



HEADLINE SPONSOR



Think green

Kayla Ente, judge of this year's Green Company of the Year award, explains how Sussex could lead the way in environmentally conscious living

“Most *Sussex Life* readers live in rural settings – and if they are using oil heating they are polluting the environment to stay warm through the winter. They are in a position to make a difference to their communities.”

Kayla Ente knows of what she speaks. She is director of BHESCO – the Brighton and Hove Energy Services Cooperative – which is currently in the middle of a project which could bring the country's first community owned heat network to Firle. The project will use two different

technologies – biomass, using locally sourced coppiced wood, and ground source heat pumps “There is the capacity to cover the whole village,” she says.

“Residents can own a share of their own heat network and get a financial return. We have got five million people living off the gas grid in this country using alternative forms of heating. We have got to reach those people and help them transition from oil tanks in their back gardens.”

Firle is just one of the projects Brighton-based BHESCO is involved with – ranging from providing energy surveys, finance packages and environmental project management services for private homes and businesses to working with Southern Water on a biomethane plant using food waste collected from a 25-mile radius of Brighton. “The legacy of our last century was oil,” says Kayla. “It's important we recognise that those days are over – we need to look at new ways of doing things. We are helping people through that change so we can create a new fossil fuel-free future.”

Kayla originally worked with accountants Ernst and Young and Deloitte before following her passion for the environment

working with campaign group Greenpeace and advising European energy companies Nuon and Ecofys.

Having worked in the cleantech industry in London she moved to Brighton in 2012 and set up BHESCO the following year. In 2018 it won Green Business of the Year at the Brighton and Hove Business Awards.

Kayla has been a judge on the Celebration of Sussex Life Awards since 2017, focusing on the Green Company of the Year prize. “Sussex businesses could be an example for the rest of the country,” she says. “The question I always ask is what actions has a business taken to reduce their fossil fuel consumption and generate new renewable heat and electricity – or improve the heat performance of their property. Are they putting pressure on their supply chains or their operations? A lot of people justify their activity by saying they are recycling, but that's not acceptable – there's much more they can do. Climate change is clearly the biggest threat to humanity – so businesses and home owners have a responsibility to their customers and future generations to take action.”

Photo: Pete Jones



Kayla Ente, director of BHESCO and judge of the Celebration of Sussex Life Green Company of the Year

