

Small-scale power can reap big rewards

Community-run renewable projects are gaining in popularity across the Highlands and Islands as residents take the power of energy into their own hands.

The initiative is particularly beneficial to rural areas with a fragile economy, because it generates an additional source of income, provides funding to invest in local services and facilities, and helps address fuel poverty.

Many island communities already embrace these schemes and now more villages and towns on the mainland are getting on board.



In Caithness and Sutherland, for example, interested parties in the area attended a drop-in session in Bettyhill last month to find out how they might benefit from installing a small wind turbine.

This was the first of a series of events being organised by Caithness Renewables Ltd that will take place across the area to give communities the opportunity to engage with the concept.

"Householders need to protect their futures by ensuring they have taken full advantage of schemes such as increased insulation, and installing a renewable energy device such as a small wind turbine is a way of making sure you can meet your family's future energy needs," said Eilidh Gunn, energy adviser for Caithness Renewables Ltd.

A similar meeting also took in place in Dingwall last month where a co-operative has been set up to give the community a chance to invest and benefit from a wind turbine to be installed at Knockbain Farm.

Dingwall Wind Co-op is asking interested residents to invest between £250 and £20,000 in the development for a predicted 7 per cent return and an equal vote in the group. Tax-paying investors will also benefit from a government incentive that



Eilidh Gunn

could result in a £300 tax rebate on £1,000 shares.

"The project also has a community fund that will put an estimated £8,000 a year into the local area, which is completely off the scale if you look at what commercial wind farms typically put in — around £1,250 a year," explained Jon Halle, company secretary of Dingwall Wind Co-op.

Angela Spence | Feature Writer

For more information about Dingwall Wind and its share offer, visit: www.dingwallwind.org.uk or telephone: 01743 277119.

To find out more about renewable energy projects in Caithness and Sutherland, email: eilidh.gunn@caithnessrenewables.org or ring: 01847 500100.

We're your local windpower co-op. Join us.

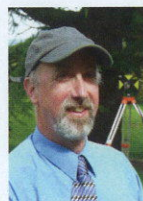
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We're building a medium size wind turbine near Dingwall. It will be Scotland's first 100% co-operatively owned wind turbine

- You can invest from £250 to £20,000
- Good financial return*
- All co-op members have an equal vote
- Local community fund (est. £8,000/yr)

SHARE OFFER NOW OPEN

The share offer document is available for download from our website. If you'd like a hard copy call 01743 277119 or email info@dingwallwind.org.uk and we'll send you one. **Share offer closes on 30th November.**



"Everybody should be able to share the benefits of renewable energy. We need around £850,000. It would be great if we could raise all the membership from Ross-shire"


Miles Davis, founder director

"We were going to take out a loan to build the turbine – but the co-op route is so much better. Instead of making money for a bank, the benefit will go back to local people"

Richard Lockett, Knockbain Farm



Dingwall Wind Co-op

www.dingwallwind.org.uk  @dingwallwind
Industrial and Provident Society Reg. No. 2770RS

* Average return to members estimated at over 7% per annum over 20 yrs. Significant tax benefits may be available.