

Dolwyddelan Community Hydro Scheme

Over the last year the community council has applied for some grants that were available for community hydro scheme feasibility studies. We hired a consultant from 'Cymru.Hydro' to undertake a feasibility study and design a plan for the scheme. He has commissioned archaeology, ecology, topographical and tree surveys. We are just awaiting the geomorphology report. Once complete an abstraction licence will be sent to NRW and a planning application sent to Parc Cenedlaethol Eryri.

At this stage the community council has taken the project as far as it can. All the consents will be in place in the next 6-9 months. Going forward an organisation needs to be set up to take the project forward to the build and operational phase, within this 6-9month timescale. This organisation will also need to apply for grants from various funds for the construction works.

Option 1: The community could opt to set up a Community Interest Company (CIC)

A CIC is a regulated social enterprise that reinvests profits into community benefit. The community could set up and use a CIC model to operate the hydro project while ensuring surplus income supports community activities.

Pros:

- ✓ Ensures surplus profits benefit the community.
- ✓ More attractive to grant funders.
- ✓ Can trade freely while maintaining a social mission.

Cons:

- ✗ Limited ability to distribute profits directly to the Community.
- ✗ Increased regulatory oversight and reporting.

This option works well for the community wanting a separate legal entity while ensuring community benefit.

Option 2: Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

A CIO is a charitable structure that ensures tax-exempt status, making it ideal for projects with an environmental and community-focused mission.

Pros:

- ✓ Can be exempt from corporation tax.
- ✓ Strong governance and credibility for funding applications.