



# Pennine Community Power



### Location

In and around Hebden Bridge



### Founded

2012



### Legal structure

Industrial and Provident  
Society/Community  
Benefit Society



### Description of services

Building a sustainable  
community (environmentally,  
socially and economically)  
through developing a  
profitable supply of energy  
from renewable resources

## Overview of the business

Pennine Community Power (PCP) was developed from a long-standing environmental group by members of the community in the upper Calder Valley. It was particularly inspired (and supported) by Blackshaw Environmental Action Group. PCP is based in a small town with a long-standing reputation for co-operative and community activity; *'We were a spin-off from an environmental group in existence for 20 years – we were clear we could not solve all environmental issues without looking at sustainability. So, we decided to do an energy project. So local food production, energy, transport were key. So we set up a separate company to deal with community energy issues.'*

The principal activity to date has been the creation of a community investment offer to install a 10kW wind turbine in the parish of Blackshaw Head and the grant-funded installation of a solar PV scheme on Colden School in the Blackshaw Parish.

## Why is community accountability important?

The group is from and of the community served, so found it a somewhat false distinction to talk about 'community accountability' as a thing; it was in the DNA of the business. The individuals involved with PCP felt that accountability was primarily about honesty and transparency: *'It means to be honest to them [a geographic community] and to members...'*

## What does accountability look like locally?

Here we use three categories to provide a snapshot of some of the mechanisms and methods that the business uses in community accountability. These categories are not hard and fast; there is some overlap between the areas outlined.



### Structures

- A core membership of individuals from the parish who are actively engaged with the issue of affordable, environmentally friendly, democratic power sources.
- 65 shareholder owners.
- PCP gives money to the local community foundation each year
  - the foundation then distributes monies from PCP to local community organisations.
- Using local suppliers: *'it could even be more expensive... we didn't go for the cheaper option but went for the local company. It was better – and maintenance people were better...'*

### Relationships

The business works closely with local people, businesses and institutions such as schools, the local authority, etc. Its networks include local groups, member networks and other community and co-operative groups in Hebden Bridge with which they have strong informal relations and overlapping members (e.g. a local community-run pub).

They seek to actively work with, and form relationships with, people who do not support the business, sometimes choosing to prioritise good relations with those living locally over the business needs.

### Communications

They have a website which includes all the business documents, send regular emails to members and run online surveys (the results of which are also on the website).

The business has engaged in a range of public-facing activity – public meetings, exhibitions, online surveys and consultation. They also hold open-house events and open gardens to draw in professional contacts as well as to build community links.