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# CARES CASE STUDY

## BROOMPOWER COMMUNITY HYDRO

### BACKGROUND

BroomPower is a 100kW run-of-river hydro-electric scheme south of Ullapool in the North West Highlands.

It is Lochbroom Community Renewables' first project and was initiated because of strong local support for community-owned renewable energy schemes. Support from CARES was used to help fund the project feasibility and development stages through a grant and a pre-planning loan. BroomPower reached its £900,000 community share offer target in 2016 with 54% of investors being from the local area.

BroomPower Community Hydro officially began generating electricity in November 2017.



- Project Owner: Lochbroom Community Renewables Limited
- Location: The Allt a' Mhuilinn burn, south of Ullapool
- Technology: 100kW run-of-river hydro
- CARES funding: Grant for feasibility study in 2012, pre-planning loan of £110,00
- Date installed: BroomPower began generating in October 2017

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## PROJECT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Lochbroom Community Renewables is a Community Benefit Society which was set up by the Ullapool Community Trust to run renewable energy projects.

An opportunity arose as Forestry Commission Scotland invited communities to develop hydro projects on local, state owned woodland through the National Forest Land Scheme. Two sites were identified and after initial feasibility work, the Allt a' Mhuilinn burn was the most viable location for a small-scale hydro scheme. The burn is on Forestry Commission land about eight miles south of Ullapool and rises on open moorland before dropping steeply through the forested slopes of the glaciated valley. It then passes under the A835 into the River Broom, the main river entering Loch Broom – also known as Loch Bhraoin, 'the loch of rain showers'.

Grant funding from CARES was used to fund the initial feasibility study in 2012. A further £110,000 pre-planning loan was essential to take the business case forward and develop the project. This development work covered all the pre-construction elements including detailed design, formal authorisation (planning permission, SEPA licensing, grid connection, Forestry approval and lease), Feed-in Tariff approval, various essential surveys, and tender specification and selection of construction contractors.

The CARES pre-planning loan bridged the gap between the feasibility stage and the launch of the community shares scheme which funded the project and repaid the loan.



## OUTCOMES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The BroomPower project was made possible by a successful community share scheme, supported by Community Shares Scotland.

The community share scheme was launched back in April 2016 with a "Hydro Hoolie" with a ceilidh band. The BroomPower team worked tirelessly to promote community involvement and investment from the local community and beyond. With only a week to go the group still had £480,000 to raise, but a final rush of interest saw the final sum raised in just five days.

Tim Gauntlett, Chair of BroomPower, said, "This is a magnificent result for the volunteer directors and supporters of BroomPower. The whole area of Ullapool and Loch Broom has responded to the call for community engagement and given this project a financial boost of confidence. It has ignited the imagination of people from across the UK and that also helped us to reach our target of £900,000. At a time of austerity and uncertainty, it is breath-taking that people have invested so much of their money. Maybe it is the simplicity of green energy, combined with a small community seeking to provide for itself, that has inspired investors."

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The official 'cutting the turf' ceremony for the hydro construction took place on 13th May 2017 at Braemore Hall, where local schoolchildren (who chose the name for the turbine in a competition) joined representatives of BroomPower and contractors to mark the occasion and name the turbine Flo. BroomPower officially began generating at the end of October 2017. The community hydro scheme was formally commissioned and transferred to LochBroom Community Renewables on 18th November 2017.

As well as generating renewable electricity, the BroomPower scheme generates income for a Community Benefit Fund. This was established after a Memorandum of Understanding was approved by shareholders at the AGM. The fund is managed by Ullapool Community Trust and the amount transferred was boosted by shareholders' gift aided donations of their first interest payments. An independent group of local representatives will distribute the fund on behalf of the Ullapool Community Trust, making sure funding goes to community initiatives aligned with the Trust's objectives.

Paul Copestake, Lochbroom Community Renewables group member, said, "Without the financial support of CARES this project could not have been entertained as a viable plan. The community group needed the initial grant to establish the scheme's feasibility and the loan to bridge the funding from the outline design to the successful community share scheme and construction."



Website: [www.broompower.org](http://www.broompower.org)

To find out more about funding from the Community and Renewable Energy Scheme, visit [www.localenergy.scot/funding](http://www.localenergy.scot/funding)

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