

# **A Neen Sollars Community Hydro Project**

## **Information for Prospective Members of the Cleobury Country Community Energy (C3E) Co-operative**

### **Introduction to the Neen Sollars Community Hydro Project at Tetstill Mill**

C3E Co-op will build a 10kW hydroelectric installation at Tetstill Mill, Neen Sollars on the River Rea. It will produce green electricity to the local electrical grid, providing around 20% of the domestic power use in village of Neen Sollars and locally meeting the national target of 20% renewables. This project will be a beacon for the region as it will be one of the very few renewable energy installations in the West Midlands and the first one to be community owned in this way. The key benefits are the practical generation of green electricity, the opportunity for local involvement in owning and running a renewable generation system, the opportunity for awareness raising and education in the local area, and the opportunity for a local social enterprise company to gain a modest annual income. This project has been entirely conceived and executed by local people and is working alongside wider attempts to improve the ecological status and sustainability of the Rea catchment. For example a fish ladder has recently been installed at the site in order to allow salmon to travel upriver: this has been designed to be compatible with the hydropower installation.

This project is collaboration between two not-for-profit organizations: Cleobury Country Environment Forum (CCEF) and Sharenergy, part of Energy4All, the most experienced organization in the UK in establishing successful community owned renewable energy co-ops.

### **Building on Success**

This Sharenergy guided co-operative will work along the same lines as Energy4All's 10 existing co-operatives. For more details please visit <http://www.energy4all.co.uk>. Work on the hydro project at Tetstill has been on-going for almost two years; during this time a comprehensive feasibility study and financial plan were completed along with the successful installation of a fish pass (September 2010) which was an EA project condition. The project is managed by CCEF supported by specialist assistance through Energy4All.

### **How the Co-operative will work**

- The Members of the Co-operative will raise the project capital through a share offer. This will enable the co-operative to purchase and install the necessary equipment. To date a limited amount of grant money has been found which will pay for connections to the electricity grid. The share capital to be raised is in the order of £150,000.
- The Co-operative will own the project under a leasing arrangement with the owners of Tetstill Mill. It will be run by its members and operate on a one member, one vote basis with an elected Board.

### **Investing in the Co-operative:**

- You can invest as little as £250 or up to £20,000. Individuals, organizations and businesses can support the establishment of the Community Hydropower Project.

- Shares will only be offered to the public once planning permission has been granted; a long term lease agreement completed and all other relevant contracts are ready to sign.
- The share offer will qualify for Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS) tax relief whereby investors can set 20% of their investment against tax, if investing over £500.
- Members of the co-operative will receive an annual interest payment on their investment. The target rate of return averaged over 20 years is 4-5% per annum (e.g., £1000 invested at 4% will yield a total dividend in 20 years of £800, almost equivalent to the original investment).
- All shares will be held in the co-operative for 20 years after which point the initial capital will be available for repayment to investors. An option, subject to an economic review, may be exercised by shareholders to keep their investment in the scheme beyond this date. Water turbines can have an operating life of 50+ years.
- The community co-operative will manage the ongoing maintenance of the turbine. A proportion of income is put aside for this purpose, with a corresponding amount providing for the ongoing administration of the co-operative. The landowners will receive low cost electricity in lieu of rent for the use of the site.

### **Benefits to the Community**

The Neen Sollars Community Hydro Project will provide renewable (green) energy into the grid locally, providing the equivalent of around 20% of the power requirements of the community (Neen Sollars) households and thereby making a significant local contribution to the reduction of the community's carbon footprint.

The project provides a rare opportunity to invest in a local, ethical and democratic social enterprise. The weir and installation are viewable from a public right of way and we will provide material to enable local schools to incorporate the hydro plant in their curriculum.

### **The Next Stage**

If you are interested in following the development of this project and possibly becoming a member of the co-operative please fill in the attached form and leave at the Cleobury Country Centre information desk (near Lacon Childe School, Love Lane, DY14 8PE) or send to:

Bill Duley [[phone 01299 270562](tel:01299270562)]  
 Community Hydro Project Manager  
 Cleobury Country Environment Forum.  
 Wild Acre, 2 The Paddocks  
 Cleobury Mortimer  
 Worcs., DY14 8EX

Email: [whdpathways@btopenworld.com](mailto:whdpathways@btopenworld.com)

There will be announcement in the near future concerning the official launch of the share offer. This will be in the local press, on community bulletin board, on the Cleobury Country website <http://www.cleoburycountry.com/> - see 'News & Events' and on the Neen Sollars Community Hydro website at <http://www.shareenergy.coop/neensollars/>

Issue date: 09.02.11

# **The Neen Sollars Community Hydro Project**

I am interested in receiving more information about this project and the proposed co-operative.

## **Address details (please print)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

House name/number \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

