent to approximately £1,300 saved each year on energy bills**.

What can we learn?

- Low lift actions which don't require building modifications or technical knowledge can save significant amounts of energy and resources.
- A carbon survey can help identify these low lift actions.

3 Medium-Scale Projects (£500–£5,000)

This next checklist of actions can support more drastic cost and carbon savings, for a higher price. Many of these actions you can do even if you don't own your building. They are mid-tier changes which don't require a tonne of external expertise, funding or operational closure.

Area	Action	Cost	Need to Own Building?	Read More
Equipment and Technology	Install smart thermostats for remote heating/ cooling control	Smart thermostats: £100–£300 per unit. Professional installation: £80–£150 if wiring changes are needed.	No for replacing existing thermostats, but check lease terms for new heating control installations.	What Are Smart Thermostats and can they save me money?
	Replace old appliances with energy-efficient models when they need replacing	Varies widely by appliance. Energy-efficient models typically cost 10–30% more upfront but save 20–50% on running costs.	No – appliance replacement is typically within tenant rights, especially for like-for-like energy-efficient upgrades.	
	Add dehumidifiers in problem areas to prevent mould and improve comfort	Portable dehumidifiers: £100–£400 depending on capacity (10–50 litres/ day). Running costs: £2–£5 per day depending on usage.	No – portable dehumidifiers are temporary solutions that don't require building modifications.	
Building Envelope Improvements	Install temporary insulation solutions like thermal curtains or wall hangings	Heavy thermal curtains: £30–£150 per window. Insulated wall hangings/tapestries: £50–£200 per wall section. Temporary wall insulation panels: £20–£50 per m^2.	No – temporary solutions that don't permanently alter the building structure.	Thermal Curtains Made to Measure
	Add secondary glazing to improve window efficiency	DIY secondary glazing kits: £50–£150 per window. Professional secondary glazing: £200–£600 per window depending on size and type.	Usually yes – permanent window modifications typically require landlord permission even if reversible.	Secondary Glazing ROI Why It Beats Full Window Replacement Costs
	Install external sun shading (adjustable blinds, shutters, or louvres)	External blinds/shutters: £100–£500 per window depending on size and type. Professional installation: £100–£300 per window.	Yes – external modifications to building facade require ownership or landlord permission.	
	Apply reflective window film to reduce heat gain and glare	Window film: £10–£40 per m^2. Professional installation: £20–£50 per m^2. DIY installation possible for smaller areas.	Usually not for removable films, but check lease terms. Permanent films may require permission.	
City funds for mid-level retrofit initiatives	Often funding available with Green Business Grants from local authorities	Grant amounts vary by location and project scope. Typical grants cover 25–75% of costs from £5,000–£25,000 depending o local authority.	Varies by grant – some require ownership, others available to tenants with landlord agreement.	

Case Study

Saltford Golf Club

Visit Website

Photo courtesy of Saltford Golf Club

Saltford Golf Club reached out to their local Authority, WECA, to support some quick, cost and carbon saving changes. WECA offered a **free carbon survey** and identified two low capacity areas to make key savings without disrupting businesses.

With a grant of £6,500, they replaced the driving range lights with LED floodlights, along with motion sensors and timers. LED lighting was also installed throughout their buildings, outbuildings and car park. The motion sensors reduced light pollution while keeping the area safe and secure. The clubhouse insulation was upgraded from 100mm to 300mm to help keep the building warmer and energy efficient. **These changes will save them £2,400 per year, with a 10% energy decrease and reduction of 7 tonnes of CO_2 per year.**

What can we learn?

- Utilising local expertise and a free carbon survey to identify facilities' needs can help prioritise low cost, low lift actions with large savings and longer term, more resource-heavy actions.
- Like cinemas, golf facilities have specialist lighting needs which can't always be fixed by swapping the bulbs. However, with the right expertise and a small grant, specialist LED lighting can be installed to improve customers' experience while saving money and carbon.
- While not a full retrofit, making partial improvements can start you on your retrofit journey in a manageable, beneficial way.

4 Building a Business Case for Larger Projects

Attending the actions above will lower your energy usage, conserving and improving the fabric of your building. Now is the time to consider larger scale building modifications such as onsite renewable energy generation, structural building fabric improvements, and low-carbon heating systems. These will require more capacity, funding, and potentially operational closure while upgrades are implemented.
This means you need to build a business case to justify the investment, align stakeholders, and secure funding by clearly demonstrating the economic, environmental and operational benefits. You want to show how retrofit projects are not only environmentally responsible, but financially and operationally strategic.

Action	Description	Read More
Conduct an Energy Audit or Building Assessment	As described above, a professional assessment of energy consumption, building envelope, lighting and equipment and readiness for low-carbon technology (solar PV, district heating systems). They often provide you with: • Projected cost savings • Projected carbon savings • Prioritisation of building improvements	See p.6
Keep track of key metrics	Keep track of data on: • Energy consumption (kWh) before improvements • Energy costs (£) reduction month-on-month • Comfort improvements (temperature, humidity, air quality) • Customer satisfaction with venue comfort • Staff satisfaction with working conditions	RISE Retrofit toolkits
Identify Retrofit measures	From the information collected, create a list of feasible upgrades, each evaluated for estimated cost, expected energy savings, carbon impact and disruption to operations. Create a cost benefit analysis of: • Installation cost • Annual savings • Maintenance costs • Lifespan and payback • Factor in non-financial benefits: • More comfortable audience experience • Higher occupancy rates • Lower carbon footprint Use this to build an overall investment case.	People Powered Retrofit Resources Rise Business Case Toolkit Retrofit Playbook: Build the Business Case Re:fit: Business Case Guide for local partnerships Green Municipal Fund: Business Case for Community Buildings

Action	Description	Read More
Engage Stakeholders	Early on in this process, engage trustees, staff, community members in this journey and share the *why*: 'saving money means more investment in programming and community events'. Consider hosting a public information session or survey to get buy-in and ideas.	RISE: Bespoke Resident Engagement in Retrofit toolkit Local Trust: Retrofit your community building communityaction plan
Risk Assessment	Identify and plan for: • Disruption to screenings • Cost overruns • Funding delays • Historic building constraints (e.g. listed status).	
Create a Phased Implementation Plan	• Break it into phases • Prioritize high-impact, low-cost actions first • Schedule works around programming (e.g., off-season, weekdays).	Retrofit Playbook – Design to Action
Explore funding options	Research: • Local authority grants • Heritage or arts funding • Community energy funding • Crowdfunding or community shares • Energy efficiency loans • Partnerships with green organizations may unlock support.	Sustainable Screen Funding Resourc Rise bid writing toolkits Centre for Sustainable Energy Funding your community energy project BFI Green Hour: Retrofit Fundraising for Community Cinemas
Present the Business Case	Produce a clear, concise document or slide deck: • Executive summary • Rationale (climate goals, cost savings, comfort) • Audit findings • Retrofit options and benefits • Financial plan • Funding sources • Timeline and risks • Community impact. Make it accessible for non-technical stakeholders.	Rise Business Case Toolkit Retrofit Playbook: Build the Business Case Re:fit: Business Case Guide for local partnerships

Here's another great resource to understand the holistic retrofit approach, where to start and how to evidence multiple impacts: Future Observatory – Retrofitting Cultural Infrastructure.

5 Negotiating with Building Owners and Landlords

While many tenants care deeply about energy prices and climate impacts, they lack the power to make more drastic building modifications. Tenants can work with their landlords to include energy efficiency and retrofit measures as part of general building maintenance and upgrade cycles. Instead of treating retrofit as a costly, separate project, tenants can encourage landlords to 'build it in' when works like roofing, heating, lighting or ventilation are being planned – leveraging shared costs, reducing disruption, and strengthening business case for improvement.

Action	Description	Read More
Lease Negotiation Strategies	Include retrofit clauses in lease agreements specifying: • Types of permitted improvements • Approval processes for modifications • Cost and benefit sharing arrangements • Who retains improvements at lease end. Getting your free energy audit is a great place to start as some scoping work is needed to make the case.	Better Building Partnership: Green Lease Toolkit
Sample Negotiation Points	• Highlight reduced maintenance costs (e.g. waterless urinals save on plumbing issues) • Emphasise property value increases from efficiency improvements • Propose tenant pays for removable improvements (sections 2 and 3), landlord for permanent ones • Suggest energy savings split between reduced rent and landlord benefit • Position retrofit projects as holistic upgrades – emphasising tenant comfort, legislative compliance, and future resilience can attract support even when you don't own the building • Present business case showing energy savings and property value improvements • Suggest phased implementation to minimise upfront costs • Offer to maintain improvements in exchange for permission to install.	LexisNexis – Alterations: a practical lease negotiation guide Green Lease Leaders Lease Negotiations
For Tenant-Led Retrofit	• Incremental approach works – small wins build to larger projects • Data monitoring is crucial – you can't manage what you don't measure • Collaboration amplifies impact – industry cooperation on shared challenges • Timing negotiations strategically, during lease renewals or equipment replacement.	

6 Community Energy Approach

What is community energy?

> **Community energy refers to the delivery of community-led renewable energy, energy demand reduction and energy supply projects, whether wholly owned and/or controlled by communities through a partnership with commercial or public sector partners”**
>
> — Community Energy England.

A community energy cooperative is a member-owned and democratically controlled organisation that develops, owns and operates clean energy projects, such as solar or wind farms, to benefit the local community, Members can be citizens, businesses, or local organisations, invest in these projects and gain control over their local energy supply and share in the generated benefits, like lower energy costs and community funds. Most importantly, it supports the transition to a more democratic, resilient and local energy system – putting the power back in the hands of the people.

How does it work in practice?

The community energy group raises capital (often via community shares) to install solar panels. The host organisation (arts venue, heritage building, community hall etc.) often doesn’t have to pay the upfront cost, or pays a lower fixed cost for power from the installed panels. This shared ownership or hosting reduces financial risk.

Why is this important for cinemas?

Increasingly, we are seeing arts organisations participate in community energy initiatives – to much success.

- Arts organisations can power their venues using locally produced renewable energy via community energy cooperatives
- Community energy partners can support this work through expertise in retrofitting buildings
- Arts organisations can support community organisations with retrofitting and renewable energy through visibility and engagement. Arts spaces can be venues for talks, exhibitions, or performances that educate about renewable energy and empower citizens
- These collaborations can unlock access to new funding and revenue opportunities, as many sustainability and community funders encourage cross-sector partnerships
- Arts organisations and energy co-ops both often struggle with funding, visibility, or engagement – collaboration makes both stronger.
- Community energy initiatives can offer discounted rates, profit sharing or reinvest profits locally
- When arts organizations invest in or co-own parts of a community energy scheme, it gives them long-term financial resilience against fluctuating energy prices.

Community Energy England

is a membership organisation of many community energy co-ops which provides a directory/map of members.

Case Study

Knowle West Media Centre and Bristol Energy Cooperative

Visit Website

Knowle West Media Centre (KWMC) is an arts and community organisation based in South Bristol. Bristol Energy Cooperative (BEC) is a community owned energy co-op based in Bristol. They develop local renewable energy projects on community and public buildings, raising funds via share offers, and ensure that people in the local area share in the benefits of renewable energy.

1. As part of BEC's early share offers, KWMC was one of the community buildings on which they installed rooftop solar PV. A share offer is a way to raise money by selling shares to individuals and organisations in exchange for ownership and financial return. In this context, a share offer invites members of the public to invest in local renewable energy (solar panels on community buildings) – the money raised then funds the installation and operation of the infrastructure.

2. BEC's share offer raised more than its target, enabling solar panels to be put on several community buildings including KWMC. This reduces the up front costs of solar installation, lowering the barrier of entry.

3. After the solar installation, KWMC reported in the first year their usage of mains power dropped by 25% – a substantial reduction in operational costs and carbon emissions.

Case Study

Norden Farm Arts Centre and MaidEnergy Coop

Visit Website

Norden Farm Arts Centre in Maidenhead is a beautiful site including a Georgian farmhouse and an 18th Century Long Barn, carefully linked with more modern buildings. It has a diverse range of performance, art and education. MaidEnergy is a community benefit society set up in 2010 by individuals interested in renewable energy in the Maidenhead region. It is democratically run for solar installations for the community's benefit.

The project was financed through a community share offer in 2015, raising £170,000 for Norden Farm and Magna Carta School. Norden now have 38.5kW of solar panels across their main roof and car park roof.

What can we learn?

- Community energy cooperatives can support raising the upfront capital for renewable energy projects and with technical expertise on installation. Shared infrastructure lowers the cost and resources on individual organisations
- Conversely, cinemas hosting community-owned solar on their buildings can support visibility and engagement with renewable energy and retrofit
- This skills exchange further supports deeper local collaboration and infrastructure for green trans itions
- These collaborations can help cinemas access further charitable funding for community projects.

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Film Hub North

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THE NATIONAL LOTTERY

Cover Image
Showroom
Cinema, Sheffield
Film Hub North