

The Reading Sustainability Centre

Working to install hydro-electric turbines on Caversham Weir

Newsletter - March 2016

Welcome

Welcome to our Easter Newsletter.



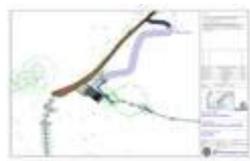
Progress on the Hydro

Over the past few of months we have continued to make steady progress with the hydro scheme that is planned by TRSC. Most notably we are very pleased to announce that we have received approval for our Environment Agency abstraction licence and flood defence consents.

Fish Pass

As part of our application to the Environment Agency, we have identified the best location for natural fish pass and have received approval for its design. This route will have zones with gravel beds suitable for fish spawning, and brushes that will ease the passage of eels and lamprey upstream.

The site plan can be viewed at www.google.co.uk/maps/@51.4619112,-0.9631977,16z



Planning Application

We submitted our planning application to Reading Borough Council in September last year. The Environment Agency have requested clarification of some technical points relating to local aquifers, and we are currently working with them to ensure that they have all required information.

Launch of the CBS

An appropriate legal structure is required to manage the next stages of fundraising and technical development of the hydro project. As such, a new Community Benefit Society (CBS) is being established. The founder members of the Reading Hydro CBS are Anne Wheldon, Sarah Rigby, Sophie Fenwick-Paul, Summreen Sheikh, Tony Cowling, John Redshaw, William Alliston, Stephen Boardmann and Duncan Turner, the first five of whom will take the role of initial directors. The role of the Reading Hydro CBS will be to oversee development of the project, taking it through the detailed design stages to financing and construction, then continue to run and manage the scheme and its benefit to the local community once

commissioned. To finance the scheme, in addition to a community share offer for local people to invest, we are seeking to work with investment partners who share our values. We are also looking to source grants or up-front investment for the initial detailed design work, and to identify a local business consumer to buy the electricity generated, as direct sales create more value for the end user as well as the generator.

Government Policy Changes

As some of you may be aware, Government has made a number of changes to energy policy since coming into power last May. Of these, the change with the greatest impact on the Reading Hydro scheme has been the Review of the Feed-in Tariff. This has seen Feed-in Tariff rates cut significantly for all renewable energy technologies, including hydro.

In addition, since November 2015 renewable energy schemes have been excluded from the EIS (Enterprise Investment Scheme), which provides tax relief to investors for shares in smaller enterprises.

These changes present challenges to the financing structure originally envisaged for the scheme, however we are confident that with the continued involvement and support of so many wonderful people, as well as local and national organisations, we will be able to complete the project.

The debates around these policy changes are ongoing, and we continue to lobby and petition to ensure that the full benefits of such schemes are recognised by Government. We are also engaging with other community energy schemes to find successful routes through the present situation to deliver our projects.

Contact Us

If you want to learn more about us, would like to get involved, or have any queries or suggestions, please get in touch:

visit us at: <http://ReadingSustainabilityCentre.co.uk>

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or find us on Facebook and Twitter:



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