

# Halton Lune Hydro

*Hydro-electric Community Project*

## 2022 Chairman's AGM Report

2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022

### 1. INTRODUCTION

It's certainly been a difficult year with the pandemic and the reported driest June to September for 130 years with the turbines stopped, as all available water in low flows, has to go to the fish passes.

The cluster then of named storms to mid-February with excessive rain "drowned-out" the weir, in that there is no useful difference in water levels above and below, to use the turbines.

The summer was however good to get maintenance jobs done at the Hydro, and plenty of others sunbathing on rocks with calming water trickling by, so some relaxation and relief of general pressures, as well as the sun's provision of vitamin D.

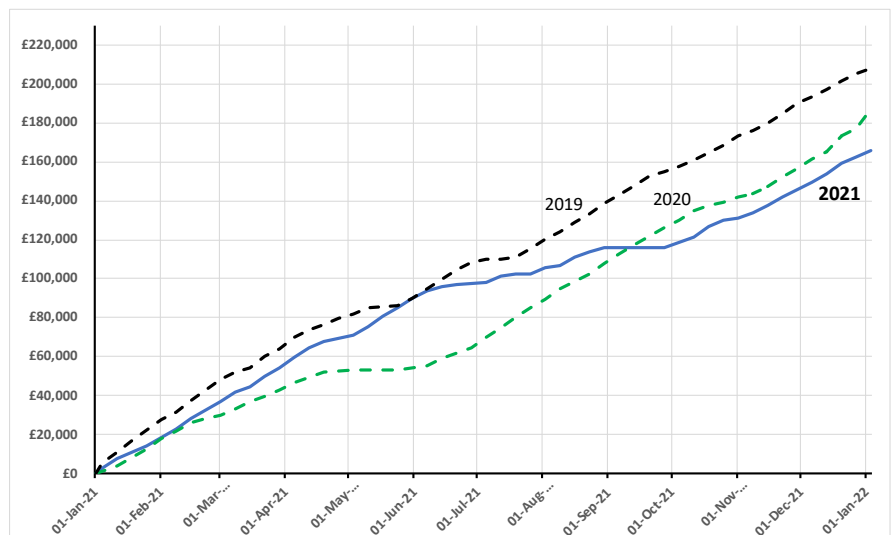
Another plus, is heading back to some form of normality with a face to face AGM Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> of April, upstairs at the Centre followed by light refreshments, so hope to see as many local visitors as possible for a Power Point Presentation, then work through a short agenda.

### 2. REVENUE

As you will see from the graph power generation, and hence revenue, varies with the weather each year. It was the long intermittent dry spell last year that was more influential than the relatively short-term storms towards the end of the year.

The resulting £165,833 revenue has to pay for annual hydro running costs, interest on shares, a donation to the Halton Lune Trust for local worthy causes and add to the ringfenced shareholder money

to be refunded by 2034. Turning to interest on shares, which is effectively a loan to the Hydro company by much appreciated "green energy" supporters. We have managed to pay the ideal 4% on the originally invested sum in recent years but were down on generation by so much last year that we have to reduce the interest for the 2021 year to 2%, to remain financially stable and achieve commitments.



As mentioned above, we must accumulate and ring fence sufficient reserves year on year to make sure we can repay all shareholders back over the defined period to 2034. Money still held for this purpose was £62,900 at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021, being funds that we must not use for other purposes but just sat in the bank not earning good interest, even though the interest paid out on retained shares is significant. This also reduces available money to operate the hydro and donate to the Halton Lune Trust for worthy causes, so should you wish to return some of your shares, it will assist us to stay on track. If so, please let the Company Secretary know by emailing [secretary@haltonlunehydro.org](mailto:secretary@haltonlunehydro.org) and the appropriate form will be provided, to enable the share transfer process.

Surrendering your shares does not however mean you need to break all ties, as we shall be pleased to offer a £1 "Retention share" to anyone who wishes to retain a voting interest in the hydro.

The law of averages "should" sort the weather for 2022, and I am hopeful of good generation, especially as we have a new grid export contract that better reflects the increase in UK electricity prices. Given good results we shall achieve all objectives, to include some of the extra revenue being reserved for major overhauls, given the lead turbine is approaching the 50,000 running hour point.

In summary, the project is achieving all of its objectives, with thanks to support of shareholders and the operating team.

### **3. ENVIRONMENTAL**

#### **a. Fish Counting**

Fish counting data is analysed and compiled by director Maria Angeles Solera, for monthly submission to the Environment Agency, along with automatically recorded water abstraction data compiled and submitted on a quarterly basis.

As mentioned last year, fish counting relies on three separate things: the resistivity strips (outside, in the fish pass channel), the fish counter itself (hardware and software programme) and the logger (software programme used to verify the counts). This year, all equipment has been in good working order for most of the time. However, we only managed to carry out fish trapping during the month of June 2021 (see below). This affects our ability to separate the counts into salmon/trout, so we had to use percentages by size, estimated in previous years.

#### **b. Fish Trapping**

The EA requirement for 5% of fish counted to be trapped for health checks operated through 2020 under director Kevin Frea's supervision. This takes place from the beginning of seeing fish movement at the end of May to October when autumn leaves block the fish gates, so 21 sessions with much appreciated assistance from the "early morning" volunteers.

The EA have joined the team on a couple of occasions and are currently considering a reduction in the trapping system, to reduce stress on fish trapped, so we await instructions that will become a variation to the Licence should there be significant change.

### **4. HALTON LUNE TRUST**

Photographs associated with the worthy causes selected by the Trust are on the external LCD screen at the Hydro and there will be a further update at the AGM, but for advanced information the Trust approved financial assistance in 2021 to:-

- The Halton Neighbourhood Watch to assist with signage.
- The Lancashire Wildlife Trust for fencing Aughton Woods Nature Reserve
- Halton Community Association to assist with exterior toilets and changing rooms.
- The Aughton Verge Project for Scythe and wheelbarrow training.
- Halton Juniors FC for essential pitch maintenance.

As always, on behalf of everybody, may I thank the Trust and early morning fish trappers for keeping everything in good shape alongside the Hydro team doing maintenance and the job of daily "Duty Officer".



..... John Blowes CEng MBE (Renewable Energy and the Community)