

**2 December 2016**

## **Scotland's first urban community hydro brings home Scottish Green Energy Award**

Aberdeen's Donside Hydro was named as the best community renewables project in Scotland, at a formal Scottish Renewables event in Edinburgh last night.

The community benefit society behind the project, Aberdeen Community Energy (ACE), accepted the award just two months after the hydro on the banks of the River Don became fully operational, hitting production targets of 99KW.

Highland Eco Design, developers and co-investors in the project, were also named as best professional services for work on the Donside Hydro and other projects across Scotland.

The fully community owned and operated hydro will generate a sustainable income for the local, economically deprived area.

Commenting on the accolade, ACE's Founding Director, Sinclair Laing said: "To be recognised as the top community renewables project in Scotland just weeks after announcing that our hydro was up and running is a great honour. The Donside Hydro has been four incredibly tough but rewarding years in the making, and as a community we're very proud to have delivered such a huge project with all the associated issues and hurdles, within extremely challenging regulatory timescales.

"We'd like to thank the people from Aberdeen, Scotland and throughout the UK who have showed faith in us by investing financially in our project; we have been overwhelmed by your support. I'd also like to extend a special thanks to the Scottish Government for their financial support through the Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES) and their selected support agency, Local Energy Scotland.

"We congratulate Highland Eco Design, our developers and co-investors, for a well-deserved award for their own work in renewables across Scotland. All our professional partners have gone above and beyond at every stage to make this project a reality, without them we wouldn't be here.

"Finally I'd also like to congratulate the other finalists in our category. Community projects are all incredibly challenging, time consuming and it takes a great deal of commitment and determination to make it work."

The hydro scheme, which is selling electricity to the national grid, is expected to generate many thousands for a community fund and enough electricity to power the equivalent of around 130 homes each year.

While the hydro is fully operational, landscaping work will continue in the spring to complete the cosmetic aspects of the project.

A Community Share Offer that offered investors a target 7% annual return, launched in August and successfully raised £500,000 ten days ahead of the planned closing date of 16 September.

A Bond Offer has now been launched to raise the remaining £600,000 required to fund the project. Buyers are promised an extremely competitive 4% fixed-rate annual return and

bonds are available to purchase until March 2017, or earlier if the target is met ahead of schedule. The Bond Offer has so far successfully raised about 50% of the target amount.

For more details, please download the Bond Offer Document from: <http://acenergy.org.uk/in-the-press/downloads/>

## **ENDS**

### **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 Group](#)), 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/>