

Horshader Community Development 900kW Wind Turbine

Introduction

Horshader Community Development Trust (HCDT) is a community development company covering the villages of South Shawbost, Dalbeg and Dalmore on the Isle of Lewis. The group has a board of eight volunteer directors, and the Trust, with support from the Big Lottery Fund, has employed a Development Officer for an initial period of three years.

HCDT was formed in December 2004 after private developers had approached the community with a view to erecting turbines on community land, and were offering only a small financial return to the community. The community did not agree with this approach, and came together to form a group which would take forward a similar project solely for the benefit of the community.

The Horshader community covers three villages, and is the first community in the Western Isles to have erected a community turbine for the sole benefit of the community.

The group became aware of the help and support that Community Energy Scotland (CES) could provide and, although they initially knew nothing about the wind business, they were keen to use the opportunity to look after their community in the long term.

Community consultation and input was always important to the project, and with assistance from CES, the community set up a steering group. A website was set up to inform the community members, and a "Have Your Say Day" was used to involve the community council and the grazings committees. The steering group visited each household, and a follow-up survey was conducted to ensure that the steering group had interpreted correctly the views of the community. 80% of the permanent residents of the community are now members of the group.

The turbine is operated and managed by Risort Power Generation Ltd, the trading arm of HCDT. Membership of HCDT is open to all permanent residents over 18 years of age within the villages of South Shawbost, Dalbeg and Dalmore, as well as tenants of crofts within these communities who are resident elsewhere on Lewis.

It is hoped that the turbine will bring in more than £100,000 net income per annum. HCDT will manage the financial aspects of the project and will supervise the allocation of the revenue. However, how the money is to be allocated will be structured according to the community's wishes, and will be decided at an annual meeting of the Horshader community.

The HCDT Development Officer will liaise between the community and the Trust to ensure that there is a cohesive approach to tackling local issues and to improving the quality of life within the Horshader community. The Development Officer will also work with the wider community to ensure that all applications for grant funding are completed and validated before being presented to the Trust Board.



This project has been funded by the Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES).



Equipment: 900kW Enercon E44

The Horshader Community chose the E44 turbine because: of its ability to operate within a wider range of wind speeds than most other turbines; a maintenance contract ('EPK Servicing') for which service personnel are based locally, and; Enercon constantly monitors the turbine and remotely resets it when required. The reputation of Enercon as a manufacturer was seen by the community as being exceptionally good, and was also seen as the Co-operative Bank's turbine manufacturer of choice.

Project Cost and Funding

Total project cost	£1.87M	Funding was obtained through: Scottish Government CARES Growing Community Assets Lottery Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Debt finance through Co-operative Bank
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Anticipated Outcomes

The group hope to use the income from the turbine to tackle local fuel poverty and to fund community transport projects initially. HCDT held a community consultation day which highlighted the community's desire for a local shop, the development of the old museum building and a children's play park, along with many other ideas.

The aim of the Horshader Community Turbine is to provide the community with a source of income over which they have control, with the support of HCDT, by gift aiding the surplus revenue to the Trust. Subsequently, building social capital in a remote and rural area, and empowering the community through giving them a voice and involving them in the decision making process, will enable them to see real developments in their own community. This is a perfect example of a bottom-up decision-making process, allowing a group of three villages to improve their community based on their local circumstances rather than on urban policies. As well as creating funds for use by the community, the turbine project has also greatly increased the community's confidence.

Lessons Learned

The group found that it is best to check with the bank before asking companies to tender for work, as Horshader were asked to change their electrical contractor, they believe, as a result of the bank's ethical policy.

The Horshader community would also advise groups to make sure that the grid connection is available at the right time for Enercon to commission the turbine. In their rush to get connected prior to the Feed-in Tariff changes in December 2012, they asked all suppliers to bring forward deliveries where possible. All suppliers were able to do this except SSE were unable to move from the original date. This resulted in the turbine being constructed ahead of the grid connection. Enercon completed pre-commissioning work prior to energisation, before leaving site saying they would return for energisation, and this attracted considerable additional cost for the group. Fortunately the date for the FiT change was moved to 1st Dec 2012.

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