

Annual Report 2024/25



torrshydro
NEW MILLS

Torrs Hydro Annual Report 2024-25

Welcome!

Writing this on a cold February day with snow lying on Kinder, it is hard to remember the heatwaves of Summer 2025, and the weeks and weeks of dry weather with so very little rain.

This year, the succession of heavy rain storms, lasting from early October until February, followed by a drought from May to August, led to a disappointing total generation for the year of just under 98 kWh – in other words only just over half last year's output.

Nevertheless there has been a cause for celebration: in this year Archie reached a milestone on 26 November 2024 with the generation of the 2,000,000th kWh.



This achievement could only be realised with a good deal of volunteer input over the years. This year we are as always hugely grateful to our volunteer teams – Archie's Angels and Torrs Hydro Engineering Advisory Group – for all their labours. Whether it is clearing the silt and debris, carrying out routine maintenance, advising the board on engineering challenges, or simply taking turns at carrying out the daily checks, this all helps keep Archie turning as much as possible.

The Torrs Hydro board has also been busy behind the scenes and at board meetings this year: In particular, we have

- Amended the 'Untraced Members' policy, following member discussions and requests at last year's AGM.
- Progressed the Community Fund by planning a meeting for members and other local community activists to consider how the Fund should be managed and deployed. (The meeting was held in November 2025, outside this reporting year.)
- Considered whether the insurance, one of our largest annual expenses, could be reduced
- Looked ahead and carried out a financial forecasting exercise to consider what impact the cessation of Renewable Obligation Certificates payments will have on our annual income when they end in 2028. Currently they form just over 25% of our income from power generation.



*2025, a dry summer.
Time for some weeding...*

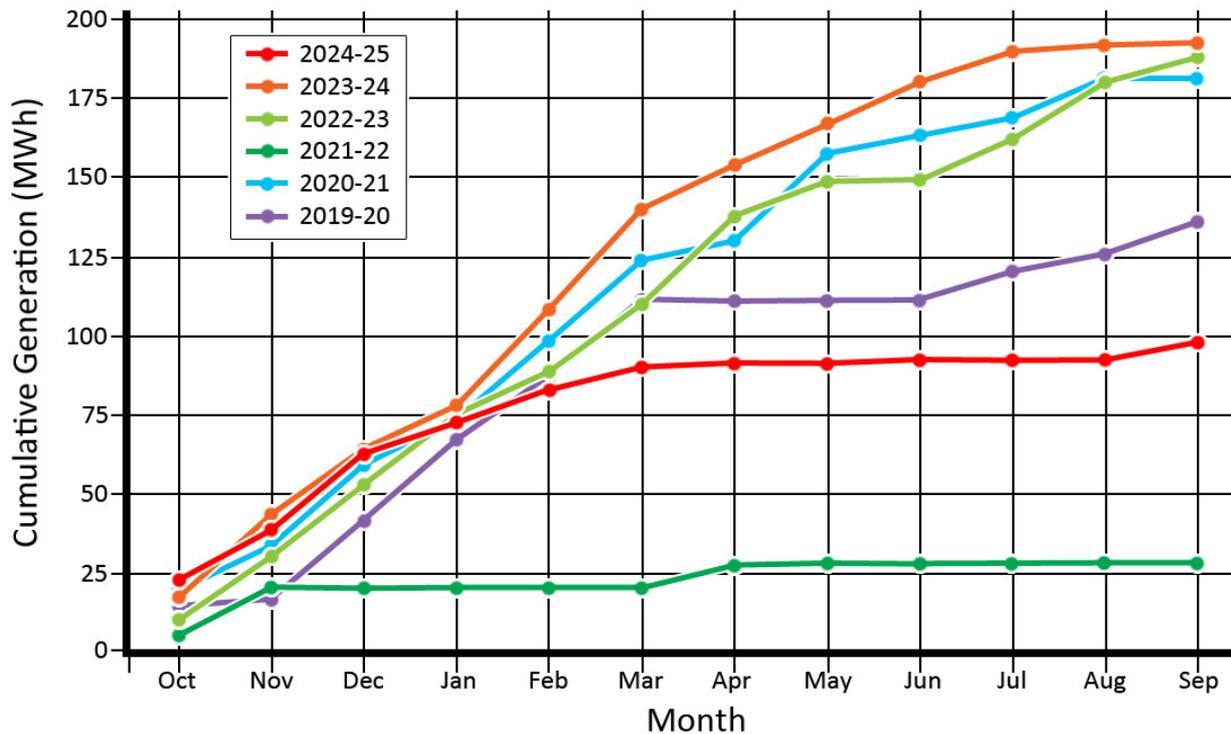
*A depth gauge fitted
next to the weir*



Plant report for 24/25

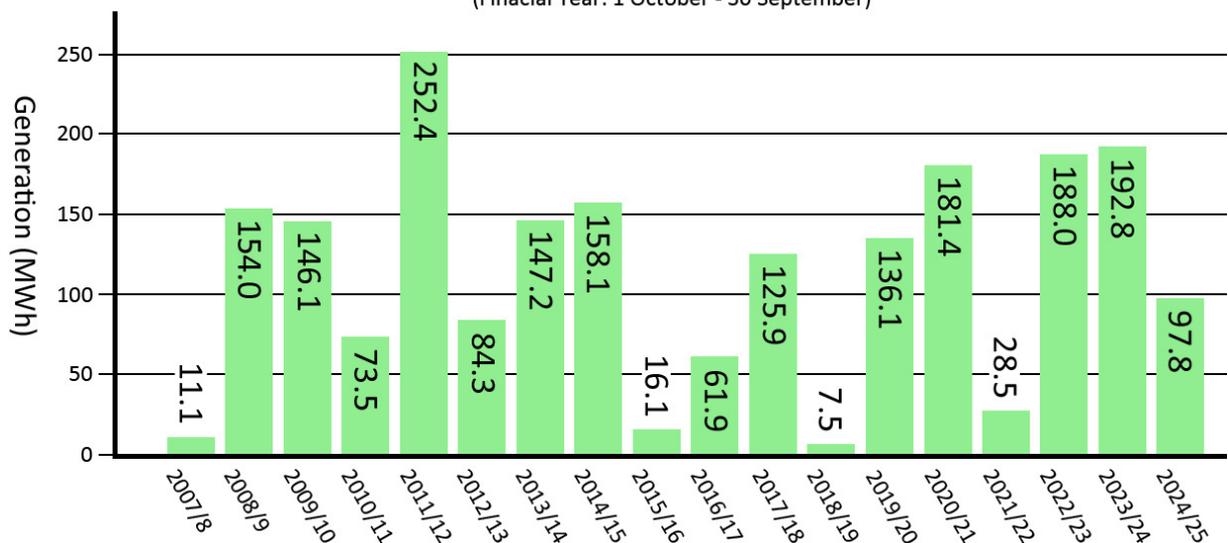
As mentioned above, the yearly generation total was significantly lower than recorded the previous year, thanks to very low rainfall in the second half of the year. The chart below shows the monthly output for this year (in red) compared to previous years. Note that 2021/22 was particularly low due to long periods of no operation while the gearbox was replaced.

Torrs Hydro - Cumulative Generation by Financial Year
(Financial Year: October 1 - September 30)



The chart below shows the annual totals for all complete financial years since starting the scheme:

Torrs Hydro = Annual Generation by Financial Year (Complete Years)
(Financial Year: 1 October - 30 September)



Storms Darragh and Eowyn caused a build-up of debris which was cleared through noble efforts by Archie's Angels. Heavy lifting was carried out by Torrs Hydro Engineering Advisory Group member Alastair and a friend to shift large stones on the Sett bend upstream of the inlet which improved the water flow, and resulted in a new wall on the bank in the process!

The Torrs Hydro Engineering Advisory Group (THEAG) of volunteers met five times during the year and continued to provide considered advice to the Board and practical assistance.

Regular greasing and maintenance was carried out and there were no major operational issues.

After the over-speeding incident and remedial control system works in the previous year, the remaining related task was to consider a re-design of the sluice gate to further improve the resilience of the plant. Maintenance company Hydro Maintain were commissioned to carry out the re-design, which will be assessed for benefit vs cost by the THEAG and Directors once received.

In accordance with our maintenance schedule, the famous bottom bearing is due for replacement in 2026, however following the advice of the THEAG, an attempt was made to change the bearing during the dry period in spring/summer 2025, in case weather conditions in 2026 are not good.



Silt blocking the intake after a storm

Work started in May to clear the bottom pond of debris in order to place the stop logs in position at the bottom of the screw and create a suitably low water level to carry out the work. An assessment of using an excavator to carry out the work was made, but no feasible solution was found. There are significant constraints in accessing the bottom pond and limits to the weight of plant that can be brought over the bridge: the size of excavator needed to have sufficient reach to carry out the work is too big to safely access the site. As a result, working parties started the process of digging out the debris manually.

The debris clearance work stopped after a site visit by Hydro Maintain, who were commissioned to carry out the mechanical replacement work. Hydro Maintain assessed that the water levels were low enough to carry out the work without deploying the stop logs, so no further clearance of the bottom pond was carried out. Hydro Maintain attempted to carry out the bearing change, but, after a number of attempts, were unable to separate the bearing casing from the bottom of the screw.

Several suggestions were offered for further mechanical methods to separate the screw. The Directors considered the risk of damage to the screw through further work against the risk of failure of the bottom bearing. Hydro Maintain were able to carry out a visual inspection and operational condition

assessment of the bearing in situ, and advised that there were no signs of deterioration that would indicate that the bearing should be replaced.

The bearing lubrication system was noted to be working well and we are also aware that the bearings at Stockport Hydro have lasted at least 15 years without issue. After consulting the THEAG, the Directors decided that no further attempt to change the bearing should be made during the year, and that in future years further condition assessments will be carried out by Hydro Maintain in order to inform future decisions on the timing of the next attempt to remove the bearing.

Financial Report and Comments

Thanks to the long dry period through the Spring and Summer of 2025, and despite the variable speed control installed in late 2020, electricity generation totalled just 97,764 kWh. This was barely more than half of the 192 MWh generated in 2023-24, and brought a correspondingly disappointing drop in income compared to last year. Nevertheless, as maintenance costs for the year were also lower than expected, we are pleased to report a surplus of £9,466.

12,500 shares were withdrawn in this financial year. This was higher than our annual target of 5,000, but was considered affordable based on our Reserves policy. Share withdrawal is not treated as an expense as it is a repayment of a debt, and therefore has no effect on the surplus in our Profit and Loss account. It does however alter our balance sheet, with less cash in the bank and less debt to repay.

The accounts for the year show that our net current assets, including the cash in hand, have increased.

The board reviewed the organisation's insurance cover, renewed each August. This year we decided not to renew the Operational All Risks cover. This was costing over £4,500 per year, has an excess of £5,000, and will only pay out in the case of a major plant failure if it can be adequately proved to the insurer that the equipment has been sufficiently maintained, and that the failure could not have been foreseen and prevented. Public Liability and Employers Liability Insurance (which covers our volunteers in their activities with Torrs Hydro) has been maintained.

Our Renewable Obligation Certificates (ROC) payments will end in 2028. These were an incentive to stimulate the development of renewable energy generation schemes, and paid per MWh generated over 20 years. For Torrs Hydro they have been providing just over 25% of our income, and will come to an end in 2028. However, our other income from the sale of electricity is increasing annually in line with the annual Consumer Price Index (CPI). This is based on price changes in the previous calendar year, and was 6.8% in 2024, 2.5% in 2025 and 3.4% for 2026. With the prospect of less income and other factors in mind, (e.g. inflation), we are therefore increasing our reserves to ensure we have the funds should a major repair be needed. Reassuringly, our financial forecasts show that the society will still be financially viable when the ROC payments end.

In last year's accounts we erroneously recorded our contribution to the 'Community Fund' as an expense, when in fact it was simply a reallocation of some of our surplus to a different piggy bank. The Income and Expenditure account for 2023-24 has therefore been restated, and the surplus has increased from £13,151 to £18,118. The balance sheet has not changed. The allocation to the Community Fund in 2024-25 has likewise been treated as a transfer of funds.

Promotion & People Power (Volunteering)



The period of reporting 2024 to 2025 was relatively quiet as far as volunteer work parties go. We had a few inlet clearings which kept the screw turning but everyone was busy and so tidying up the site and weeding and sweeping was not tackled to any great depth. The biggest turnout of volunteers was on the weekend of 10/11 January when over 10 turned out to help.

There was one highlight though. In mid-February 2025, two volunteers spent a weekend rebuilding a wall on the curve of the Sett just upstream from the inlet. There were some heavy stones to move and position and the result was a good, solid structure that should take the battering from the river for a good few years (fingers crossed)

We had open days and visits, and also a stand at the One World Festival. Weekend daily checks, especially in Summer, have become an opportunity to speak to passersby. It's always heartwarming to speak to people who are interested and appreciative of the work done by Torrs Hydro.

A small celebration took place on 26th November 2024 to see Archie generate the 2,000,000th kWh of electricity. (See cover page.)



Website: www.torrshydro.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TorrsHydro/

Email: secretary@torrshydro.org

Phone: 07827 743678 (Torrs Hydro duty phone)



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90 Market Street, New Mills, High Peak SK22 4AA