

## FIVE NEWLY APPOINTED KERRY MENTORS ARE LOOKING FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED IN THE ENERGY TRANSITION.

The Dingle Hub has recently taken on the role of providing mentors to support communities in Kerry who are looking to set up Sustainable Energy Communities (SECs) and become more energy efficient. The Sustainable Energy Community network is an initiative of the Sustainable Authority of Ireland (SEAI).

The newly appointed mentors are Deirdre de Bhailís, Catriona Fallon, Martin Bealin, Dinny Galvin and Ann Ní Chíobháin, all of whom have been involved with the Dingle Hub for a number of years. Dingle Hub has garnered extensive experience in this area over the past seven years and is eager to share this knowledge with other communities. The mentors are looking to identify new groups and communities interested in becoming an SEC. An SEC is a local voluntary group with aims to improve energy efficiency in their area. This is done by organising workshops, creating a network of likeminded people and sharing knowledge. The model of an SEC is to “Learn, Plan, Do”.

The SEC structure provides an excellent framework for communities to get started in becoming more energy resilient at a time when climate change is a concern for many. SECs are formed by a wide variety of groups, including Tidy Towns groups, housing estates, Community Development Groups, and GAA clubs, as well as ad hoc groups that form just for the purposes of creating an SEC. Occasionally SECs form around a particular sector, such as the dairy farmers of West Kerry in the WKDF SEC, or the tourism and hospitality sector in Corca Dhuibhne.

The SEC mentor role is to support a group in creating a vision of a more energy sustainable community. They guide groups on how to set up an SEC following the ‘Learn, Plan, Do’ method and identify roles that individual committee members might take on. Some remain at the ‘Learn’ stage, building up knowledge and expertise on renewable energy and energy efficiency that might benefit their communities.

For others, the SEC journey might include applying for Energy Master Plan (EMP) funding and the mentors will support groups as they identify a suitable energy consultant. An EMP gives a detailed snapshot of the energy baseline for a community and a roadmap on how to improve. Those who undertake EMPs can use the plans to source funding for projects such as retrofitting community centres and unlock funding opportunities.

Examples of established SECs in Kerry who are doing great work are Kerry Sustainable Energy Co-op run by KSEC, Valentia Island Co-op SEC and Dingle Peninsula SEC who have done their EMP's. Both the West Kerry Dairy Farmers SEC and Corca Dhuibhne Tourism and Hospitality SEC have done successful Solar Meitheals for their communities. Comharchumann Dhún Chaoin Teoranta SEC are due to start their EMP this year.

Recent groups that have established are Shannon Hub SEC, the North Kerry Environmental Group SEC, and the Kenmare SEC. For any groups eager to know more, the mentors are happy to arrange visits and/or online video calls to explain in more detail the benefits of SEC membership.

All the new mentors have area of expertise that can help your community, Martin Bealin who has experience in the hospitality sector, Dinny Galvin and Catriona with the Agri sector, Ann Ní Chíobháin in tourism and Deirdre de Bhailís in energy systems and technology.

Any communities looking to get in touch please contact [ann@dinglehub.com](mailto:ann@dinglehub.com), [catriona@dinglehub.com](mailto:catriona@dinglehub.com), [martin@dinglehub.com](mailto:martin@dinglehub.com), [dinny@dinglehub.com](mailto:dinny@dinglehub.com)

The new mentors will host an online info session on **Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm** for any communities who want to learn more about SEC. Everyone welcome to join:

**Zoom Link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82464659387?pwd=bZnqGt6Dh8MyS3vZsnRuJzwtd5Oa0L.1>

If you need any further press information, please contact Ann Ní Chíobháin at: [ann@dinglehub.com](mailto:ann@dinglehub.com)

For Editors:

SEC: Engaging and enabling energy citizens, with communities nationwide working together to achieve their energy goals. <https://www.seai.ie/plan-your-energy-journey/for-your-community/sustainable-energy-communities>

SEAI: Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland is Ireland's national sustainable energy authority. They work with householders, businesses communities and government to create a cleaner, brighter future. <https://www.seai.ie/>