

Press Release

December 10, 2020

Funds saved by energy recovery technology donated to the charity Wells of Life Ireland

Tuesday December 8th 2020 was a cold but sunny day in Rathnure, Co. Wexford. It was also the day members of the Dwr Uisce Team, Blackstairs Group Water Scheme, National Federation of Group Water Schemes, and staff of EPS Water were waiting to mark a number of great achievements.

Photo: Pump as Turbine at the inlet of the raw water tank at Blackstairs WTP

The micro-hydropower energy recovery system at Blackstairs Group Water Scheme (GWS) Water Treatment Plant has been in operation for over a year. Installed to recover energy by means of a 'pump as turbine' (PAT), it was to produce electricity at significantly lower cost than conventional turbines. It was also to reduce the carbon footprint of the water supply scheme and generate monetary savings. That is what has happened! Over the past 12 months, the PAT has produced almost 15,600 kWh of electricity, corresponding to 3.6 tonnes CO2 equivalent and €2037 saved!

Thinking differently, the Blackstairs GWS Committee and EPS Group decided that the funds saved by the energy recovery installation would be donated to a charity. The charity of choice is called Wells of Life Ireland. Its mission is to provide financial and technical support for drilling and reconditioning community water wells in rural Uganda.

Ms Dympna Skelton, Blackstairs GWS General Manager, explained: 'When the idea came to donate to a charity we chose another water focused organisation. It is great to extend the positive results achieved by the Dwr Uisce project by helping people in another part of the globe. It enhances our own mission of providing clean safe water to the community'.

On the occasion, Jerome O' Sullivan (Group Energy Manager of EPS) on behalf of Blackstairs GWS, handed over the cheque for the sum of €2037 to Mr. Aidan Jordan, Operations Manager of Wells of Life Ireland.



Photo: Official handover of the cheque. (Left to right, front row: Mr Jerome O' Sullivan EPS, Mr Aidan Jordan, Wells of Life Ireland, and Ms Dympna Skelton Blackstairs GWS; back row: Prof Paul Coughlan, TCD, Mr. Padraic Dunne, EPS, Mr David Logue, EPS, Prof Aonghus McNabola TCD, Ms Roisin Dowd Smith, NFGWS, Mr Oliver Neville, Blackstairs GWS, Mr. Mike Reddy, Blackstairs GWS Committee, and Mr Benny McDonagh, LIT)

When asked about how the funds will be used, Mr Jordan said: 'The amount we received today corresponds to two thirds of what is needed to recondition an old well in a rural community in Uganda that will provide 20 years of fresh water for 1000 people'.

Trinity Professor, Aonghus McNabola highlighted the important role played by the positive responses given by all stakeholders throughout the duration of the project from idea conception to implementation and ongoing management of the energy recovery system. He said: 'A single 'NO' to the idea would have made all of this impossible; all parties have fully supported the Dŵr Uisce energy recovery project from the start. It is a great example of collaboration and partnership between industry, community and academia to achieve real sustainable technology innovation for the water sector'.

In expressing his appreciation for the achievement, Trinity Professor, Paul Coughlan said: “The initiative demonstrates mission extension in action. We see a non-profit community water organisation extending the geographical boundary of its mission to support a charity bringing safe drinking water to a community in another part of the globe”.

The Blackstairs Group Water Scheme, Pump-As-Turbine Pilot plant and the development of the technology and design software on which it relies was funded by the Interreg Ireland Wales Programme 2014-2020 through the Dŵr Uisce Project.