



IET Newsletter August 2017

Our aims and objectives: To promote involvement in and benefits arising from renewable energy initiatives, including wind, wave, tidal, hydro, solar and biomass initiatives and projects. To secure benefits from such renewable energy initiatives and projects for those living in or working on Islay, Jura and Colonsay. To promote involvement in and benefits arising from energy sources other than renewable energy. To encourage the public to adopt energy efficiency techniques with a view to reducing poverty within the community. To advise and educate the public on the effective use of all forms of energy.

Get ready for winter! There are several home energy efficiency schemes available to home owners and tenants to improve energy efficiency. IET wants to ensure that eligible residents in Islay, Jura and Colonsay are aware of what is possible, and to that end our stand at the forthcoming Islay Show on 10th August will focus on providing advice and guidance. Present on the day will be representatives from Home Energy Scotland and Argyll & Bute Council, and IET.

Most of these schemes have conditions attached, so advice will always be necessary. A&BC are once again offering the HEEPS:ABS programme, aimed at properties in Council Tax bands A-C (and band D with income below £20000) and offers internal and external wall insulation, loft insulation, cavity wall insulation and underfloor insulation. Grants of up to £7500 are available. Backing up this scheme is the HEEPS:ABS Loan Scheme, which can be used to cover any additional works required which go beyond the grant scheme, including additional repairs which may be required to get the full benefit of other improvements.

Warmer Homes Scotland offer support to improve insulation measures and also to upgrade heating systems. There are strict criteria to determine those who are eligible (see www.warmworks.co.uk) or by contacting Home Energy Scotland on 0808 808 282. The Home Energy Scotland Loan Scheme offers funding for a range of primary and secondary improvement measures including heating systems and renewables installations. The maximum loan is £15000, of which up to 25% can be claimed as a grant. A further pilot scheme is being trialled in Argyll & Bute, called the HEEPS:Equity Loan Scheme and administered by Care and Repair Services. This can provide for energy efficiency measures and repairs, aimed at reducing heat loss or damp prevention. The loan is secured by taking a share in the equity of the eligible property, so careful advice is required.

Finally, through the Islay Energy Community Benefit Fund, we accept applications for small grants under the Energy and Fuel Efficiency stream. This funding aims to support individuals and groups to modernise outdated systems, and also to help those in fuel poverty who need help to meet their heating costs. It can also provide additional support to the HEEPS:ABS scheme.

Islay Energy Trust is happy to assist as required in providing brochures and information on these schemes, and look forward to seeing you at the Show.

Review of the achievements of the past year:

1. The Castlehill Wind Turbine Project

The community-owned wind turbine at Castlehill was developed by IET and transferred to the specially-created Islay Energy Community Benefit Society (IECBS), which owns the turbine. The turbine has continued to perform well, producing 1,161,000kWh in calendar year 2016, and averaging 100,000kWh per month so far in 2017. These figures remain ahead of the original business plan, which is highly satisfactory. Through the provisions of an Operating Services Agreement (OSA), IET manages the turbine on behalf of IECBS, monitoring performance, dealing with maintenance requirements and handling all payments/receipts and book-keeping. This work requires a detailed understanding of all of the contracts and processes involved, and establishing routines to ensure all aspects are under proper control. There have been opportunities to improve and fine-tune these processes, the result of which was that the auditors of IECBS were able to sign off the annual accounts without any issues.

2. Community Benefit Fund (CBF)

Based on the original research done on behalf of IET, there are three main "target" areas which can be supported by the CBF. These are the development of further renewable energy related projects, the strengthening of community groups to provide environmental or social benefits, and the relief of fuel poverty and improvements to energy efficiency in domestic and community properties. The fund was launched in May 2016 and has been advertised in the *Ileach* and on the IET website (www.islayenergytrust.org.uk) where full details of the application method are available. A total of £60,000 was transferred from IECBS to IET as the initial contribution to

the CBF, with a further smaller payment anticipated later in 2017. At the time of writing we have received 35 expressions of interest, of which 16 so far have received funding of £22,536 in total, with 2 being declined support as out-of-scope. Full applications have been received from a further 2 of the Expressions of Interest. The applications are evaluated according to clearly defined criteria, by a panel drawn from the Boards of IECBS and IET, supported where necessary by advisors. We are indebted to the support of the Big Lottery fund during the initial period while the CBF is becoming established.

3. Islay Tidal Projects

The project to install turbines in the Sound of Islay received approval from the appropriate authorities in 2015. However, Scottish Power Renewables (SPR) decided that they should not proceed with this development alone, and subsequently sold their interest in the project to Atlantis Resources Ltd, while retaining a shareholding interest in the Atlantis company which now owns the project. Atlantis are focussing their current efforts on their 'Meygen' project in the Pentland Firth (see www.atlantisresourcesltd.com for details) which is progressing on schedule. IET maintains regular contact with Atlantis, and we await their decision on how the Islay project may develop.

Very recently, DP Energy Ltd were awarded a licence to develop the West Islay Tidal Array, off Portnahaven. While IET has no direct involvement in this project, we have been in contact with the company, to try to ensure that their communications with the Islay community are as open and informative as possible. The consent they have received involves a very significant list of conditions which must be fulfilled before the project starts, so we should anticipate DP Energy will become active in seeking to fulfil these conditions. IET is happy to discuss this project locally, to the extent that we can.

We have been in contact with a number of developers of smaller scale tidal stream devices, to establish whether any of these could provide a community-scale project, to increase local generation of green energy. These are all at very early stages of development, but given the tidal energy resources of Islay and Jura, it is important that we look for such opportunities.

4. Other work

IET will be a participant in an Atlantic Area project to investigate all aspects of geothermal energy, including air-source, ground-source and water-source heat pumps. This will involve research into the current situation in our area and in Argyll & Bute more widely, such that the relative costs and effectiveness of different approaches can be properly understood. This work will be in collaboration with partners from a number of countries and is expected to begin in October.

Other areas of research include how to utilise smart metering to enable local energy production to be matched with local consumption, as a means to put more control into local communities' hands. The Scottish Government's emerging energy strategy places great emphasis on localising supply and demand management, and there are likely to be several initiatives springing from this approach.

Your Board

The Board has remained unchanged over the past year. Stephen Harrison stepped down as Chair after his period of office, and has passed the baton to Glen Roberts. Board meetings are held regularly, are well attended, and properly documented and reported. We remain confident that we have the skills and resources to ensure that IET will continue to serve our communities effectively.

Membership

Membership currently stands at 343 and is available free to adult Islay, Jura and Colonsay residents (over 17 years of age), Juniors who are aged 12 to 16 years and Associate Membership for non-residents of Islay. The wider our membership, the greater our potential influence can be.

Membership forms are available from the IET office at the address below.

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