

Expert Witness

Phil Powell, Director, Gwent Energy CIC



What is your passion / specialism / position on solutions to the climate crisis?

My specialism is helping community buildings to reduce their energy usage and running costs. Allowing the organisation to improve and increase what activities they can provide for their community.

We do this by a combination of technologies LED lighting and solar systems to reduce daytime electricity and batteries for night-time electricity. It is possible but not always practical to reduce electricity costs to zero. Reducing the amount of imported electricity also reduces carbon emissions.

Community buildings have an important role in providing vital community services in a flexible and cost-effective way such as supporting food banks.

They can be excellent showcases to demonstrate what can be achieved to hall users and the wider public and use the resulting cost savings to provide improved community services.

Heating for community buildings is a particularly difficult task as they are often older buildings with solid walls and insulation to gain higher energy performance values is difficult and expensive to achieve. There often intermittent usage means maintaining temperature is often expensive and wasteful.

A good example of what can be achieved is Ebenezer church and community centre in Abertillery.

They have a combination of solar, battery and low energy lighting. These make a huge difference to their electricity costs, and allowing additional activities to be provided.



Cynulliad Hinsawdd
Climate Assembly

[Ebenezer Baptist Church Abertillery \(ebenezerabertillery.co.uk\)](http://ebenezerabertillery.co.uk)

If you wish to know more, please contact Eryl at Ebenezer

Thinking about critics and/or alternative views to that which you have put forward above – what would others say about your perspective and idea?

I believe fighting carbon change can be done in a cost-effective way and by concentrating on actions which can save money or even make money will be a win all round.

Solar panels can have a payback of 5 to 6 years on the investment and work for 20 years or more. Cleanly and quietly saving energy and money and reducing carbon emissions.

LED lighting can have a quicker payback and the latest models are reliable and cheap.

Batteries can in the right circumstances have a beneficial effect on energy bills, but they need to be carefully designed and the building well used.

Money saved by community organisations is often much better spent than by councils or commercial organisation with their less flexible structure and overheads.

Energy saving in a community building is an excellent financial and community investment.

Use this final part of your presentation to help Assembly members better understand your position in relation to others and what that means for addressing the question that they have been set.

Fighting climate change can be carried out in numerous ways, such as providing e- bikes, growing trees and repair cafes. Making community buildings low energy is one important leg of the fight against climate. That can save and make money for other activities.

If we have commercial buildings that can host solar systems and pay for the electricity used. We can actually make money to fund the other important activities, many people will prefer to do.

Solar is a way to fund the climate change fight Not an alternate to the other way discussed.