



# CLASP.

## Lake District Low Carbon Energy Futures

### Plan for Future Action – Pooley Bridge

**A summary of the discussions held so far with the community, and suggestions of actions to take forward the project ideas**

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*This document is part of a series of information about this project, including a guide to the process, 3D model used, and the resulting community Action Plans.*

*All documents can be downloaded from: <http://claspinfo.org/rural-low-carbon-futures>*

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## **Introduction to the Low Carbon Energy Futures Project**

Many communities in the Lake District National Park have already expressed an interest in looking at renewable energy generation and energy efficiency measures within their communities, but many struggle to know how to take these ideas forward, often finding the enormity of the challenge overwhelming.

In order to attempt to overcome these barriers, a project was developed to provide assistance and guidance for a number of communities in the National Park.

The LDNPA have been successful in obtaining funding from CLASP to undertake this work and they have employed Cumbria Action for Sustainability to deliver the project with them.

In summary, the project will provide three communities in the National Park with the assistance they need to help them take ownership of their own energy futures. It will provide the much needed structured advice and support to overcome the barriers that are stopping activity, enabling community groups to progress from initial ideas, and towards having a clear plan for action, including sourcing for funding to get projects on the ground.

## **The story so far – Pooley Bridge**

### Background

Pooley Bridge is an active community on the edge of Ullswater in the Lake District National Park. The idea for a community energy project in the area took shape as part of the comprehensive Valley Planning exercise undertaken by the Lake District National Park Partnership over the last few years. This Ullswater Valley Plan identified an action to look at the opportunity to develop a hydro project at Hayeswater Gill.

Things have moved on since the initial Valley Planning exercise, and the support offered through this project has enabled a group of interested local residents to revisit the idea for a hydro project at Hayeswater Gill, and to work out how to take it forward.

Since the Ullswater valley plan was published, the National Trust, owners of the land at Hayeswater Gill, has been pushing on with a hydro project on the site, and plans for this are now fairly advanced.

In order to kick off this project and to bring everyone up to speed, an initial community workshop was held in the valley in September 2014. This brought together representatives of a number of the local Parish Councils, the Lake District National Park Authority, the National Trust, some local residents, and Cumbria Action for Sustainability.

### Outcomes of community meetings / workshops

The initial workshop fell into three main sections:

- General Renewable Energy Presentation explaining the types of technologies available, the pros and cons of such schemes for community groups, possible sources of funding, and things to consider further – making use of the 3d architectural model of a typical Lake District Community
- An update from the National Trust on their plans for developing a Hydro project at Hayswater Gill
- Wide ranging discussions about the opportunities and ways forward for the various individual communities in the Ullswater Valley

In relation to the National Trust's plans for Hayswater Gill, they are now quiet far advanced in their plans for a hydro scheme here. Discussions have been held with the statutory agencies, but applications for consents have not yet been submitted.

In summary, the scheme being looked at is a 250kW project – the size is limited due to the grid connection capacity at Hartsop. The Trust is currently exploring options for financing a range of renewable energy projects across their estate. A final decision on the way forward will be made in Spring 2015. If the Trust decides to progress with the scheme and fund it themselves, then there will not be any opportunities for the community to get more involved in the project, or to invest.

However this decision is yet to be made, and so it is advised to keep in touch with the National Trust staff to see how the internal discussions there progress.

As the potential for a community hydro project at Hayswater Gill looks unlikely at the present time, those present at the workshop moved on to consider other options for project in the Valley.

Two clear options began to emerge, with discussion about the possibility of a scheme in Pooley Bridge – possibly utilising a Water Source Heat Pump, and another scheme in Martindale, looking at options for a small scale hydro project.

With specific reference to Pooley Bridge, there is a local resident who also runs a company specialising in heat pumps, and it is known that one of the local hotels is interested in looking at this technology too.

A second community workshop was held to begin to focus discussions down and look at specific ideas for both Pooley Bridge and Martindale.

Again the discussions were wide ranging, but a presentation by a local renewable energy expert, and Pooley Bridge resident, set the scene for one possibility of what would be possible in the village, utilising a range of different renewable sources to come together to form a district heating scheme.

This was very well received by those present, and the job now is to work out how to take these ambitious plans forward, and access the support and funding needed to ensure the community have a clear picture of what is possible, how much it would cost and how long it would take.

The following sections of this report set out details of additional support and funding available to the community in Pooley Bridge to take their ideas forward, and suggested actions for the forthcoming months to help keep the momentum going with this project.

## Next steps

Based on the discussions with the community representatives and interested local residents, the following are suggested actions for the forthcoming months. The timescales suggested here are indicative. Community projects move at their own speed, based on the time and resources available and the number of individuals involved. The timescales suggested below are based on expertise of similar community projects, and are considered to be achievable. But if, for whatever reason, the community finds they cannot progress at this pace, then then that is fine.

### Suggested action up to March 2015

- Reconvene the group of community representatives / residents to consider this action plan and agree a way forward
  - The last community workshop saw a wide range of ideas being considered and great enthusiasm to take a renewable energy project forward. The challenge for the community in the next two months will be to drill down into the ideas a bit further, and decide which idea to consider first. Having such a wide range of potential projects is excellent, but could also be daunting, so it's important we break the work down into manageable pieces, so no one becomes overwhelmed with the enormity of the possibilities
- Fully consider the criteria for applying for the Rural Community Energy Fund
  - This will help to focus in on what the first project is to be and what evidence is needed prior to submission of a funding application
- Engage with the wider community to inform them of work to date on the renewable energy project, tying it into the actions already set out in the Parish and Valley Plan (which were subject to wide community engagement during their development) and get some evidence of up to date support for a feasibility study into a specific community energy scheme
- Keep in contact with staff at the National Trust to ensure links are kept to their renewable energy projects in the valley
- Keep in contact with staff at Eden District Council to ensure links to kept to their renewable energy projects in the District

### Suggested actions up to June 2015

- Submit an application to the Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) for one specific energy project idea in Pooley Bridge
  - Staff at CAfS have been involved in / are aware of 5 successful RCEF applications from communities in Cumbria. Many of these community groups are more than willing to share their experiences of applying for this funding, and this should provide some invaluable help to the group.

- Develop a brief for the feasibility study to send out to tender, prior to applying for RCEF funding
  - Again, the experiences of other communities in Cumbria will help here
- Ensure the Parish Council are kept up to date of progress with the discussions about a potential community energy project
  - There is the potential to run another 'workshop' for the whole Parish Council if this would be considered beneficial and CAFS staff are available to help organise and facilitate this.
- Investigate potential contractors in the area who may be able to carry out the feasibility work. Three quotes are required as part of the RCEF application process
  - Staff at CAFS will pass on details of a number of local contractors who would be able to undertake the feasibility work, and who are known to have produced excellent work of a similar nature in the past.
- Contact staff at the relevant statutory agencies to investigate any issues relating to consents that may be required, for example planning permission. This could mean speaking to the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Lake District National Park Authority, but this will depend on exactly what renewable energy project is being considered
  - NB This will all be undertaken formally as part of the feasibility work, for which funding should be sought via RCEF, however, it may be worth making initial contact at the project outset
- Engage with local District and County Councillors, and board members of the LDNPA, so they are up to speed with the community aspiration for a renewable energy project

There are a number of possible actions for later in 2015, but what needs to be done will in the large part be determined by the outcome of the RCEF application process. If you're successful, then you will be progressing with the feasibility work, and then looking to move things forward should the project be viable.

- From experience working with other community groups, you can expect a decision on RCEF funding to take at least 2 months from the date of submission of the application.

Should you not be successful in obtaining funding from the RCEF for the feasibility study, then we will need to source additional funding to achieve the same aim

- Things are moving on apace with the Community Energy agenda at the moment, and there are many discussions being held in Cumbria about further support for community groups. There is also a general election in 2015 and so the specific support available at present from the UK Government may change.

In terms of trying to give a steer as to how long any of this work will take, it is very difficult to be precise about what and when at this stage in the project. That said, you need to be prepared for this project to take a while. Should the RCEF bid be successful, the feasibility work is undertaken, and

the results show the project as currently being considered is possible, then the next phase of work would need to start. This will include:

- Detailed technical work to develop a fully developed plan for the installation
- Prepare all of the reports necessary to be able to apply for planning permission and any other statutory consents from the Environment Agency
  - This will include various environmental surveys many of which are time sensitive in terms of when during the year they can be carried out
- Develop of a fully funded business plan and raise all of the finance required

As you can see, there is still a lot of work to do and it is highly likely this will take in excess of a year.



## **Support and Funding available**

### Funding

This section sets out details of funding currently available for feasibility studies for community energy projects, and some information about raising finance for the build costs of your community energy scheme.

### **Feasibility and project development costs**

It is clear from the discussions that have taken place, that the community in Pooley Bridge would benefit greatly from the assistance and funding that can be provided through the Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF).

This is a relatively new source of funding, announced by the Government in 2014 as part of its wider commitments made in the Community Energy Strategy.

For further information about the fund, please follow this link:

<http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/rural-community-energy-fund>

In summary, RCEF funding is available in two stages:

Stage one is a GRANT of up to £20,000. It provides the finance a community group will need to undertake a feasibility study into ideas for a community renewable energy project in their area. The grant is to pay for consultants to be brought in to carry out a detailed feasibility study, and a final report is produced, answering a standard set of key questions.

Stage two is a LOAN of up to £130,000. It provides the finance required for a community group to get their project shovel ready, including all preparatory work and studies required for submission with any planning applications or permissions for consent from bodies such as the Environment Agency.

Once the scheme is complete, the loan needs to be repaid, but if, for a valid reason the project is not able to go ahead (for example planning permission is not granted), then the loan will not have to be repaid.

### **Funding – capital build costs**

In terms of looking at ways of funding the capital build costs of the scheme, assuming the feasibility study comes back positive, and the group are able to proceed through the planning and consenting phase, there are a number of options that can be pursued.

The following provides a good summary of some options available for raising finance for a community energy scheme via community shares. Unfortunately there is no easy option here, and

this is an incredibly complex area of work. We would encourage you to seek help and advice from others who have been through this process before, to see what options will be available to you and which you want to pursue. Community Energy England is an excellent source of information here

<http://communityenergyengland.org/>

The following link also provides a range of sources of advice around setting up the correct legal structure for your community group, in order for you to be able to go about raising funds for your project.

<http://www.lowcarbonhub.org/resource/how-to-set-up-a-community-benefit-society/>

### Support

This section sets out details of the support that is currently available to help you continue to take your community energy project forward.

### **Sustain Eden – Sustainable Community Solutions**

Cumbria Action for Sustainability are currently running the BIG lottery funded Sustain Eden programme. As part of this project, communities can access support and advice to help them take forward their plans for community energy projects. The support available via Sustain Eden will mean that as a community, you still have ongoing access to CAfS staff until September 2015.

For further information about what this support can offer, please contact Alison Lax at CAfS on [Alison@cafs.org.uk](mailto:Alison@cafs.org.uk) or 01768 210276.

### **Cumbria Community Energy Conference 31 January 2015**

<http://www.cafs.org.uk/events/cumbria-community-energy-conference-2/>

The conference will take you through the wide range of issues covered by the phrase 'Community Energy' – including larger-scale renewable energy generation; reducing energy use in your community; and different ways of reducing your energy bill, for example through switching suppliers. Delegates will learn about the Government's approach to Community Energy; hear from people who are already blazing the trail with Community Energy projects in the county and find out more about the support and funding that is available in Cumbria to help you progress your projects make your ideas a reality.

### **Peer Mentoring support**

This support package brings together a range of organisations who can offer community groups free 'peer mentoring' support to help them with their community energy projects. You will be able to learn from the people who have already been there, done it and got the t shirt!

For more information about the overall project follow this link:

<http://energymentoring.org.uk/find-out-more/about-us>

And for more information about what a community group can access in terms of support and how to apply, follow this link:

<http://energymentoring.org.uk/find-out-more/guidance-community-enterprises-mentees>

### **Rural Cumbria Connects**

Rural Cumbria Connects (RCC) brings together key players in the Renewable Energy sector from both the private and third sector who are working together to help rural communities in Cumbria develop community energy projects.

Rural Cumbria Connects can offer your community specialist knowledge and experience of all renewable energy technologies (Anaerobic Digestion, Solar PV and Thermal, Wind energy, Hydro and Biomass) and District Heating Systems. They can also help you to properly engage all members of your local community in your plans.

If you're interested in what Rural Cumbria Connects could offer your community follow this link:

<http://www.cafs.org.uk/projects/rural-cumbria-connects-community-energy/>

Rural Cumbria Connects consortium members (as of January 2015) are:

- Barden Energy Ltd
- Biogas Power Ltd
- Bizcat AB
- Cumbria Action for Sustainability
- Low Luckens Organic Resource Centre Ltd
- Reiver Renewables

### **How to hire the 3D architectural model from LDNPA**

As you will have seen at the workshops held, the LDNPA are now the proud caretakers of a 3D architectural model depicting a typical Lake District valley, and illustrating a range of renewable energy technologies.

The model is available for any organisation / community group in the North West of England to hire, and is stored at the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) offices in Kendal, Cumbria.

There is no charge for hiring the model, but you will need to arrange your own transportation. It fits into a ford fiesta with the back seats down, just to give you an idea of its size.

If you would like to hire the model, please contact Samantha Hagon at LDNPA on [samantha.hagon@lakedistrict.gov.uk](mailto:samantha.hagon@lakedistrict.gov.uk) or 01539 792659

### **Other support**

Community Energy is high up the political agenda at the moment, and staff at CAFS are in discussions with a number of public sector bodies and other funders about projects which would enable us to offer more support for community energy schemes in the future. Although we cannot report on anything specific at the moment, we will keep you informed, and details of future projects and offers of support will also be made available via our website <http://www.cafs.org.uk/>

## Appendix A

Indicative Timescale	Action needed	Support available
Jan 2015 – Mar 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend <b>Cumbria Community Energy Conference 31 January 2015</b></li> </ul>	Places are free of charge but must be booked in advance by <a href="#">clicking here</a> or by calling 01768 210 276
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconvene the group of community representatives / residents to consider this action plan and agree a way forward</li> </ul>	Staff at CAfS can help arrange and facilitate this event
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fully consider the criteria for applying for the Rural Community Energy Fund</li> </ul>	Support available from CAfS staff
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with the wider community to inform them of work to date on the renewable energy project, tying it into the actions already set out in the Parish and Valley Plan (which were subject to wide community engagement during their development) and get some evidence of up to date support for a feasibility study into a specific community energy scheme</li> </ul>	Support available from CAfS staff
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep in contact with staff at the National Trust and Eden District Council to ensure links are kept to their renewable energy projects in the valley</li> </ul>	
April 2015 – June 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit an application to the Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) for one specific energy project idea in Pooley Bridge</li> </ul>	Staff at CAfS can share their experiences and put you in touch with other community groups who have been through this process
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a brief for the feasibility study to send out to tender, prior to applying for RCEF funding</li> </ul>	Staff at CAfS can share their experiences and put you in touch with other community groups who have been through this process

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the Parish Council are kept up to date of progress with the discussions about a potential community energy project</li> </ul>	Staff at CAfS could help arrange and facilitate another workshop for the whole Parish Council if required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate potential contractors in the area who may be able to carry out the feasibility work. Three quotes are required as part of the RCEF application process</li> </ul>	CAfS staff can advise on possible contractors here
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact staff at the relevant statutory agencies to investigate any issues relating to consents that may be required, for example planning permission. This could mean speaking to the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Lake District National Park Authority, but this will depend on exactly what renewable energy project is being considered</li> </ul>	NB This will all be undertaken formally as part of the feasibility work, for which funding should be sought via RCEF, however, it may be worth making initial contact at the project outset
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider accessing peer mentoring support on offer through <a href="http://energymentoring.org.uk/find-out-more/guidance-community-enterprises-mentees">http://energymentoring.org.uk/find-out-more/guidance-community-enterprises-mentees</a></li> </ul>	Free support

Produced by Cumbria Action for Sustainability, as part of the Lake District Low Carbon Energy Futures Project

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