

Big Solar Gathering

5 October 2026

Delivering **local** solar through a **national** co-op

A brief history of community energy/solar

1997 Baywind

2002 Energy4All

2011 Rapid growth (FiTs)

2015 Rapid slowdown

Since 2015 3 main strands:

- Established societies continue to grow
- Attempts to set up new local societies
- Other models

Features of local solar

- 100% local ownership aspiration
 - Often heavily volunteer based
 - Local empowerment, local knowledge
 - Aim to distribute community funds
-
- Often supported by national organisations
 - Members in practice often from a wide area
 - Wide range of outcomes
-
- Very hard for new entrants

New models

- UK-wide societies aiming for scale
- Sectoral (Solar for Schools, Schools' Energy Co-op)
- Big Solar Co-op
- Trying to combine the best features of local and national

Our approach

- 'Solar Seekers'
 - Less formal
 - Lower longterm commitment
 - Support package
- Working with
 - Individuals
 - Existing community energy groups
 - Other civil society groups

Big Solar Map

- Digital tool for finding solar
- Support package
- Energy Redress Funding Bid