**23 August 2016**

**Local leaders tour Donside Hydro construction site**

Local leaders, including MPs and MSPs, yesterday visited Scotland’s first urban community hydro, in the Tillydrone area of Aberdeen city.

The hydro, which recently launched a bid to raise £500,000 through a community Share Offer, is on track to complete construction and begin generating electricity by October 2016.

Hydro operator, Aberdeen Community Energy (ACE), has led a number of events throughout summer to offer local residents, stakeholders and interested parties the opportunity to visit the construction site and participate in conversations about how the hydro can benefit the local area.

Members of ACE shared their experiences so far of bringing the hydro to life, before taking the group on a guided tour of the construction site.

Among the delegates in attendance were MPs Kirsty Blackman and Callum McCaig, and MSPs Kevin Stewart, Alexander Burnett and Liam Kerr. City Councillor, Ross Grant also attended on behalf of the Office of the Lord Provost.

Callum McCaig, MP for Aberdeen South and Energy and Climate Change spokesperson for the SNP in Westminster, said: “The Donside Hydro project is clear evidence that not only does Scotland have enviable potential to generate massive amounts of energy from renewables, but also that our communities are enthusiastic to back investment in them.

“We need long-term sustainable energy to power our country and our governments must do all they can to support the development of technology to support the renewables sector.”

Kirsty Blackman, MP for Aberdeen North, said: “The SNP in Westminster have been pushing for the UK Government to recognise the public support for renewable energy, and it is fantastic to see an example of that here in my constituency. The Donside Hydro scheme is exactly the sort of innovative project we should be looking to encourage and support, especially in Scotland where we have such an abundance of renewables potential.”

A huge number of people from across the country have invested in the hydro so far, meaning that ACE is well on its way to raising its target of £500,000.

Founding Director, Sinclair Laing said: “We’ve had a fantastic response to our Share Offer, with people from far and wide recognising the attractive investment opportunity. With a 7% return, it offers a healthy financial yield, but it’s about so much more than that – it’s about creating a sustainable community and generating

renewable energy. We’ve still some way to go to meet our target, so please take the time to read our share offer document and consider investing in our project.”

The project will create a sustainable income for the local community by selling clean, renewable electricity to the national grid. The hydro is expected to generate many thousands each year for a community fund and enough electricity to power the equivalent of around 130 homes annually.

Further guidance on the Share Offer can be found on the ACE website. <http://acenergy.org.uk/how-to-invest/>

***Notes to editors:***

***About ACE***

*Aberdeen Community Energy is a Community Benefit Society which was set up in 2014 by the Donside Community Association (DCA) to build, own and operate the Donside Hydro Scheme on behalf of the community.*

*ACE’s vision is to deliver on the founder's ethos of Donside Village as a sustainable community, one that truly works for both its inhabitants and natural riverside setting, while delivering a project that is aligned with local, national and EU policy on energy, climate and sustainable communities.*

***About the DCA***

*Donside is a sustainable community nestled on the banks of the River Don. Built in 2012 by social landlord Tenants First Scotland (now part of the* [*Sanctuary Goup*](https://www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk/)*), the development is a mixture of affordable homes offered for sale and lease.*

*The Donside Community Association (DCA), was established by the community in February 2013 to act in the best interest of its residents. The DCA takes on roles and responsibilities to develop Donside and the community through site improvements and the organisation of events and activities designed to bring the community together. It also aims to act as a voice for Donside at a local level through involvement and engagement with local networks, Community Councils and other partner agencies.*

<http://acenergy.org.uk/>