



LOCAL CLIMATE ACTION PROJECT PROMPTS NATIONAL CHARITY TO URGE COMMUNITIES TO TAKE THE LEAD IN TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

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As Governments meeting at COP27 this week are criticised for having climate change policies inadequate to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees C, the national charity Carbon Copy is urging communities to take the initiative and develop projects that tackle climate change at the grassroots level. It is highlighting Reading Hydro as an inspiring example of how local projects are finding ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, make lifestyles greener and to protect residents from the worst effects of climate change – without having to wait for governments to honour their promises.

Discussions amongst local environmental groups led to the founding of The Reading Sustainability Centre to develop plans for a hydroelectricity plant on the River Thames adjacent to Caversham Weir. This involved raising £1.2m to construct the hydropower plant, seeking permissions from Reading Borough Council and the Environment Agency, and engaging with local volunteers and specialist contractors.

The plant was finished in summer last year and is capable of generating about 320 MWh of renewable electricity each year for decades to come, enough for about 90 average homes without releasing carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

Community engagement has been crucial to the success of the project: most of the funding was provided by local people who invested in the scheme and volunteers prepared the site, built the turbine house which stores the generating equipment, and helped install the cable which takes the electricity to the main customer, Thames Lido, on the opposite side of the River Thames.

This project was one of just 27 outstanding community-led projects selected by Carbon Copy to form the backbone of the Running Out of Time climate relay route when it passed through the UK. It was the world's longest non-stop relay and thousands of volunteers – including a team from Reading Hydro - ran, cycled or sailed stretches of the total 7,767km/4,826mile route from Glasgow to Sharm El-Sheikh where COP27 is being held. The volunteers passed a baton from hand to hand containing a message from young people – signed online by over 800,000 people – calling on governments to provide the resources, skills and quality education that communities need to tackle climate change in their locality.

Ric Casale, co-founder and trustee of the charity said:

“Reading Hydro is an outstanding example of what communities, companies and partnerships at the local level can and are achieving right now. We want projects like these to inspire other communities and give them the confidence that they can do the same.”

He continued: “Collective local action is too often overlooked in discussions and decision-making about how to address the climate crisis. National projects are too large-scale for the public to get involved and individual action alone is not enough. Community-level action is a

vital middle ground where individuals can pool their efforts, knowledge and energy, and together take significant greener and fairer strides quickly.”

As well as this inspiring local project, over a thousand, big-thinking local climate projects have been published on Carbon Copy from around the UK, tackling a wide range of sustainability issues from renewable energy to food waste, sustainable fashion to eco-construction, nature restoration to energy efficient homes.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Attached is a photo of the Reading Hydro team running in the relay.

Carbon Copy is a UK charity, inspiring big-thinking local action on the climate crisis. We're here to help communities discover what's happening in their local area, to share and celebrate low-carbon success stories, and for projects to showcase their own brilliant examples of working together so we can accelerate progress towards a fairer, carbon zero future. It's a principal partner of the Running Out of Time relay. Visit www.carboncopy.eco for more information.

Running Out of Time is a collaborative event organised by the World Relay Ltd, multi-award-winning global leaders in mass participation relays. We've organised relays all over the world including across the USA and two non-stop month-long relays in London. Awarded honours for these events include Runner's World 'Heroes of Running'. Over 200k runners have participated in our relays raising over £1.9 million for good causes. www.theworldrelay.com

Other Relay Principal Partner Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) is one of the world's largest Education for Sustainable Development organisations, with over 100 member organisations in 81 countries and a network of over 60,000 educational institutions. <http://www.fee.global>

Relay Partners - <https://running-out-of-time.com/partners> Hundreds of partners brought this event to life including sponsorship from Ecotricity, Britain's greenest energy supplier.