Musselburgh community group given green light for solar panels

A Musselburgh community group has been given the green light to rent its roof space to a green energy firm to put solar panels on.

The Fisherrow Trust is working with Porty Community Energy on a project to promote the use of solar panels on heritage buildings and help local communities.

The Trust, which leases its Fisherrow buildings from East Lothian Council, had asked planners if it needed permission before installing the panels but has now been told it is permitted development and will not require approval.

Port Community Energy, which asked planners for a ruling on the project said it would allow the Fisherrow Centre to "maximise the community benefits of renewable energy by promoting themselves as an exemplar of a heritage building working towards carbon Net Zero in a way which also builds community resilience and capacity."

It said: "This joint project with Porty Community Energy aims to achieve
both environmental and societal improvements for Musselburgh, Portobello and the wider region."

The energy firm plans to install solar PV cells on the roof of the main building and annex as part of the community energy project.

It said slates which would need to be removed to make room for the panels will be kept in storage ready to be put back when they are removed in the future.

The Fisherrow Community Centre was established in the former school building in the heart of Musselburgh's harbour area in the Seventies before becoming the Fisherrow Centre in 2006 when the trust was formed and signed a 99-year lease from the council.

The trust, a registered Scottish charity, raised funds to carry out improvements in the centre and established it as a community space for local events and groups to use.

Last year the council signed a new agreement with the trust which transferred more responsibility for its management from the local authority to the charity giving it more powers to plan for its future.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter