

## SMALLEST Case Study

### Upper Eskdale Development Group

#### Brief description of the group:

The Upper Eskdale Development Group (UEDG) is a community based organisation, set up in 2005 after the closure of a village primary school spurred the community into positive action.

After the closure, UEDG was set up, its members bought the vacant school building from the local authority and began developing it into a community Hub.



The first stage of this development is nearly completed and the space is already available to hire for social, community and learning activities, meetings, training, mini-conferences etc.



When researching the best option for low carbon heating of the building wood fuel was the obvious choice as the surrounding area is densely forested. Now the community are planning to offer renewable wood-powered heating to local residents, community groups and local commercial ventures, creating a local renewable source of fuel in the process.

#### Aim:

The primary aim of UEDG is to wean the community off fossil fuels and to create a model sustainable community.

#### Background Information:

Eskdalemuir is a small, isolated village located in the Dumfries and Galloway region of Scotland.

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### **Contact made with advisory services in the region:**

UEDG has been active in making contact with existing advisory groups in Scotland. The community has been in contact with the International Resources and Recycling Institute, the Big Lottery Fund, the Climate Challenge Fund and Community Energy Scotland (CES). CES helped UEDG to fund its woodchip boiler for the school building.

### **Examples of particular barriers/challenges in trying to develop the project:**

UEDG came up against significant problems securing funding for the woodchip project. The project was short listed as the Scottish village for the BBC and Big Lottery Fund, Village SOS programme and scheme; however it was unfortunately knocked out in the final round.

Due to these funding issues, UEDG have requested assistance in creating a successful business proposal to present to different funding streams.

### **UEDG Project Development:**

So far the group has installed a 12 KW pellet stove and two 9kw air-source heat-pumps in the old school. Additionally, they plan to install a 10 kW Pv system to generate power for community activities and create a small income stream.

The community group will build a wood yard with a facility for air-drying split logs and a hard standing area to site processing machinery. The wood will be bought from the Forestry Commission and other suppliers, processed on-site and then sold on to the local community. UEDG plan to assist local residents with installing wood burning systems in their homes and to set up an energy supply company which will supply heat to the famous Samye Ling Tibetan centre.

The new energy supply company – the Eskdalemuir Community Energy Supply Company (ESC) will allow the community to take responsibility for supplying renewable fuel for heat to the community.

UEDG's objective is to interlock with the main organisation embedded within the community, the Samye Ling Tibetan centre, with 80 permanent staff, a capacity of up to 200 guests, and more than 30,000 visitors annually, This will ensure a stable demand for fuel in the community, protecting the long-term sustainability of the project.

The UEDG project will create new employment in the area, reduce fuel costs and allow the community to work with the environment for a more sustainable future.

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