



Sustainable Energy Communities NI: Updates & Insights

March 2025

Project background

The SEC NI Project emerged from a deep concern over the lack of urgent government action on rising energy costs, fuel poverty, and the climate crisis. Recognising the need for grassroots involvement, the project seeks to empower communities to examine and address their own energy issues.

This collaborative effort addresses the urgent challenges of rising energy costs, fuel poverty, and the climate emergency by engaging communities directly in creating and implementing local energy strategies.

The team have been busy over the past three months, working mostly on the development of the plans for the consultants in each area.



Dolmens hosted a public engagement evening at the Burrendale Hotel, Newcastle, on 11th March, highlighting the impact of Storm Eowyn. Community members along with the SEC team shared survival stories, tips, tricks and recipes for resilience.

The group distributed the Household Emergency Life Saving Plan from the local councils, though dated to 2014, it remains a valuable resource for storm preparedness.

Consultant Procurement Progress

The SEC team, along with Paul and Mel from ATU, met the Dolmens team on 21st February. Dolmens also held several independent meetings to develop procurement forms, providing a solid initial draft.

Lisnaskea update



The SEC team met at Lisnaskea Enterprises on 10th March, joined by Maria, several directors, and representatives from Fermanagh Community Trust & Oak Healthy Living to refine consultant procurement forms.

A follow-up meeting with Oak Healthy Living on 19th March introduced new members to the project and explored ways we can support their community engagement. Oak has a new building proposal, and we're evaluating how we can contribute, potentially with a solar study.



[Watch their walkthrough here.](#)

Inner North Belfast update

Paul and the SEC team met with Billy and Ashton Centre representatives on 27th February & 4th March to refine their consultant procurement documents. A draft is in place but requires further consultation.

The Ashton Centre building, currently used for daycare, has internal damp issues. It features two gas supplies and four boilers. As an older building, it has undergone multiple extensions.



During our visit, the weather was cold outside, yet the interior was very warm, with all windows left open. This building is among the non-domestic properties included in the consultant's assessment as part of the project.

In addition to this site, Ashton Centre operates at least five other buildings in the community, which we will also review, along with several properties in Mount Vernon.

Geoenergy NI

We attended the Geoenergy NI launch event at the Ulster Museum on 20th February, featuring the short film 'Unearthing the Heat Beneath Our Feet', hosted by Cool FM's Paulo Ross.

Geothermal energy could be a game-changer for our communities!



We're also pleased to announce our nomination to represent SEC on the Advisory Board of the EU PEACE PLUS GEMINI Project.






Solar and Energy Initiatives

Ballymacash Sports Academy has appointed a Quantity Surveyor to manage the procurement and installation of solar PV, battery storage, and EV chargers.

On 14th March, we met with the Quantity Surveyor, and the Ballymacash team to review procurement details. Progress is looking strong!

Upcoming Events

-  17 JUL Steering Group Meetings – 26th March & 30th April 2025
-  17 JUL Advisory Group Meeting – 23rd April 2025
-  17 JUL Dolmens Solar Workshop – 1st April 2025

Are you interested in being a part of the SEC NI Project?

[Click here](#) to express your interest and join our efforts in building sustainable energy communities across Northern Ireland.

