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Case study: Tiree Renewable Energy Ltd

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Ann Kirby,
Director,
Tiree Renewable Energy Ltd.

Customer: Tiree Renewable Energy Ltd

Project: Wind energy generation

The residents of the Isle of Tiree, the most westerly island of the Inner Hebrides, have pulled together to preserve their community and protect their way of life. Identifying that renewable energy technology could help them to secure a sustainable future, they enlisted the specialist help of The Co-operative Bank to help them realise their dream.

Though the population has remained stable at around 750 for the last 10 years, the residents of Tiree were concerned that at some point in the future it could become economically unviable to maintain the island's amenities, including a school, a surgery, regular transport links and a care unit. Rather than leaving others to decide their fate, the locals took matters into their own hands and devised the Community Development Plan. Its remit was to look at ways of raising finance that could fund future developments on the island. The first major project is the Community Wind Energy Project.

"We're passionate about our way of life and wanted to safeguard our social, economic and cultural future," says Ann Kirby, Director of Tiree Renewable Energy Ltd (TREL), which is wholly owned by the Community Trust and comprising local people who are tasked with overseeing the project.

"The island has an abundant natural renewable energy resource; the wind, and after widespread community consultation we decided that a wind energy project would deliver the most benefit."

Sustainability in action

A 900kW E44 wind turbine supplied and installed by industry specialists, Enercon, was commissioned on 27 March 2010, with the official launch on 24 April 2010. Among the attendees were Chris Matthews, Kelvin Cheetham and John Puddephatt from the bank's Renewable Energy Team.

"It's been painstaking, but the fact that the turbine is operational makes it all worthwhile," says Ann. "The Tiree Community Wind Energy Project is the culmination of working in partnership with The Co-operative Bank. The bank provided some of the funding, but just as importantly, the Renewable Energy Team's knowledge, expertise – and contacts – were invaluable throughout the process. We might not have achieved this without them."

To the end of June 2010 the turbine has produced 613MWh, an increase on its anticipated target. The directors of TREL are now sharing the lessons learned with other remote communities across the UK who are looking to generate much-needed revenue from renewable energy.



Building on success: The directors of TREL celebrate the completion of the foundations.



Protecting the natural habitat: The site of the wind turbine was carefully chosen to ensure there is minimal disruption to the island's thriving local wildlife and animals.

Speak to our Renewable Energy Team
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