

Edinburgh eco projects awarded funding

Two Edinburgh renewable projects have been awarded funding from the Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES) to help with pre-planning costs in an announcement by Energy Minister Fergus Ewing.

In total 42 locally-owned renewable energy projects across Scotland have been given financial assistance of nearly £4 million in loans.

[Balerno Village Trust Ltd](#) have been given a loan of £20,000 for its proposed 0.065MW hydro project and £118,000 has been earmarked for the 1MW wind project proposed by [Greener Leith](#).

Greener Leith explained their delight at the award on their website:-

The project, which is a joint venture between Greener Leith and neighbouring community group [PEDAL](#) – Portobello Transition Town, proposes to build a single wind turbine on the Seafield Waste Water Treatment Site of between 500kw and 2,300kw. The electricity would be sold locally and the surplus from the turbine would allow a community fund to benefit the communities of Leith, Portobello and Craightinny.

Commenting on the announcement, Charlotte Encombe, Chair of Greener Leith said:

“We’re delighted to receive this backing from the Scottish Government, which will help us take this exciting project forward.

“If the wind turbine goes ahead, its surplus will allow a community fund that will directly benefit people living in

Portobello, Craigentenny and Leith. Not only will it will provide the resources for green projects that in the current economic climate may not receive funding, we hope it will become an inspiration for other communities to do the same for themselves. Of course there is still a lot of work to be done before the project gets the final green light, but we hope that the proposed wind turbine will become a landmark and a source of local pride; an example of what can be achieved when local communities work together towards a common purpose.”

Eva Schonveld, Chair of PEDAL – Portobello Transition Town said:

“PEDAL have worked hard with Greener Leith to secure this finance for Portobello & Leith Community Wind Energy Project. If it goes ahead it will bring material benefits to the local area as well as wider society and could also provide an inspiring visual focus for real sustainability on Edinburgh’s seafront. Clearly there is much still to do, not least in consulting fully with those who will be affected, but this award means we now have the majority of funds in place to take this exciting project to planning submission.”

The locally-owned projects will produce 56 Megawatts (MW) of wind and hydro capacity and make a contribution to the Scottish Government’s target of 500MW of community and locally-owned renewable energy by 2020.

Of the 42 projects, 29 are community-owned, one is owned by a rural business and the remaining 12 have been brought forward by farmers. All have made commitments to benefit the local community.

The loans total £3.909 million, and will support 32 wind turbine projects, nine hydro schemes, and one anaerobic

digestion plant. The loan scheme replaces a previous grant scheme.

Fergus Ewing said:

“These projects will not only help us meet our ambitious target of generating the equivalent of all Scotland’s electricity needs to come from renewables by 2020, but also benefit their local communities.

“Scotland is already leading the way in the UK, helping communities across the country own their own energy projects, and to benefit from them – last year alone, CARES grants benefited more than 300 projects across Scotland

“We want every community in Scotland to share in the rewards of the green energy revolution, and the CARES loans are a practical way to make that happen.

“All profits from the community-run schemes will remain with the communities, and all the schemes run by local businesses have committed to give at least 20 per cent of their profits back to the local communities, ensuring the benefits of Scotland’s natural resources are shared with everyone, as well as the jobs and opportunities the schemes will create.

“As the payments are all loans, they will empower not just these communities to develop experience and expertise, but countless more as the money is paid back and lent out again and again.”

Rural Affairs Secretary Richard Lochhead added:

“Farmers understand the benefits to be gained from renewables, but have told me they are put off pursuing schemes by the expense of reaching the pre-planning stage. These loans help farmers and land managers overcome that hurdle and take up the opportunities offered by renewables.

“The renewables revolution offers our farmers and land-based

industries the chance to cut energy costs, generate new income and contribute to our low carbon future. I'm delighted farms are now taking up this chance with the support of the CARES scheme and urge all land managers to seize this opportunity to benefit from nature, assist their communities and help Scotland maximise its potential from the renewable energy revolution."