

SIMPLE ENERGY PROJECT

2024 Constitution

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Our Identity

In crafting the identity of our initiative, we deliberately chose a name that encapsulates our mission and vision: "The Simple Energy Project." This name is not just a label; it is a testament to our commitment to demystify the often complex world of energy and to make understanding it as straightforward as possible.

Simplicity at the Core

The use of "Simple" in our name is intentional and meaningful. It signifies our commitment to simplifying the complexities of the energy sector. Particularly in times of financial difficulty or during emergencies, aiming to strip away the complexity, providing easy-to-understand, actionable advice that helps people make informed decisions and find relief.

Energy: Our Central Theme

"Energy" is, quite literally, the core subject of our project. Gas and electricity are vital resources that powers our homes and shapes our daily lives. By placing "Energy" at the center of our name, we emphasise our focus on this crucial service, underscoring our commitment to educating the public about their rights and responsibilities as an energy consumer.

A Project for the People

Lastly, the term "Project" conveys a sense of ongoing effort and collaboration. It is not a static entity but a dynamic, evolving platform that adapts to the changing landscape of the energy world. This word also invites participation and community engagement, symbolising our belief in the power of collective action and shared knowledge to make a real difference.

Symbolism and Vision

Together, "The Simple Energy Project" symbolises transparency, accessibility, and empowerment. Through this project, we pledge to be a steadfast ally, helping customers navigate the energy market with confidence and ease.

"The Simple Energy Project" stands as more than just a name; it is a reflection of our values and our unwavering commitment to making energy knowledge accessible to all. It is a name that carries with it the spirit of enlightenment, community, and positive change.

Our Aims

Our Mission Statement

The Simple Energy Project is dedicated to empowering energy consumers in the UK, with a focus on providing comprehensive, accessible information and support related to gas and electricity services.

Scope of Work

Our primary aim is to educate and assist consumers in understanding the energy industry, addressing and resolving complex issues related to their energy accounts. This includes, but is not limited to, challenges in smart metering, industry concerns, metering complications, billing disputes, affordability crises, and how energy suppliers can support vulnerable customers.

Beneficiaries

Special emphasis is placed on supporting customers in vulnerable positions, such as those facing financial difficulties, physical vulnerabilities, and those on prepayment. Our resources and assistance are designed to be inclusive, catering to the diverse needs of these groups.

Methodology

We will achieve our aims through the provision of a user-friendly website and active social media channels, offering clear, accurate, and practical information. This will serve as a platform for education, issue resolution, and community engagement.

Expansion of Services

Subject to funding and volunteer support, the Simple Energy Project aims to extend its services to include direct support for consumers facing significant energy-related challenges. This expansion will enable a more personalised approach to assisting those in need.

Community Engagement

By fostering a community of informed consumers and volunteers, we aim to create a collaborative environment where issues can be openly discussed, and solutions can be collectively pursued.

We will seek out community focused events to attend and share our resources.

Our Commitment to Clarity and Support

At the heart of our objectives is the commitment to clarity. We believe that informed decisions stem from understanding. Therefore, our resources, advice, and support systems are designed to be as straightforward and user-friendly as possible, ensuring that even the most complex energy issues are approachable for everyone.

Membership

Eligibility and Joining Process

Membership to the Simple Energy Project is open to individuals who support the aims and objectives of the group.

Interested individuals can apply for membership by completing an online application form available on the Simple Energy Project website. To ensure accessibility for all, a postal application option is also available.

Membership becomes effective upon receipt of the first membership fee payment.

Membership Fees

A nominal fee of £2/month or £20/year is proposed. This fee helps to demonstrate commitment and provides a modest revenue stream to support the project's activities.

Membership Benefits

1. **Community Engagement:** Access to a members-only online forum or discussion group where they can interact with other members, share experiences, and discuss energy-related issues
2. **Discounts on Events and Workshops:** If the group organizes events, workshops, or webinars, members can receive discounts or early access
3. **Voting Rights:** Members could have the right to vote on key decisions or in elections for the Management Committee
4. **Acknowledgment:** Recognition on the project's website or annual reports, acknowledging their contribution as members (subject to their consent for privacy reasons)

Duration and Renewal

Membership is renewed annually, contingent upon the payment of membership fees.

Members will receive a reminder for renewal before their membership expires.

Membership Termination

1. Members may choose to terminate their membership at any time by notifying the group in writing
2. Membership will automatically lapse if the membership fee is not paid within one month of the renewal date
3. The Simple Energy Project reserves the right to terminate a membership if a member exhibits aggressive or abusive behavior towards other members, energy suppliers, or engages in unprofessional actions that contradict the ethos and objectives of the group
 - a. Such decisions will be made following a fair and transparent process, ensuring the member in question has an opportunity to respond to any allegations

Upon termination of membership, there are no obligations or conditions imposed on the member. Our support remains available should they choose to seek our assistance again in the future, unless they have been terminated for abusive behaviour.

Equal Opportunities

The Simple Energy Project is steadfast in its commitment to fostering an environment of equality, diversity, and inclusion. We believe that everyone, irrespective of their background, deserves equal access to the resources and support we provide. Our commitment to equal opportunities is embedded in all our activities, policies, and practices.

Equality and Respect

- We pledge to treat all individuals with respect and dignity, ensuring that no one experiences discrimination based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation
- Our actions and decisions are guided by principles of fairness and justice, ensuring equal treatment and opportunity for all

Inclusive Participation

- We actively encourage participation from people of less privileged backgrounds, recognising the value of diverse perspectives in achieving our aims
- Our programs and activities are designed to be accessible to all, with special attention given to removing barriers that might prevent participation from underrepresented or disadvantaged groups

Community Engagement

- We seek to engage with a wide range of communities, particularly those who are under-served or face energy-related vulnerabilities, to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are addressed

- Our communication strategies are inclusive, utilising various platforms and formats to reach and include all segments of society

Continuous Learning and Improvement

- We commit to regular reviews of our policies and practices to ensure they align with our equal opportunities ethos
- We welcome feedback from our members and the wider community to help us identify areas for improvement and to foster a culture of continuous learning

Promoting Equality in Partnerships

- In collaborations with other organisations or entities, we advocate for and uphold our equal opportunities principles, ensuring that our partners share similar values

Accountability and Transparency

- Our commitment to equal opportunities is a responsibility shared by all members, volunteers, and staff
 - Everyone associated with the Simple Energy Project is expected to uphold these principles in their interactions and contributions
- We will maintain transparency in our actions and decisions, providing clear rationale for our policies and practices, particularly as they relate to equality and inclusion

Management Committee

Management Committee Structure

The Simple Energy Project operates under the guidance of a Management Committee, a team elected annually to oversee the day-to-day operations of the organisation. The Management Committee is fundamental to our structure and is instrumental in steering the group towards achieving its aims and objectives.

Composition and Eligibility

- Member composition
 - The Management Committee comprises members of the group who possess considerable knowledge of the energy industry
 - This expertise is crucial for informed decision-making and effective management
- Election process
 - Committee members are elected each year during the Annual General Meeting (AGM)
 - This process ensures democratic participation and fresh perspectives within the committee

Key Roles

The committee consists of the following pivotal roles:

- **Chair:** Responsible for leading the committee, setting meeting agendas, and ensuring smooth operation of the organisation
- **Secretary:** In charge of maintaining records, managing correspondence, and ensuring effective communication within the committee and with members

- **Treasurer:** Oversees the financial aspects, including budgeting, accounting, and financial reporting
- **Engagement Officer:** Focuses on website & social resource creation, securing participation at events & securing outright & signposting ties with other organisations

There may be a need to add or remove roles from the Management Committee. This will be handled in accordance with the Ammendents section.

Initial Committee Formation

- **Founding members:** Initially, these roles will be filled by the founding members of the Simple Energy Project
 - This initial setup is to establish a strong foundation for the organisation
- **Subsequent Elections:** Following the initial period, elections for these positions will be held each January
 - This ensures that the committee remains dynamic, representative, and aligned with the evolving needs of the group and its members

AGM and Other Meetings

Annual General Meeting

The AGM is a mandatory annual meeting to inform members about the group's achievements, discuss financial reports, and approve annual accounts. It serves as a platform to celebrate the group's progress and involve members in key discussions and decisions.

The AGM is also the occasion for electing the management committee and discussing potential amendments to the constitution.

Notification and Scheduling

Members will be notified of the AGM details, including date, time, and venue, via email. If we do not hold an email address, a letter will be sent to the customer. This applies to all members and committee members.

A minimum of 8 weeks' notice will be provided for the AGM. The maximum time allowed between AGMs is 15 months, offering flexibility in scheduling.

Members can submit items for discussion at the AGM up to 10 working days in advance. This ensures adequate preparation time for including these items in the agenda.

Nominations for Committee

Individuals interested in serving on the committee can nominate themselves using a specific form, which will be distributed 8 weeks prior to the AGM. They must receive a minimum of four supporters for their nomination to be eligible.

Quorum

The quorum for the AGM is set at 5 members. This ensures that significant decisions are made by a representative segment of the membership while maintaining a realistic attendance requirement.

Management Committee meetings

The Committee will meet once per month, with a minimum of 8 meetings per year. This allows for any sickness or alternative business that needs to be attended to.

The meeting will be open to all Committee members, general members, volunteers and advisors.

There will be no quorum for Committee meetings if no impactful decisions are to be made. In such cases where impactful decisions are to be made, the full Committee must be in attendance.

General meetings

Given most of our members will not be involved with our services repeatedly, we don't feel there is a demand to permit general meetings. If this view changes, we will look to allow general meetings.

Special General Meetings

A Special General Meeting is used to discuss important matters that need to be put before the whole membership, such as an amendment to the constitution. They can be called by the committee or requested by members.

Members will be notified of any SGM details, including date, time, and venue, via email. If we do not hold an email address, a letter will be sent to the customer. This applies to all members and committee members.

A minimum of 1 weeks' notice will be provided for the SGM.

The quorum for any SGM is set at 5 members. This ensures that significant decisions are made by a representative segment of the membership while maintaining a realistic attendance requirement.

Rules of procedure for meetings

- **Meeting organisation:** Meetings will be held virtually and the Chair will lead the meeting through a set agenda
- **Decision making:** We will always aim to reach a consensus, rather than making a decision. However, when a decision is to be made, a vote will be held with a minimum of 50% voting in favour for the decision to be successful. If there are an equal number of votes on each side, the chair will have an additional casting vote.
- **Meeting facilitation:** The Secretary will facilitate each meeting and make notes

Finances

Bank Account Maintenance

- The Simple Energy Project will maintain a bank account at a financial institution agreed upon by the committee
- This account will be used for all financial transactions related to the project
- The account will be in the name of the Simple Energy Project, ensuring clear identification and proper management of funds

Signatories

- At least three signatories, who will be members of the Management Committee, will be designated for the project's bank account
- Each financial transaction will require the authorisation of at least two of these signatories to proceed to ensure a system of checks and balances in the management of funds

Record-Keeping and Reporting

- The Treasurer of the Simple Energy Project will be responsible for maintaining accurate and up-to-date records of all income and expenditure
- A financial statement will be prepared by the Treasurer and presented at each committee meeting
 - This statement will provide a clear overview of the project's financial status, including recent transactions and current balances
- An annual statement of accounts will be compiled and presented to the membership at the Annual General Meeting (AGM)
 - This statement will provide a comprehensive overview of the project's financial activities over the past year

Use of Funds

- All money raised or donated to the Simple Energy Project will be spent solely on achieving the aims and objectives as laid out in the constitution
- No part of the funds will be distributed to members or trustees, except as reimbursement for approved expenses directly related to the activities of the project

Financial Oversight and Integrity

- The committee will ensure that the project's financial affairs are conducted with integrity and in accordance with legal requirements and best practices
- Regular audits or independent reviews of the project's financial transactions and records will be conducted to ensure transparency and accountability

Changes to the Constitution

Authority to Amend

- Amendments to the constitution can be proposed upon by the Management Committee or a general meeting specifically convened for this purpose
- In exceptional cases, where a change is deemed urgent and necessary by the committee, a special meeting may be called to address the amendment

Proposal of Amendments

- Any proposal to amend the constitution must be submitted in writing to the committee
 - The proposal should detail the specific changes proposed and the reasons for such changes
- Upon receipt of a proposal, the committee is responsible for reviewing the proposed amendments and deciding on the process for their consideration

Notice to Members

- Members must be given a clear and timely notice of any proposed changes to the constitution
 - This notice should include the details of the proposed amendments and the date, time, and place of the meeting where the amendments will be discussed
- The minimum notice period stated in the *AGM and other meetings* section will apply to the meeting is required to ensure adequate time for members to review and consider the proposed changes

Voting on Amendments

- A vote on any proposed amendment to the constitution will take place at a meeting convened for this purpose
 - This can be at an Annual General Meeting, a Special General Meeting, or a Management Committee meeting, as appropriate
- To ensure a democratic process, all members present at the meeting will have the right to vote on the proposed amendments
- A two-thirds majority of the members present and voting is required for any amendment to be adopted
 - This threshold is set to ensure that any changes to the constitution reflect a strong consensus among members

Implementation of Amendments

- Once an amendment is passed, it becomes effective immediately, unless the amendment itself specifies a different implementation date
- The amended constitution will be circulated to all members and made available on the project's website

Policies & Statements

Conflict of Interest Statement

The Simple Energy Project recognises the importance of handling conflicts of interest with transparency and integrity. We are committed to identifying, disclosing, and managing any conflicts that may arise among our staff, volunteers, or committee members.

This involves a clear process for declaring potential conflicts and a protocol to ensure they do not influence the group's decision-making.

Our aim is to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct and ensure that all decisions are made in the best interest of our mission and stakeholders.

Our full Conflict of Interest Policy is available on request.

Safeguarding Statement

The Simple Energy Project is committed to the safety and well-being of all individuals who engage with our services, especially the vulnerable. We uphold strict safeguarding policies to ensure a secure and respectful environment for everyone.

Our commitment includes regular training for staff and volunteers, thorough vetting processes, and clear procedures for reporting and addressing any safeguarding concerns. We believe in creating a safe, inclusive space where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Although this won't be applicable until we offer a full service option, our full Safeguarding Policy is available on request.

Environmental Statement

The Simple Energy Project is committed to environmental sustainability in our operations.

We prioritise virtual meetings to reduce travel and carbon emissions and limit printed materials, favoring digital formats to minimise waste. When necessary, eco-friendly and recycled materials are used.

Advocating for sustainable energy production is integral to our mission. We continuously update our practices to align with the latest in sustainability, demonstrating our dedication to environmental conservation and a sustainable future.

Smart Meter Statement

The Simple Energy Project fully supports the adoption of smart meters, recognising their significant benefits for consumers and the environment. We advocate for their widespread rollout, as smart meters are key to enhancing energy efficiency and transitioning to a cleaner energy grid. Our commitment is to promote and support their use as a crucial step towards sustainable energy practices.

Dissolution

Authority to Dissolve

The decision to dissolve the Simple Energy Project can only be made at a General Meeting, specifically convened for this purpose. This decision cannot be taken lightly and requires careful consideration.

Proposal for Dissolution

A proposal to dissolve the group must be submitted in writing to the committee. This proposal should include a clear explanation of the reasons for suggesting dissolution.

The committee will review the proposal and, if deemed appropriate, will schedule a General Meeting to discuss and vote on the dissolution.

Notice of Dissolution Meeting

All members must be given notice of the meeting where the dissolution of the group will be voted on. This notice should be provided at least 8 weeks in advance of the meeting.

The notice should detail the reasons for the proposed dissolution and provide information about the time, date, and location of the meeting.

Voting on Dissolution

The dissolution of the Simple Energy Project requires a two-thirds majority vote of the members present at the meeting. This significant majority is necessary to ensure that the decision reflects a broad consensus among the members.

Handling of Assets and Funds

In the event of dissolution, the following steps will be taken regarding the Simple Energy Project's remaining funds and assets:

- Any remaining funds from grants will be returned to the respective funding bodies, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grants
- Remaining donations or funds raised through fundraising activities will not be distributed among members
 - Instead, these will be allocated to other groups or charities with similar aims and objectives, ensuring that the resources continue to support related causes
 - The allocation of these assets will be decided upon by the members at the dissolution meeting, with careful consideration to ensure alignment with the project's values and objectives

Final Steps

After the dissolution decision is made and members agree on the allocation of remaining assets, the Management Committee will be responsible for the orderly winding down of the group's affairs.

This includes settling all debts, returning grant funds, distributing remaining assets as agreed, and completing any outstanding administrative tasks.

Acceptance of Constitution

The hereby named individuals agree to the above Constitution and agree to abide by it's guidelines.

X Chair

X, Secretary

X, Treasurer

X, Engagement Officer