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By email

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Dear Cathleen

Proposed Ardtaraig Wind Farm – Community Benefit fund explained

Following the submission of the Ardtaraig Wind Farm planning application to Argyll and Bute Council further clarity has been requested from members of the local community regarding the £147,000 community benefit fund.

To help clarify how this element of the proposal might work I thought it might be beneficial to highlight the following:

How much money is in the community benefit fund?

In line with current best practice for the onshore wind industry in Scotland, the total annual fund amount is based on £5,000 per installed Megawatt (MW). At Ardtaraig Wind Farm, the proposed application is for a total installed capacity of 29.4MW which equates to £147,000 per annum, index linked. The wind farm is expected to be operational for up to 25 years.

Who receives the money?

In this particular case we are proposing that the community councils located within a 10km radius of the scheme would benefit from the £147,000 fund.

The proposed wind farm is located entirely within the Colintrave and Glendaruel Community Council area which covers over half of the 10km radius. We therefore propose that 60% of the benefit fund is allocated here. The remaining 40% would be divided according to land area covered amongst the remaining four community councils: Kilmun, South Cowal, Kilfinan and Strachur.

How the money is managed and distributed is at the discretion of the community. Various options are available here and can be looked into greater detail should the proposed Ardtaraig Wind Farm be consented. We would envisage setting up a Community Benefit Liaison Forum in due course to discuss the matter.

When does the first annual transfer of £147,000 commence?

The initial payment to the fund would be transferred following the first year of the wind farm's operation. Payments from then on will increase in line with the retail price index (RPI).

What involvement does the wind farm have in the management of the fund?

Ardtaraig Wind Farm Ltd would play a minor role in the management of any monies, ultimately ensuring the local community takes control of what would be their money and income for the 25 year lifetime of the wind farm.

What can the funds be spent on?

Many other wind farm community benefit funds have supported green initiatives, such as: the provision of energy efficiency measures eg. double-glazing (frequently suggested by local residents at Ardtaraig wind farm information days); property insulation; and small scale renewable energy schemes or community projects such as the development of affordable homes for those working locally. As with most wind farm community benefit schemes, the only prerequisites on the fund would relate to religious or political support and the campaigning against future renewables projects.

An alternative approach is to invest this fund back into the operational wind farm and see the fund grow even further. Ardtaraig Wind Farm Ltd will make 10% of the wind farm open to community investment with the revenue shared proportionately.

I hope this helps to clarify the basic mechanics behind the community benefit fund as well as provide further assurances that, although community benefit is not a material planning matter or requirement, this fund is wholly included as part of the proposed Ardtaraig Wind Farm package. Although we believe that the prevention of emitting approximately *one million tonnes of carbon dioxide* into the planet's atmosphere is in itself a meaningful benefit to all, we are very pleased to be able to provide a benefit which can be used to support the communities which host our projects become more sustainable.

A very recent example of how such a fund can have a positive transformational impact on the community includes a recently developed Infinergy project (now owned by Eneco UK), Lochluichart Wind Farm, which through the Lochluichart Community Trust (<http://www.lochluichartcommunitytrust.com/>) provided funding for the Garve & District community's Broadband internet connection project, now due to be completed by the end of this year. As the headline in the attached BBC article (overleaf) states, "*Parts of Wester Ross to go from 'worst to best' broadband*".

If you have any questions regarding this fund or any other aspect of the wind farm application please do not hesitate to contact members of the Infinergy team directly using the contact details below:

Email: info@ardtaraigwindfarm.co.uk
Telephone: **0800 980 4299**

Yours Sincerely,



Kari Clouston
Project Manager

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Parts of Wester Ross to go from 'worst to best' broadband

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Sending even a basic email is a challenge for the communities involved

About 140 homes in Wester Ross are to go from one of the UK's worst broadband speeds to the fastest in the next few months.

Low connection speeds have been a source of significant frustration in the area between Achnasheen, Garve and Aultguish.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise and a wind farm community benefit fund is covering the cost of new fibre cables.

Community group Garve and District Broadband has been driving the project.

The voluntary body's Steve Jones said many residents were currently experiencing "very slow speeds capped at 0.5Mbps".

He said: "It has been an interrupted service which has made sending basic emails or doing basic internet searching very difficult.

"But with fibre we are going from the worst broadband to the best in one leap.

"So it's bye bye to that buffering blue circle that goes round and round in the centre of the screen."

Mr Jones added: "We will be able to email very easily, we will be able to actually see people on Skype, and be able to watch a YouTube video or watch that a film that has been downloaded or is live streaming."