

Outer Hebrides Community Energy Fund Case Study – Leurbost Hall Biomass Boiler

Background

North Lochs Community Association is a community group based in Lochs, Isle of Lewis, and is responsible for the running of the local community building, Leurbost Hall. The building consists of a large games hall, a kitchen, a bar area, various meeting rooms and dressing rooms for the local football club. The building previously had an old oil boiler, but the group was keen to lower their carbon emissions and instead of replacing the boiler with another oil boiler, they decided to apply to OHCEF for funding for a wood pellet boiler. At the moment, the hall is used three to four times a week, and a pellet boiler is suitable for this type of usage since it can be switched on and off and boosted as required. The group is one of the first community groups in the Western Isles to replace their heating system with a biomass system, and hope to monitor the system and its performance in order to be able to provide this information to groups who might look at a similar replacement in the future.



Details of Work Carried Out

After planning permission and a building warrant had been obtained, a Klover PB 24 (24kW pellet boiler) was installed at the hall. The old oil burner was removed and the oil tank was capped off. The new pellet boiler was integrated into the existing heating and water supply, and the group added two new radiators in the upper floor of the hall. A new, larger water cylinder was also installed to improve the flow of water to the shower rooms. A flue pipe was constructed as an outlet for emissions.

Cost and Funding

Work	Total Project Cost	OHCEF Amount
Biomass Boiler and pellets for testing and commissioning	£11,877.40	£10,689.66

Results and Local Impact

The group is happy with the new boiler, after initial teething problems. In the first couple of weeks the boiler was not programmed correctly and was not working to its full potential. This has

now been resolved by the installer, and all of the groups who have used the hall have commented on how cosy the hall is, especially upstairs where we had no heating prior to these works.

One member of the group received formal training from the installer on how to use the boiler, and a couple of committee members who have pellet boilers in their own homes are competent in using it. The boiler is easy enough to clean and maintain, and loading it up with pellets is not too painstaking as the group only has it on for around two hours each day. It is hoped to have a training session for all committee members in the coming months.

Comments and Lessons Learned

Iain Macdonald, who was leading the project, gave the following feedback:

“I feel the project went very well. Community Energy Scotland was very helpful at every stage in the application process and the contractor cannot be faulted for the service they provided. The local authority were also a great help as they provided a bridging loan to tide us over until we received our OHCEF grant.

My advice to any group thinking of installing a biomass system would be to have one which is self-feeding. We couldn't really justify the cost of having a self-feeding system, nor did we have the room for it, but if you had a boiler which is in constant use, e.g. a school, you wouldn't want to be having to hand load it.

The PB 24 which we have is a smaller unit but it is sufficient for the needs of our building.”

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