

Parklea Branching Out, Port Glasgow



Introduction Branching Out, a Scottish Charity, was established in 1997 and operates as a horticultural training centre in premises secured on a 25 year lease from Inverclyde Council. They use social and therapeutic horticulture as a vehicle to provide training, work activity, volunteering, recreational and social facilities. They engage with a range of service users such individuals with a learning disability and /or learning difficulties, those with mental health problems, young people still at school and the young long term unemployed, local volunteers, weekly day groups and visits from schools.

Equipment: Eco Angus Orlingo 80kW Log fired boiler linked to a 4000L McCallum Water Heaters thermal store providing a

heat source for the heating pipework network installed in the greenhouses. Parklea paid for the pipework distribution system.

Cost and Grant Funding

Total Project cost	£ 116,725.00	The remaining funding was contributed by Parklea Branching Out from their capital funding.
CARES grant	£ 105,013.30	
CARES grant Percentage	90%	

Fuel Bill Savings

The project was completed in March 2012 and due to the warmer weather the log boiler was not required for the new greenhouses until October 2012 where it kept the plants in the newly refurbished greenhouses at a temperature that they could grow and flourish. The centre management have worked tirelessly to develop local partnerships to obtain "free" wood by picking up wood offcuts from the local prison and by taking wood from trees that had to be cut down by Inverclyde Council. The council had to pay to have these trees removed before so both Parklea and Inverclyde Council benefit from cost savings.

Emission Savings

Estimated kWh savings p.a.	27,300kWh
Annual CO ₂ savings (kg)	15,000
Lifetime CO ₂ savings (kg)	300,000

Project Monitoring

The log boiler has been installed for over a year and the operation and maintenance of the boiler are now well established. Apart from a few very cold days over the worst part of winter where stoking the boiler sufficiently to maintain sufficiently high temperatures required the next day the log boiler has operated exceptionally well as a sustainable heating alternative to gas boilers.

Local Impact

The centre have been able to expand and develop the services they provide to the local community and can demonstrate how renewable energy can be used to provide a suitable heating system to meet the needs of the centre without having to resort to non renewable sources. Parklea has also raised its profile locally by actively engaging with businesses, local council and other not for profit organisations through their efforts to obtain a sustainable supply of wood for the log boiler. They have invested in a log breaker and developing drying out areas for the wood in the previous disused areas at the rear of their land to ensure the quality of the wood is optimum for the boiler operation.

Lessons Learned



Parklea Branching Out was able to install a renewable energy in preference to a gas boiler for the heating for the newly acquired greenhouses through the CARES grant funding which gives them not only a sustainable source of heating but it avoids the large gas bills they would otherwise have to pay. As the centre is occupied every day a log boiler was a suitable system for them to install as although it requires manual stoking the staff have developed a workable system so in cold spells the heating provided to the greenhouses is reasonably constant.

Sharon Gemmell of Parklea Branching Out said, "From our initial meeting Community Energy Scotland has been very helpful, offering advice and guidance throughout the process. Without the assistance from Community Energy Scotland and the CARES programme we could not have pursued this type of system and it may have been a much more complicated process."

For further information:

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