

Marine Renewable Energy Engagement User Guide

Rural Communities

This Guide contains information on how to inform and educate the community about marine renewable energy in Pembrokeshire.



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in partnership with
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Benfro



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Introduction



Most of Pembrokeshire is rural, and 17.2% of people identify as Welsh-speaking. Pembrokeshire also has one of the highest percentages of people employed in agriculture, forestry, and fishing in Wales at 9.9% ([Afonydd Cymru, 2019](#)).

Farming is at the heart of rural life in Pembrokeshire. However, farmers are dealing with a range of challenges, from the rising costs of running farms and unpredictable market prices, to finding enough workers and keeping up with environmental regulations.

Rural communities in Pembrokeshire have a strong bond with the land and sea. While these communities might not be fully aware of marine renewable energy developments happening now, they could play a key role in the future. Marine renewable energy could create a wider range of jobs in Pembrokeshire, helping the county become more resilient to economic ups and downs, and reducing its reliance on seasonal work and agriculture. Farmers and rural residents are natural stewards of the land and sea. Marine renewable energy can help mitigate climate change impacts and preserve the land for future generations. Marine renewables could also provide a boost to the wider economy that supports well-resourced local services and infrastructure that will benefit Pembrokeshire's rural communities.

Questions To Consider



- The development of floating offshore wind will require a large workforce
 - where will these workers live and what impact will they have on our existing communities?
- How can people in Pembrokeshire access jobs in this sector if they're interested?
- What impact will the sector have on recruitment for existing Pembrokeshire businesses?
- Both landscape and wildlife are important to many people in Pembrokeshire, how will they be protected ?

Speaking to Different Beliefs

People have diverse opinions and concerns. What might appeal to one person might not appeal to someone else. However, there are some core messages that appeal to almost everyone.

- **Connect with local identity:** Link messaging about marine renewable energy to local identity and leadership, focus on supporting local and British industries.
- **Acknowledge their efforts:** Recognise the work rural communities are already doing to help the environment. Instead of telling them what not to do, talk about what they can do and emphasise stewardship and the shared responsibility of protecting the environment.
- **Use trusted voices:** Local people with deep roots in the community are the best messengers. They understand the area's heritage and represent the community well.

Potential Benefits of Marine Renewable Energy

- **Protecting Heritage:** Supports both agricultural and maritime traditions while ensuring a sustainable and healthy economic future.
- **Strengthening the Community:** Increases resilience by boosting energy security and lowering energy costs for farming. This could also make local produce more profitable.
- **Sustainable Farming Practices:** Access to affordable, locally produced energy could support sustainable farming practices.
- **Strengthening Rural Economies:** marine energy projects can bring investment and development to rural areas, boosting local economies and providing opportunities for residents to stay local rather than moving to urban areas for work.
- **Education and Skills Development in Welsh:** Training programs and education about marine renewable energy could be offered in Welsh, ensuring that local Welsh speakers gain relevant skills in this growing sector and creating new job opportunities.

Potential Concerns

- **Land Use Conflicts:** marine renewable energy projects may require land for some infrastructure, potentially conflicting with agricultural use.
- **Habitat Disruption:** Construction and operation can affect marine habitats, impacting fish populations and marine life important for fishing and aquaculture.
- **Job Displacement:** New jobs in marine renewable energy may lead to potential job losses in traditional agricultural sectors.
- **Public Opposition:** Some farming communities may have concerns about the effects of marine energy projects on their livelihoods, environment, and local character.



Potential Marine Renewable Energy Ambassadors

- Local Councillors have direct access to community networks and can use existing communication channels to share information.
- Third sector organisations are already engaged with the community on coastal and marine issues. They can effectively communicate and address community concerns.
- Pastors and Community Leaders from local chapels are influential and trusted within their communities.
- Organisers of local Eisteddfodau are well-known and respected within the community.
- Local news outlets and radio stations can reach a wide audience and provide consistent coverage, keeping the public informed and involved.

This list isn't exhaustive and there could be many other influential people within rural communities too!



Engagement Activities

The table below contains different events and activities to engage people in Rural Communities with marine renewable energy.



Event	Activity
Agricultural and county shows	Stall, hands on activities and virtual reality, live demos, workshops and educational materials. Stall, demos, discussions and Q&A sessions to target farming community
Food and drink festivals	Stall with interactive materials in exchange for free food tickets
Eisteddfodau	Stall with information, activities delivered in Welsh
Rural Christmas fairs	Festive stalls with information and holiday-themed activities, reusable shopping bags and other freebies for gifts.

Communication Channels

The table below contains methods of communication about marine renewable energy for Rural Communities.



Channel	Description
Local news outlets	News articles, press releases and updates
Community noticeboards	Distribute general information and projects based in Pembrokeshire
Community Social Media Groups	provide information on upcoming events and local news.
Local Events	Stalls with information, discussions and Q&A.
School Assemblies	Share Updates, success stories and educational content.
Direct Mail	Share updates, how to get involved and upcoming events

Contact

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