

Why renewable energy?

In order to combat climate change the Government has a commitment to encourage the production of 15% of energy needs from renewable sources by 2020. These sources would include wind, wave and tidal power, biomass, solar energy as well as hydropower.

Hydropower can harness the flow of water in a river, using a waterwheel or turbine, to drive a generator to produce electricity. Hydropower is the most environmentally friendly of all renewable energy sources.

The nine SSHG sites operating in 2010 have a total generating capacity of 55kW. They now produce an annual electrical output of 200,000 kWh (units), varying slightly with annual rainfall and river flows. This is sufficient to power 50 average sized homes.

The group operates mainly by encouraging information exchange and mutual support between its members, and by holding regular meetings at the various sites. It does not itself directly advise or undertake feasibility studies at potential new sites.

However, members are very pleased to share their own experiences with others, and regular day tours are organised to the various sites now operating.

The SSHG also aims to try to influence Government policy and regulations to encourage more development of hydropower within the UK, particularly with the introduction of the Feed in Tariff in 2010.

More details -

[http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/Planning & Environment/Climate Change](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/Planning%20&%20Environment/Climate%20Change)

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South Somerset Hydropower Group



Generating renewable
electricity at sixteen
historic watermill sites
in South Somerset



South Somerset has inherited many **historic mill sites**, some with up to 1000 years of history, where waterpower was harnessed for the benefit of the local community. Water draining from the surrounding hills was channelled to turn wheels powering many of the local industries, such as corn milling, flax mills, woolen mills, silk mills and engineering works.

Many of these sites became disused in the 20th century, but now, with a re-emphasis on renewable energy, the mills can be adapted to produce green electricity.

The **South Somerset Hydropower Group** was formed in 2001. The original 10 mill owners engaged consultants to conduct feasibility studies and to negotiate the necessary licences from the **Environment Agency**. Grants were given by the **SSDC**, the **Energy Savings Trust** and **SWEB** to support this innovative project.

The first electricity from waterpower was generated in 2004, and by 2010 the membership of SSHG had increased to sixteen. Turbines and generators have so far been installed at nine of our sites.

