



Communications & Support Officer
for
Westmill Solar and Wind Co-operatives
Information & Job Description



Part of Energy4All



About Westmill Solar Co-operative

Westmill Solar Co-operative is a successful pioneer in community energy. It was the UK's first community-owned solar farm and, we believe, the largest community-owned solar farm in the world at the time of its creation. The 5MW park was built in 2011 next to Westmill Wind Farm Co-operative.

Westmill Solar was established to inspire change, to show that ordinary members of the public can participate in developing new sources of renewable energy and help combat climate change. Following its initial share offer in 2012, its membership has a strong local connection with over 70% of the 1,600+ members being located within 40km of the site. Since its launch, the co-operative has provided over £700,000 in community funding for projects close to the site and further afield, including for Westmill Sustainable Energy Trust (WeSET), a key partner.

About Westmill Wind Co-operative

Westmill Wind Farm Co-operative was the first 100% community-owned onshore wind farm to be built in the south of England. The five-turbine site at Watchfield, Swindon was commissioned in March 2008.

Westmill Wind was established to provide an opportunity for all who were concerned with the effects of climate change to become involved in the ownership and operation of a wind farm. It was especially, but not exclusively, aimed at groups and individuals local to the Wind Farm. The co-operative established Westmill Sustainable Energy Trust (WeSET) to help bring the benefits of the project to the wider community. In the last five years over 10,000 people have visited the wind farm site.

About their future ambitions

Both Westmill Solar and Westmill Wind are keen to demonstrate how community-owned renewables can improve the UK's generation and use of energy to help create the low carbon future. Through the site itself, and through the funding of the co-operatives provide to other organisations, they aim to play their part in encouraging and developing a more sustainable way of life both locally and more widely. The Board of Directors and members of both co-ops want to see community-owned renewable energy thrive and we want the Westmill Story to help support the building of a movement.

In particular, the co-operative wishes to engage more closely with its members and the local community, and welcome in new members to support the co-op through new developments on-site and in the local community. This role will play a key part in the delivery of these ambitions.

In the past year, work has been undertaken to align the communications strategies of Westmill Solar, Westmill Wind and their charity partner, WeSET. With a new website underway and a consolidated approach to social media just around the corner, this is an exciting time to join Energy4All to support these exemplar co-operatives. This role will play a key part in shaping the future of the communications strategy.

About Energy4All

Energy4All is the UK's leading social enterprise in the delivery of community owned renewable energy schemes. Its mission is to deliver more community owned renewable energy and carbon reducing businesses. It is a non-profit-distributing social enterprise, applying its surplus to its mission. The co-operatives it creates are its shareholders, in order to ensure its social enterprise ethos – a 'co-operative of co-operatives'. It combines robust business principles with ethics of a co-operative, democratically run business.

Founded in 2002, Energy4All has successfully delivered 34 operating community energy co-operatives, with more under development. Energy4All also acts as the manager of each of these co-operatives, including Westmill Solar and Westmill Wind. As part of the support provided to the two Westmill co-operatives, Energy4All will be the employer of the Communications and Support Officer. The intention is that in the long term, depending on workload, this role may work with other Energy4All co-ops.

What we are looking for

The Directors of Westmill Solar and Wind have set the aim of establishing the two co-ops as the UK's leading and best-known examples of community-owned renewable energy generation. Energy4All is a small team who believe in what they are trying to deliver. The new recruit should be happy to support these aims and to fit into this ethos.

It is envisaged that the post-holder will support day-to-day operation of the two energy co-operatives, in particular, communications at all levels – with board directors, Energy4All staff, co-op members and the local communities around the Westmill Site

Some of the envisaged key benefits to the two co-ops are:

- Increased active involvement of members
- Greater awareness of the two co-ops in local communities
- Stronger presence in the local community – increased local membership of the co-ops and effective use of community funds locally
- Greater awareness of the Westmill Story and the impact that community ownership has created there
- More regular updates for co-op members
- More effective internal communication with board members
- Clear point of contact for board members
- Timely communication with Energy4All

This role will work closely with, and report to, the Energy4All Westmill Wind and Solar Manager, who is responsible for the services delivered by Energy4All to the two co-ops, and the Directors of the two co-ops. This role will also liaise closely with the other Energy4All staff working with the co-op – Administration and Project Development staff.

This role will support Energy4All's Westmill Wind and Solar Manager to ensure effective delivery of Energy4All's core administrative services and that there is a clear point of contact always available to Board directors and members.

In addition, in collaboration with Board Directors and Energy4All's Westmill Wind and Solar Manager, this role will prepare communications and communication material, drive social media activity, update the Westmill Energy website and attend events for members and the local community.

Energy4All is also looking to extend the support role provided to the Westmill co-ops to other Energy4All co-operatives. Depending on the workload for Westmill Wind and Solar, the role may be expected to provide similar support directly to other Energy4All co-operatives or help develop such services with other Energy4All members of staff.

Job Description

The purpose of this role is to enhance the delivery of Energy4All's services to the two co-ops and develop the links between the co-ops, their members, the local community and the wider community energy sector.

The envisaged activities include:

- Provide general administrative support to Energy4All's Manager
- Support the smooth running of co-op board meetings, including taking minutes of the meeting
- Keep up-to-date on all aspects of the co-operatives activities
- Respond to questions and requests for information from the Co-op Directors
- Support the process of distributing Community Benefit Funds
- Prepare newsletters, press releases, social media posts, website updates and other communications; with the ability to distinguish tone for co-op members versus the general public
- Be involved in the preparation of the joint Annual General Meeting of the co-operatives and support the delivery of these
- Set-up and support local community events as requested by the co-op Directors
- Attendance at events in the local communities organised by others

The Communications and Support Officer may also be involved in:

- Providing these services to other Energy4All co-operatives
- Working with other Energy4All members of staff to strengthen Energy4All's services to other co-ops
- Working with other Energy4All members of staff to enhance Energy4All's communications

This role is relatively new within Energy4All, existing for only a year. The exact job description remains flexible and open to discussion. In the first year of this post, work was done to establish a joint communications strategy and a new Joint Westmill Energy website is currently under development. These two co-operatives are very dynamic and as such the role will be regularly reviewed. If workload and time allows, activities supporting other Energy4All co-ops will be introduced.

Person Specification

The role calls for a broad range of skills and a degree of flexibility. The successful candidate will have a good number of the following skills and attributes:

Essential

- Commitment to community energy and developing the potential of the Westmill Solar and Wind Co-operatives
- Excellent communication skills and an ability to communicate in a range of situations – one-on-one, with a Board of Co-op Directors, at Member meetings, in a public setting at community meetings and events
- Demonstrable writing skills - ability to write copy for a range of mediums e.g. newsletters, member updates, board reports and website content
- Knowledge of the locality of the Westmill site and surrounding communities
- Ability to manage a programme of diverse activities
- Highly organised
- Flexible approach in order to be able to respond to the dynamism of the co-operatives
- Willingness and ability to learn

Desirable

- Understanding of climate change and appropriate actions to tackle climate change and mitigate its effects
- Understanding of community energy and key aspects of a community energy co-operative
- Experience of organising community events
- Ability to work with and manage volunteers
- Experience of managing or administering application for grant funding
- Experience of managing and update WordPress websites
- Experience creating and scheduling social media posts
- Understanding of development of web-content
- Willingness to travel in the UK

If you feel you have a good number of the above skills, then please make contact.

Reporting Structure

The role will report principally to the Energy4All's Manager for Westmill Solar and Westmill Wind Farm Co-operatives, Sarah Flood, who is based in Oxford. It sits with the Co-operative Development team at Energy4All led by Rachael Hunter. Energy4All is a small team, so it is essential that every member of the team can pull their weight effectively and is well-organised and self-motivated.

Location

It is intended the person will work from home or from a local office space (there will be support available to set this up). Ideally, this will be close to the Westmill site so that real connection with the local communities can be established over time and with ready access to Oxford.

Sarah Flood is based near Oxford and meeting in person in central Oxford will be expected initially and then from time to time as required.

A clean driving license is advantageous, although we ask staff to prioritise use of public transport where possible.

Terms and Conditions

Employer: Energy4All Limited will employ the Communications and Support Officer. The role will, initially, be assigned to work with the Westmill Solar and Wind Co-operatives. The contract of employment will be with Energy4All.

Energy4All values diversity and inclusion and does not discriminate based on their age, race, sex, sexual orientation, or any other characteristics. We welcome applications from candidates with diverse backgrounds.

Salary: None of our staff are driven by a wish to get rich quick. However, we do try to pay fair and attractive salaries. As a business driven by co-operative ethos, we operate an unusually flat salary structure. The role in question is likely to command an annual salary of around £26,000-£30,000, depending on experience and qualifications.

Hours: Core hours are from 9am to 5pm, but the role requires occasional evening and weekend meetings. The demands of projects can be extreme, and the candidate needs to be flexible and willing to work around the needs of the project.

Holidays: 25 days plus statutory holidays.

Contract: Full-time, permanent subject to a 6-month probation period.

Notice Period: There will be a 6-month probationary period during which the notice period is 1 week on either side. After that, a notice period of 3 months usually applies.

Pension: Energy4All supports a stakeholder pension scheme and will pay up to 8% in salary if the employee contributes at least 4%. Staff are required to join the pension scheme on completion of the probationary period.

Office and Equipment: Energy4All will supply all necessary equipment including office space.

Expenses: All expenses are reimbursed at cost against receipts. Mileage in your own car is paid at 45p per mile but, wherever reasonable, employees are encouraged to use public transport.

Closing Date

Closing dates for all applications is Wednesday 11th September 2024 at midday.

To apply, please send a CV with a covering letter explaining how you meet the criteria to coopmanager@westmillsolar.coop.

Interviews will take place on Monday 16th September and Tuesday 17th September. We intend to carry out face-to-face interviews in Oxford, but may use Zoom or MS Teams depending on circumstances and timing.