

Halton Lune Hydro

Hydro-electric Community Project

MINUTES OF THE 2025 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held in the Centre@Halton on Friday 11th April 2025 at 7:30pm

1. Present:

Hydro Management – John Blowes (Chair), Kevin Frea, Brian Jefferson, Nick Mannion, Jon Sear.

Other Shareholders – Sallie Boreham, Kathleen Jones, Linda Lambson, Debbie Storr, Debbie Storr, Tom and Vivien White, Graham Porter. (13)

Also in attendance - Carol Slinger & Jonathon Sewell (Halton Lune Trust), Andrew Richards. (3)

2. Apologies:

Apologies were received from Laura Aitken, Angela Blowes, Maria Angeles Solera Garcia, Sandra Gardner, Michael & Frances Green, Robert Hall, Phillip Harper, Michael Haswell, Fern Hodges, Graham Lister, Lewis Mackie, David Martin, Susan O'Brien, Joan Richards, Valerie Stevens, John Taylor, Linda Taylor, Tom Wilkinson, Andy & Linda Woodmancy, Norman & Sandra Woodhead. (23)

3. Chairman's AGM Report:

Chairman John Blowes welcomed shareholders to this eleventh AGM and provided a power-point presentation covering the highlights of the successful 2024 Financial Year and with comparisons to earlier years.

His presentation began with an overview of Government policy to support renewables and the place of this 'green' energy in the generation mix. Hydro is a small but growing part of the picture, although mainly in Scotland with higher head systems. 2024 proved to be a year with no dry period ensuring constant generation through the year, albeit the sale price of our generated grid export power was much lower than 2023. This still provided income of £265,000 and enabled another significant contribution of £85,000 to Halton Lune Trust for charitable purposes. The current year's tariff is due renewal in May and again looks to be slightly lower impacting future revenues in this financial year.

Eighty percent of our revenue is derived from the Feed in Tariff, payable for the first twenty years, which from 2034 will no longer be paid. It will be a challenge to operate in profit beyond that date with revenues thereafter expected in the £58,000 range. This is the reason underlying the need to repay shareholder loans before 2034. This year we have so far bought back £90,000 worth of shares, but still have a further £60,000 for further shareholder repayments.

Ownership of Halton Lune Hydro post 2034 will remain with holders of Retention shares. These can be applied for by those selling their shareholding to the Company, but still wishing to be involved after that date.

One very high river level last year brought a large amount of stone into the hydro inlet, although generation does not appear to have been too badly impacted. These will be removed by lowering a digger into the drained inlet area and the stones bagged for removal and resale by the contractor. The drain down is programmed for Tuesday 6th May and will be carried out mostly by our regular duty operators.

Low waters occasionally introduce blue green algae blooms into the river, indicating evidence of pollution which is a concern. Nevertheless, there were significantly more fish recorded travelling upstream in 2024 compared to 2023. Pollution checks earlier this year by one of the mountain rescue services has resulted in them suspending training near the hydro.

HLH have a grant funded £40,000 feasibility study contract to assist Lancaster Cohousing with potential improvements to the mill heating system that will increase the use of hydroelectricity and lowering the carbon footprint of the community. Improved metering of power used in different areas should also assist calculations for HLH and LCH income and cost sharing.

The chairman then handed over to Mrs Carol Slinger to provide an update of the activities of Halton Lune Trust.

