

UDNY COMMUNITY WIND FARM CASE STUDY



OVERVIEW

COMMUNITY GROUP: UDNY
COMMUNITY TRUST
DEVELOPMENT NAME: UDNY
COMMUNITY WIND TURBINE
DATE OF COMMISSION: 2011
SIZE: 800KW ENERCON E48

Udny community wind project is wholly owned by the local community. The funds generated from the turbine are invested in the local area on local projects, in keeping with the priorities and wishes of local people. The turbine is expected to generate funds of £4-5million for the community over the 20 year lifetime of the project.

BACKGROUND

The group invested a large amount of volunteer time to drive the project forward and secure the necessary funding, initiated by the community council in 2006. The initial financial plan was to utilise various available grant schemes (i.e. Big Lottery, Scottish Government and LEADER), however this arrangement would have rendered the group ineligible for the Feed-In Tariff, the source of long-term income from the turbine. Consequently the grants were repaid and the group took out a loan from Triodos Bank. Further support was obtained to cover any remaining costs such as grid connection and the planning application.

The turbine was installed in May 2011 and has been generating income for the community ever since.



COST AND FUNDING

Loan from TRIODOS Bank (overdraft facility for VAT) - Capital Expenditure	£1.4 million + VAT
Social Investment Scotland - GRID	£54,000
Community Council	£3-4000
LEADER - Planning and other issues	£15,000
CARES	£6,000
BIG Lottery	£6,000
Aberdeenshire Council	£3,000

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SUCCESSSES TO DATE

The project brought £120,000 to the community in its first year of operation and is estimated to generate over £5m during its lifetime. The funds are now being used to pay off the loans and any surplus is being invested into community projects.

The group were able to secure funding support from the community council, LEADER and Social Investment Scotland, along with other sources.

A "Planning4Real" workshop was used to collect views from the community. This was a well-attended two day workshop which found that there was broadly support for the construction of the turbine. A wider community ballot was also undertaken and the local press and media were used to inform and engage with local people.



BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT

The funds from the Udney Community Wind Turbine are administered by Udney Community Trust through two grant programmes – small projects under £500 and larger projects over £500. The project is still in its early days and many ideas are still under development. The community are beginning to realise the potential opportunities of the fund.

The Trust looks to support projects which fit under their five main aims:

- * Community Action
- * Community Organisations
- * Charitable Support
- * Environmental Action
- * Community Health & Wellbeing

All projects are required to have other sources of funding, and the Trust generally contributes around a third of the overall costs, to ensure that the grants are well spent. It is vital that projects benefit as many individuals in the community as possible; the goal of the turbine and the Trust is to bring people in the community together, and improve social cohesion.

Supported projects to date have included:

- * Local sports clubs, for example floodlighting at the tennis club. In return for the £7,000 grant, the tennis courts have agreed to open up the tennis club to the local school for free lessons once a week, offering tuition for nothing. This was not a term of the grant funding, but was a suggestion; the tennis club complied and it has worked very successfully.
- * Funds towards improving the playing surface at the bowling club. The bowling club can now using the new surface to teach children about the sport and bring in new players. This has been successful in engaging young people, which can often be difficult.

"Younger people are starting to think about what they want to do next year and looking forward to next year's event, and that brings the community together."

- * Christmas lights switch on in small villages, with an evening's Christmas event. Younger people are getting involved, and the community are brought together. Young parents are beginning to think about what could be achieved next year – already planning for future events and ongoing community projects.

- * Leasing a vehicle to a local First Response unit, allowing volunteers to attend incidents ahead of the ambulance service in situations where immediate attention can save lives.

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A new First Response vehicle will be labelled with the Udney Trust logo to raise awareness of the funds and what they can achieve in the community.

* Pitmedden music festival which brings people together and sustains the culture and heritage of the area.

* Solar panels on a village hall, the income from which in turn has been used to subsidise running costs, and reduce costs to users.

* Pitmedden music festival which brings people together and sustains the culture and heritage of the area.



WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNT

The biggest setback in taking the project to completion was the issue relating to grants and loans and eligibility for the Feed-In Tariff.

It can be difficult to engage the whole community in a project such as this, and in the first year of funding there were few community projects suggested for investment. However, ideas are starting to be put forward now and the community are thinking strategically about the potential positive impact for the area.

NEXT STEPS

The Trust is also looking to fund larger long-term projects, for example the first community-owned pharmacy in Scotland. The community saw an

opportunity for a pharmacy in the area, and rather than having an external company removing profits from the area, decided to develop plans for a community pharmacy. The pharmacy is currently in the early stages of development, with plans for one full time pharmacist and two assistants. This facility would allow doctors in the neighbouring village to keep local surgeries open.

Providing three jobs in the local community, and reinvesting all money earned back into the community Trust will provide further economic stability for a rural area. Such a community asset will require a large level of up-front costs, and plans can only be taken forward due to the availability of grant funding including that from the Udney turbine.

The group recognise that there should be a balance between large capital projects and multiple small scale projects. Agreeing and maintaining an appropriate split between these scales of projects will be an ongoing challenge for the group.

The achievement of the community owned turbine has helped to improve confidence in the community, and show what can be achieved by a group of volunteers; success breeds success!

This case study has been created under the Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme.

The Community and Renewable Energy Scheme is delivered on behalf of the Scottish Government by the Local Energy Scotland consortium:

