**Government minister congratulates Saddleworth community hydropower scheme on winning “Engineering Oscar”**

The trail-blazing community project in Saddleworth has won a prestigious award from Institution of Civil Engineers and government minister Dan Rogerson MP has sent his congratulations to those involved.

The Dove Stone Hydro Scheme, which is believed to be the first project of its kind in England, has won the Community Award in the ICE North West Annual Awards – the region’s “Engineering Oscars”.

 The £516,000 project – funded partly by 160 shareholders and partly by a £220,500 grant from Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) – has been brought to fruition thanks to a partnership between private company United Utilities and volunteers from the Saddleworth Community Hydro group.

The Dove Stone Hydro Scheme generates enough electricity to power 75 houses, using the energy from reservoir water that would otherwise be wasted. The designers say the scheme effectively prevents the emission of 164 tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year and improves the outflow control saving an estimated 2 million litres of water per day.

**Environment minister Dan Rogerson**commented: “Dove Stone Hydro Scheme is a ground-breaking project which thoroughly deserves this recognition from the ICE awards.   
 “We provided £2 million of funding for the Rural Carbon Challenge to support initiatives just like this – promoting renewable energy while making important contributions to our rural communities. Everyone who played a part in Dove Stone’s success should be very proud.”

**Alan Butler, North West regional director of the Institution of Civil Engineers,** said: “These annual awards help showcase some of the excellent civil engineering that’s happening across the North West, but in this case we’re also looking at a hugely successful community project. Dove Stone Hydro Scheme is a fantastic achievement and it’s a great example of the innovation and the civil engineering genius that go into providing the North West with world-class infrastructure, while improving the environment and benefiting the economy.”

Members of Saddleworth Community Hydro say the inspiration for the project came from the 2006 Academy Award-winning film *An Inconvenient Truth*, about former US vice-president Al Gore’s attempts to educate the public regarding climate change.

**Bill Edwards, chairman of Saddleworth Community Hydro,** said: “We are delighted to have won an award from this professional institution. We hope that it will inspire others to use existing infrastructure to expand the use of renewable energy from water power.”

The principal designers of the Dove Stone Hydro Scheme were Gloucestershire-based hydro- and windpower specialists Renewables First, and the work was carried out by CT Construction of Chinley, Derbyshire.