

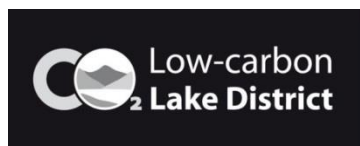


# CLASP.

## Lake District Low Carbon Energy Futures

### Plan for Future Action - Staveley

**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 of funding to get projects on the ground.

## **The story so far - Staveley**

### Background

Staveley is a very active community, located not far from Kendal in the Lake District National Park, and it has a lot of projects being driven forward by its residents.

A sustainability group was formed in 2008 called SENS, and from this, a lot of specific sustainability projects have been developed and taken forward. The group also provides a focus for discussions about wider sustainability issues at their regular meetings and new ideas are always coming forward.

One issue that has been on the agenda of SENS since the beginning is the possibility of developing a community owned hydro scheme in the village or surrounding area. The area already plays host to a number of private hydro schemes, and there is a lot of interest in and expertise of hydro projects in the vicinity.

The Parish Plan (finalised in 2013) also includes a reference to a hydro project in the Parish.

A lot of discussions have already taken place about the potential hydro scheme, and some feasibility work has been carried out. A pre-feasibility report was commissioned and funded by the Lake District National Park Sustainable Development Fund and this looked at flow rates and head. This study concentrated purely on an Archimedes screw solution.

Unfortunately, even with all the effort that has been put in and the research that has been done to date, there has been no conclusive decision made as to whether a hydro scheme is a viable option in Staveley. A lot of questions remain unanswered and for this reason, the issue is continually being discussed.

A number of residents and members of SENS decided recently that they were determined to put some additional effort in, and to try to drive this project forward. This led to the formation of a Community Interest Company (CIC) in January 2014 – with a stated aim of looking at community hydro in Staveley.

The funding available through this project has enabled the directors of the CIC to access additional support and advice to help them achieve their aim of driving this project forward. The timing has worked well in providing additional technical support to help focus the direction of this project, at a time when there is also renewed energy and determination within the community to move things forward.

### Outcomes of community meetings / workshops

Following an initial meeting with community members, it was agreed that the support offered by this project should be focused on looking at one specific hydro project at Barley Bridge Weir in the centre of the village. Although there are other potential opportunities within the Parish, it was

decided that there was a need to focus down on one project and come to a definitive conclusion about its viability, before looking more widely at other possible projects.

There are a number of things to consider with a hydro project at this location. The river in question is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), there appears to be some confusion over land ownership for part of the possible location for the hydro project, and finally there is a lot of community interest in the heritage qualities of the weir being considered for the hydro project.

In order to progress towards an application for funding from the Rural Community Energy Fund, the community need to gather some more up to date information about general support for the project. SENS already have evidence that there is interest in looking at hydro, but this data was collected a number of years ago, and so it would be sensible to seek the views of the community now, in order to present up to date information on the RCEF application form.

The CIC directors have also been finding it difficult to identify a number of local contractors who would be able to tender for any feasibility work, and would welcome advice from others about how best to develop the brief for the feasibility work, so it adheres to the requirements of the RCEF funding.

An evening workshop was held to bring the wider community up to date with the project and seek feedback on the proposals to apply for RCEF funding for a detailed feasibility study into Barley Bridge Weir. The event was well attended by a wide range of local residents, all with a keen interest in the project. Those present were brought up to speed with the formation of the CIC, updated on opportunities for funding via the RCEF, and had the opportunity to ask questions and consider options, using the 3D architectural model as a focus.

This event has enabled the directors of the CIC to obtain some recent evidence of community support for the proposed scheme, and reiterates the desire to see hydro options pursued in the community.

The following sections of this report set out details of additional support and funding available to the community in Staveley 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 wide discussions with the Directors of the CIC and the community workshop held, the following are suggested actions for the forthcoming months to keep momentum going with the project. 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 actions up to March 2015

- Revisit draft RCEF application and get ready to submit – incorporating lessons learnt from other Cumbrian communities who have been successful in obtaining funding from the Rural Community Energy Fund ( RCEF)
  - 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 in Staveley.
- Meet with the Parish Council to bring them up to speed with progress and to get their input into the project
  - It is very important to ensure the Parish Council are up to speed and on board with the project. The reference to the hydro project in the Parish Plan is a good starting point.
- 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
- Contact a number of local hydro developers to discuss plans for the scheme, and encourage them to tender for 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 abstraction, the SSSI designation and planning permission. This will mean speaking to the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Lake District National Park Authority
  - NB This will all be undertaken as part of the feasibility work, for which funding should be sought via RCEF
- 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 hydro project

### Suggested actions up to June 2015

- 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.
  - This experience also shows us that the feasibility work is likely to take around 3-4 months
- If the feasibility study shows the current favourite location is not suitable, then it may be time to look at other potential hydro sites in and around the village. Previous plans for a community hydro scheme further up Kentmere could be revisited.
- Should you not be successful in obtaining funding from the RCEF for the feasibility study into the proposals at Barley Bridge weir, 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 activity post June 2015, it is very difficult to give a steer on what will be required and when. 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 hydro 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 Staveley 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 if statutory consents are 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.

### **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>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
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revisit draft RCEF application and get ready to submit</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>Meet with the Parish Council to bring them up to speed with progress and to get their input into the project</li> </ul>	The reference to the hydro project in the Parish Plan is a good starting point.
	<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>Contact a number of local hydro developers to discuss plans for the scheme, and encourage them to tender for the feasibility work.</li> <li>Obtain three quotes</li> </ul>	Staff at CAFs will pass on details of a number of local contractors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact staff at the relevant statutory agencies to investigate any issues relating to abstraction, the SSSI designation and planning permission. This will mean speaking to the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Lake District National Park Authority</li> </ul>	NB This will all be undertaken as part of the feasibility work, for which funding should be sought via RCEF
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ul>	

	hydro project	
March 2015 – June 2015	Actions will depend on result of RCEF bid, but depending on outcome, will be along the lines the following	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>If you're successful</b>, then you will be progressing with the feasibility work, and then looking to move things forward should the project be viable.</li> </ul>	No specific support is currently available, however, many discussions are underway in Cumbria and we are hopeful of having more support in place for community groups in the coming months. Sign up to the CAfS newsletter to keep up to date with progress on this <a href="http://www.cafs.org.uk">www.cafs.org.uk</a>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>If the feasibility study shows the current favourite location is not suitable</b>, then it may be time to look at other potential hydro sites in and around the village. Previous plans for a community hydro scheme further up Kentmere could be revisited.</li> </ul>	No specific support is currently available, however, many discussions are underway in Cumbria and we are hopeful of having more support in place for community groups in the coming months. Sign up to the CAfS newsletter to keep up to date with progress on this <a href="http://www.cafs.org.uk">www.cafs.org.uk</a>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Should you not be successful in obtaining funding from the RCEF</b> for the feasibility study into the proposals at Barley Bridge weir, then we will need to source additional funding to achieve the same aim</li> </ul>	No specific support is currently available, however, many discussions are underway in Cumbria and we are hopeful of having more support in place for community groups in the coming months. Sign up to the CAfS newsletter to keep up to date with progress on this <a href="http://www.cafs.org.uk">www.cafs.org.uk</a>

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

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