

# UistWind: The journey so far

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UistWind (North Uist Development Company (Trading) Limited)



# UistWind

- ▶ 1.8MW community owned wind farm in North Uist
- ▶ Been generating since 2019
- ▶ Operated by North Uist Development Company Trading Limited - a community benefit society - for the benefit of the community of North Uist.
- ▶ 234 members (increase from 220)



## UistWind - how it began

- ▶ Started in 2009 - community ballot and the feasibility study.
- ▶ To create a community owned wind farm in North Uist near Clachan to generate an income for the benefit of the local community “to support the 'social, educational, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing' of people residing in North Uist, Grimsay, Baleshare and Berneray”.
- ▶ North Uist has some of the greatest wind resources in Europe with a fragile economy.
- ▶ Initial delays then project stopped in 2014 caused by MoD changing policies regarding the erection of wind turbines within a self-declared exclusion zone around the South Uist Range and the Cletraval Radar (SG called in application 2013 & refused planning permission in 2014).
- ▶ Planning granted in 2017 subject to a planning condition for a radar mitigation scheme.
- ▶ The FiT rate in Oct 2014 was 3.46p/kWh. The FiT in tariff at financial close 0.64p/kWh; which equated to a loss of c.£4 million.



## UistWind - finalising development and into construction

- ▶ From planning permission being granted, Locogen appointed as PM, Triodos & REIF engaged, conditions satisfied, converted to a Benn Comm, share offer opened etc. Continued work with aviation consultant on MoD condition...
- ▶ Summer 2018 still no progress with MoD and lenders engagement on hold
- ▶ September 2018 after taking over negotiations; face-to-face in Bristol
- ▶ Due diligence with lenders started Autumn 2018
- ▶ Raised £453,850 from community share offer.
- ▶ Financial close March 19 2019. Up to July 2019 for commissioning and September 30 2019 to secure FiT.

# UistWind - Construction

- ▶ Once enter construction, no more support from LES and it ended up being one problem after the next -
  - ▶ Brexit - a big thank to Calmac.
  - ▶ Sheep haters and inquisitive visitors.
  - ▶ The crane incident.
  - ▶ The wrong turbines and wrong blades.
  - ▶ The foundations
  - ▶ Negotiating Sunday working.
- ▶ Until finally...

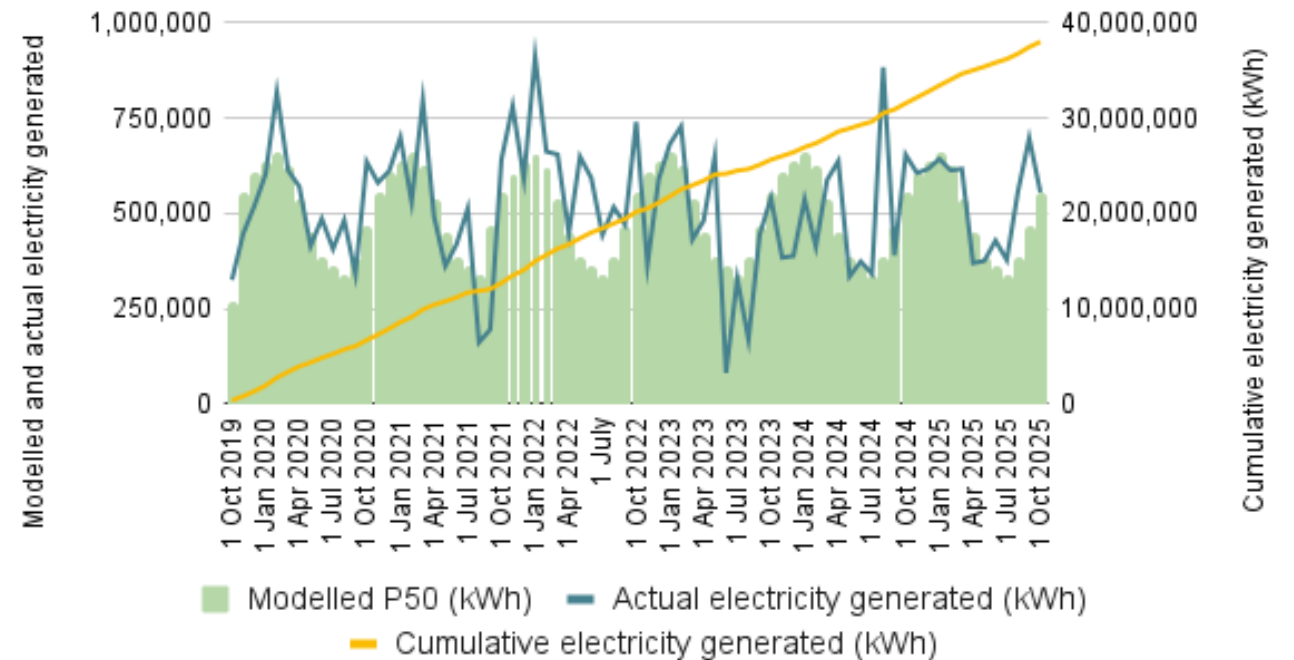




# UistWind - Operations and Impact

- ▶ August completed the lift of Turbine 1 and 2 for the FiT application which was submitted on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 2019 - deadline met!
- ▶ Since the start of operations UistWind has generated over 38 million kWh - equivalent to over 6 year's worth of North Uist household's electricity consumption.
- ▶ Thanks to coming under budget on construction and rebate from grid connection, junior loan repaid in full.

## Electricity generated by Uist Wind to-date (kWh)



# UistWind - Operations and Impact

- ▶ Built prudent reserves - to mitigate insurance exclusions, constraints and lender requirements.
- ▶ Built a strong Management Committee.
- ▶ Navigated the world of operations - it's ups, downs and nuances.
- ▶ Developed processes and procedures.
- ▶ Continued outreach and communications, including supporting community energy lobbying.
- ▶ Community investor return rate of 4% to diverse range of members.
- ▶ Over £80k lease payments to township
- ▶ Over £340k to local contractors



# UistWind - Latest successes

- ▶ Reviewed the Rules to add clarity
- ▶ Set up an MoU
- ▶ More recent challenge - recruitment
- ▶ Pleased to say UistWind has issued it's first grant - for the appointment of a development officer for the development and implementation of the first North Uist Community Benefit Fund.
- ▶ Also, the greatest success is when you are no longer needed...





# Lessons Learnt

- ▶ Take a holiday before you start!
- ▶ Over plan your human resources.
- ▶ Nurture volunteers and create clear roles.
- ▶ Become an expert at nagging and take charge.
- ▶ Beware of the sharks.
- ▶ Communicate transparently and lean on networks.
- ▶ Create your brand.
- ▶ Document everything and plan ahead.
- ▶ Be prepared for anything.
- ▶ Community benefit societies have additional responsibilities.
- ▶ Just keep swimming.

# Finally, a huge thank you

- ▶ All the project's advisers and funders over the years - LES, CES, Locogen, CSS, Triodos, HIE, WIDT, SHEPD, EIF etc
- ▶ To all the individuals we reached out to on the journey.
- ▶ To the project's supporters, near and far.
- ▶ To all the volunteers.
  
- ▶ And...to everyone who has listened to me moan, or cry, or both.

It takes a village.



Any questions?

