



## CHI Summer Edition 2016

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### Donside Hydro

#### Investing In Renewable Energy, In Community, In Your Future...

Imagine building a power station in your spare time. Well, that's exactly what Sinclair Laing, Team Leader for Environmental Policy, and our 'Local Hero', is doing.

Sinclair is the visionary and Founder Director behind Aberdeen Community Energy (ACE) - Aberdeen's first Community Energy Company. ACE is well into the construction of its pioneering renewable energy development, the Donside Hydro - Scotland's first urban community hydro scheme. Nestled on the banks of the River Don in Donside Village, Tillydrone, the Donside Hydro is bringing history back to life at the former papermill site – now an urban village with a strong and active community.

The scheme is scheduled to complete in October this year, at which point it will generate enough clean, renewable energy to power 130 average UK homes, divert 240 tonnes of damaging carbon emissions and provide thousands of pounds to community funds each year. Doing all this contributes to Aberdeen's ambitions of tackling climate change, developing sustainable energy and empowering local communities. Initially, community funds from this project will be directed to redeveloping the waterfront at Donside for residents, visitors and wildlife and developing educational outreach projects for local schools, focusing on science, engineering and environment.

Initial project development funding has been provided by the Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme in the form of a £10K grant and £250K loan. Construction is being funded through Community Share Offer (CSO). CSO's are a regulated form of Crowdfunding, one of the fastest growing ways people are investing today. They are small scale, low risk, ethical, local and accessible



means for everyday people to invest in community projects. ACE aims to raise £1,250,000 through individual pledges of between £100 and £100,000, targeting an averaged 7% annual return on investment.

Sinclair and his community's success have achieved them the recognition and support of leaders at the City and National level. Sinclair has been nominated as the 'Local Hero' by Kevin Stewart - his MSP and Minister for Housing & Local Government. He joined Kevin and other MSPs and their Local Heroes for celebrations at the opening of the 5<sup>th</sup> Session of the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh on 2<sup>nd</sup> July where they met the Queen and heads of all Scottish parties.

Sinclair said "I'm a great believer in the power of community and this is a meaningful example of how community energy projects are achievable and can make a real difference. This project would not have been possible without the support of the community, Senior Managers, Councillors, politicians of all persuasions and of course our initial funders and community investors. Everyone has recognised the real value of this venture and has gone out of their way to provide their support to keep the project on track to success. We're eternally grateful for everyone's support." "Having successfully crossed the construction start mark, our next milestone is raising funds through our Community Share Offer. This is where we are incredibly reliant on the support of our fellow citizens across Aberdeen and the UK; if you're passionate about green energy and sustainable communities or even if you're just looking for a solid return on your investment, then please take some time to find out more about ACE and the Donside Hydro from me or our website."

Pete Leonard, Director of CH&I said "This project, while small in generation capacity, is nonetheless an important and high profile example of transformation change in Aberdeen. Aberdeen City Council & City Leaders recognise and support this project as it fits well with a number of our City ambitions and strategic plans, including Shaping & Powering Aberdeen – where we look to direct and deliver the future of Aberdeen. We're supporting Aberdeen Community Energy and wish them the best with this venture. The benefits should be enduring both for the local community and the city."

Minister for Business, Innovation and Energy Paul Wheelhouse said: "This is a great example of a local community capitalising on its own urban natural resources. This hydro project will benefit the whole community and will provide a long-term income that will support local projects for more than 20 years.

"I hope that the project can help inspire other communities across Scotland to join a growing list who are similarly benefiting from Scotland's renewable potential."

Keep an eye out for further updates in the press, go and have a look at the site if you're in the area and / or find out more about this venture and the community behind it from the following links, or following it here in CHI Mag:

### **Aberdeen Community Energy:**

Website: <http://acenergy.org.uk/> (<http://acenergy.org.uk/>)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ACEnergy2016/> (<https://www.facebook.com/ACEnergy2016/>)

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ACEnergy2016> (<https://twitter.com/ACEnergy2016>)

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/aberdeen-community-energy> (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/aberdeen-community-energy>)

### **Donside Village:**

Website: <http://donsidevillage.community/> (<http://donsidevillage.community/>)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/donsidevillage/> (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/donsidevillage/>)

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