



## **Introduction**

Islay Energy Trust (IET) is a registered Scottish Charity, established in 2005. Our aims are to promote and develop renewable energy projects for the benefit of the islands of Islay, Jura and Colonsay, and to support carbon reduction and energy efficiency. We have over 350 members, and have conducted projects in tidal stream, wind, wave, biofuels, geothermal, hydro, biomass, solar and carbon savings activities.

## **Review of activities in the past year**

**Castlehill Wind Turbine:** IET acted as the developer of this project, and then established Islay Energy Community Benefit Society (IECBS) to enable local people to invest in the project, such that the benefits of the turbine could be retained and used locally. Since commissioning in April 2015, the output of the turbine has exceeded the figures from the original business plan. In calendar year 2017, it generated 1,193,000 kWh and to end July this year 602,900 kWh. The hot and sunny weather of June and most of July has been relatively wind-less, which has meant these two months have been well below the usual levels. If only we had solar panels as a hedge! IET manages all aspects of the turbine on behalf of IECBS, monitoring performance, dealing with maintenance matters, handling all payments and receipts and book-keeping. This arrangement continues to work very effectively.

**Community Benefit Fund (CBF):** after meeting all expenses, interest costs and loan repayments, the surplus income from the wind turbine project is transferred from IECBS to IET through a Deed of Covenant, providing the main basis for IET to fulfil a number of charitable purposes. The CBF aims to support three main areas of activity: the development of further renewable energy projects, the strengthening of community groups to provide environmental and social benefits, and improvements to energy efficiency in domestic and community properties (including providing support for individuals who may have difficulty in maintaining warmth at home). Transfers to IET have so far amounted to £90,000, and the Fund was launched in May 2016. Since that time 44 applications have received funds, totalling £64,892. The majority of the support has been in the strengthening communities stream, and has included projects at the Mactaggart Leisure Centre, Islay High School, Gortanvogie, Islay Book Festival, Coisir Og Ghaidhlig Ile, Islay Community Access Group, South Islay Development, Re-Jig, Museum of Islay Life, Cyber Cafe and several others. Applications in the domestic energy efficiency stream have included replacement windows, boiler replacement and insulation. We have not as yet found an economically viable renewable energy project, but continue to research a number of possibilities. The process for applications to the CBF has been reviewed and simplified, and operates robustly and well, under the management of Dr Billy Sinclair, who is always ready to assist applicants as required. All documents are available from our website [www.islayenergytrust.org.uk](http://www.islayenergytrust.org.uk)

**Support for Education:** we regularly receive requests from undergraduates and postgraduates to assist in their research projects in the renewables field. This reflects IET's reputation built up over the many projects we have tackled, and we are always ready to share our experiences, also with other third sector groups who face similar challenges to us. In the past year we have assisted six groups covering subjects as diverse as tidal stream, financing community projects, sustainability of islands and district heating approaches. We also participate in information exchanges with other groups in Argyll & Bute. Perhaps the most entertaining and fascinating support was for Port Ellen Primary School. They were successful in becoming one of six UK primary schools to reach the finals of the Rolls Royce Science Prize, and chose renewable energy on Islay as their topic. IET were delighted to assist the school, and organised visits for all the school pupils to the wind turbine, and thanks to Dunlossit Estate, to their hydro scheme and biomass boiler. The enthusiasm of the children and the school staff was tremendous to see, their final report is an enormous credit to all of their efforts, and we look forward to the judging of the competition in November.

**Islay Tidal Projects:** while there are two consented tidal energy projects around Islay (10MW in the Sound of Islay, and 40MW in West Islay), there is no current price support mechanism for the electricity which could be generated, and hence it is difficult to see a means to bring either or both of these major projects to fruition. Nevertheless, efforts are continuing to find a creative way forward. IET continues to work with developers of smaller scale tidal devices and is trying to raise funds to conduct a pilot project.

**Other work:** we have partially completed a complicated piece of work to investigate how to match the production of the wind turbine with the consumption of two loads, and thereby develop a means to put more control over the use and price of electricity generated locally into local hands.



We are delighted to advise that we have recruited Kirsten Gow to work as a Project Development Officer, and she will start on 23rd August. This will provide much needed expertise to allow us to pursue research into domestic heating systems as part of the geothermal Atlantic Area study in which we are participants, along with Allenergy in Oban.

There are a number of Government supported schemes accessible to domestic properties, which can be accessed through IET, or direct with the providers. These are the HEEPS:ABS scheme where details can be found on [www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/home-energy-efficiency](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/home-energy-efficiency) or by contacting Home Energy Scotland on 0808 808 2282, who also administer the Warmer Homes Scotland scheme. These schemes may have certain restrictions or limitations on what work can be carried out, but applicants from Islay, Jura and Colonsay may also be able to apply for supporting funding from our Community Benefit Fund.

Our Board has remained largely unchanged under the Chairmanship of Glen Roberts, with only one change being the resignation of the member representing Jura. We will however continue to ensure that contacts are maintained. The Board met 8 times in the past 12-months. Our Annual Report & Accounts is being audited at present and will be available shortly.

### **Longer-term Energy Strategy for Islay**

The Scottish Government has published its vision for energy, which places emphasis on localising supply, community involvement, decarbonisation, renewables and energy savings. IET wishes to help the community to understand where we are now, and where we might aim to be over the next 10-15 years. At present we import almost all of our electricity via sub-sea cables (local generation by wind, hydro and solar panels represents only around 8% of usage), and virtually all of the fuels required for industry, transport, domestic use (with only a small amount of energy delivered by wood and peat). Importation means some vulnerability, and increased costs, so any way to reduce this by local actions will be beneficial. We recently made a short introductory presentation to the Islay Community Council, and set out some of the challenges and the options which might be available. Over the coming months we hope to develop this work and generate community involvement in understanding our carbon footprint, and what it will take to reduce it. Such work will require inputs from all sectors of activity in the island, so that we can agree the scale and nature of the issue. We very much hope our members will contribute to this effort, and will set out initial ideas over the coming months.

Finally, membership of IET is free to all adults resident on Islay, Jura and Colonsay, or with associations with the islands, and juniors (age 12-16). The wider our membership, the greater our potential influence can be. Forms are available from the IET office at the address below.

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