



The proposed hydro-electric scheme in Glenachulish

The Lochaber Environmental Group (LEG), as a non-profit making, community-based, company limited by guarantee, has been offered the opportunity to develop a hydroelectric generation scheme in Glenachulish. Glenachulish is a forest glen embraced by the mountain horseshoe of Beinn a'Bheithir (the mountain of the thunderbolt). The woods are owned by Forestry and Land Scotland (previously the Forestry Commission) and the forest tracks are open to walkers and riders.

<https://forestryandland.gov.scot/visit/glenachulish>

This is a great opportunity for LEG to secure a stable financial future and to contribute, albeit in a small way, to the important task of replacing the use of fossil fuel with renewable energy. For the past 20 years, LEG has been fortunate to attract grant funding for a succession of environmental projects but there is always the risk that next year the grant funding might dry up. The income from a small hydroelectric scheme would provide base-line funding in the future and allow LEG some freedom to decide its own priorities instead of having to closely follow the preferences of others in order to attract funding.

The proposed scheme in Glenachulish has the potential to generate an average of approximately 1,900MWh per year. This is enough power to provide the electric energy to 450 homes. It is a run of river scheme and therefore it will cause minimum disturbance to the river and associated wildlife. During the construction stage, special precautions and regulations will be in place to minimise any environmental damage or disturbance to the wildlife.

The scheme will cost approximately two million pounds to build and commission. Like similar schemes elsewhere, LEG plans to raise this sum partly through a bank loan and partly through inviting local people to invest. Initially, the loan repayments and interest charges will take the majority of the income but later the scheme will provide an income to LEG.

Changes to the Articles of Association.

LEG will lease land from the Forestry and Land Scotland through a Community Asset Transfer. To qualify for this, changes are needed to the Articles of Association. The Memorandum and Articles of Association were drawn up in accordance with the legislation in force at the time that LEG became a limited company in 2003. Since then the legislation has changed and the articles and the memorandum are integrated into one document; the Articles of Association. In addition, the 2015 Community Empowerment Act has opened up new opportunities. To enable LEG to benefit, some changes are needed to the Articles and it is an opportunity to update the whole document. The main changes are to specify more precisely the community involved and to change the emphasis of the purposes of the organisation. The community remains as everyone resident in Lochaber which is defined as the two relevant electoral wards of the Highland Council. The main substantive change is

to the purposes of LEG which previously highlighted waste management. This has been widened to the goal of living in a more sustainable manner. The old and proposed purposes are shown below. These changes have been agreed by the Office of Scottish Charity Registration and the status of LEG as a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee will not change.

The formal mechanism for this change is that the Board of Directors have approved a resolution which is attached. The new 2005 Companies Act means that 75% of LEG members need to agree to the resolution. As you will appreciate, this is a high level of response so your involvement is extremely important. A voting form and a stamped addressed envelope is enclosed: your response is needed by November 18th 2019. It is a legal requirement that a copy of the proposed new Articles of Association is provided to you and this is enclosed.

The proposed changes

LEG objectives 1999. (The current text)

To create, develop, provide and assist in the provision of opportunities and facilities for the benefit of all residents of Lochaber in terms of:

- (a) The preservation, conservation and restoration of the environment of Lochaber for the benefit of the public
- (b) The advancement of education and training of the public in the study of the environment and of waste management

LEG Purposes 2019. (The proposed new text)

To help and encourage everyone in Lochaber to reduce their impact on the environment by:

- (a) Promoting the preservation, conservation and restoration of the natural environment of Lochaber for the benefit of the community.
- (b) Providing information and training about the environment and about ways to live in a more sustainable manner

The Community.

The Community is remains as Lochaber but is more precisely defined as residents of Highland Council Ward 11 (Caol and Mallaig) and Highland Council Ward 21 (Fort William and Ardnamurchan). Maps of these wards are available on the Highland Council website.

https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/501/polling_districts_ward_maps_and_review_information_2016)

Annual General Meeting

For more details and the latest information on this project and all the other LEG work, come along to our Annual General Meeting.

When. 6.00 pm. Tuesday 26th November 2019

Where. Volunteer Action Lochaber

An Drochaid, Claggan Road, Fort William. PH33 6PH