

## **PRESS STATEMENT**

email: neil@publicaffairs.coop

phone: 07980 543683

### **STUDENTS AT HEART OF NEW COMMUNITY WIND PROJECT**

27th April 2015 - For immediate release

STUDENTS from rural Perthshire will reap the benefits of a special fund set up by a new community wind project in the region.

Heartland Community Wind will establish an annual bursary fund of £5,000 for students travelling to Perth College UHI from the PH15 postcode (Aberfeldy and Kenmore), where the renewable energy project will be sited.

Five students will receive £1,000 a year from the Community Benefit Society's funds to help them with the costs of further or higher education. The link-up between the project and the college will be formally announced and an outline agreement signed when the main share offer for the project is launched at the Birks Cinema, Aberfeldy, on Tuesday.

A 'pioneer' community share offer raised £450,000 to place Heartland turbine orders and the main community share offer aims to raise around £1.4 million to construct two farm-scale turbines, which have planning consent and are due to be operational by November.

The project, led by community renewables specialists Sharenergy, gives local people priority for share applications, with the minimum investment £100. All members, whatever their level of investment, can vote on the way the project operates, including the community fund, and will benefit from generous tax reliefs under the Enterprise Investment Scheme and projected interest payments of around 7pc on their share capital.

Sharenergy has already successfully assisted two similar community schemes in Scotland at Wester Derry, near Alyth, on the Perthshire/Angus border - and in Dingwall.

Margaret Munckton, Principal of Perth College UHI, said: "This is an exciting project which is benefiting young people in a highly creative way - and I am very pleased that the college can be part of it."

John Swinney, Scotland's Deputy First Minister, whose Perthshire North constituency covers the PH15 postcode, said: "This is an impressive and innovative way to ensure local communities derive genuine benefits from wind turbine developments. Decisions will be made locally, not in some far-away corporation's HQ.

"I am supportive of the sensitive development of clean and carbon-cutting energy in Scotland - and this project is especially positive because young people from the area will benefit in furthering their studies."

Jon Hallé, Director of Sharenergy, said: "These turbines will be owned 100 per cent by members, who will pay into a local community benefit fund at twice the rate of commercial

wind farms - and we are delighted local students will benefit. Members will be helping young people to study and to transform their lives."

A small panel, including a Heartland director, will examine annual applications for the bursaries and judge which students will gain most from a fund award. Successful students will be asked to report annually on their progress at college and have regular contact to help ensure a positive outcome for their studies.

\* The launch of the Heartland share offer takes place in the Birks Cinema, Aberfeldy, on Tuesday at 7pm on Tuesday April 28th. There will be a short presentation explaining the project and how to join the Society, and a chance to meet people who have been working on the project. Light refreshments will be available. [www.heartlandwind.org.uk](http://www.heartlandwind.org.uk)

## **ENDS**

Issued on behalf of Heartland Community Wind by Public Affairs Co-op Ltd

For further information, contact:

Neil Cuthbert

T: 0131 281 0856 M: 07980 543683

E: [neil@publicaffairs.coop](mailto:neil@publicaffairs.coop)

David Lee

T: 0131 281 0856 M: 07802 206695

E: [david@publicaffairs.coop](mailto:david@publicaffairs.coop)