

# Wind Turbines get thumbs up from EU - UK company Community Power Cornwall shortlisted for European Energy Action Award

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UK company Community Power Cornwall shortlisted for European Energy Action Award

Community Power Cornwall, a pioneering cooperative that enables local communities to own and benefit from renewable energy installations, has been shortlisted for the Managenergy Local Energy Action Award from the European Union. The company is one of only three innovative finalists out of a record 64 submissions from 23 countries.

The Managenergy Local Energy Action Awards are won by companies that show successful sustainable energy initiatives at local and regional levels. The pioneering co-operative that is Community Power Cornwall was established in response to the growing demand of local communities in Cornwall to address the challenges of climate change, energy security and rising fuel costs. It is a business model that is easily transferrable around the UK and more widely across Europe, hence its place in the final three. It is also designed in such a way that it does not rely on grant funding and aims to raise its own capital, which ensures the continuity of the project.

So far, Community Power Cornwall has successfully applied this financing model to the installation of two new (Endurance E-3120) wind turbines in the Cornish village of Gorran, each with an installed capacity of 80kW. These are expected to generate 480,000 kWh of electricity, and save 251 tons of CO2 per year. The local community has raised £80,000 (approx. €100,000) through their share issue, which is a considerable amount for such a small community. While the co-operative's initial focus is on wind-generated electricity—for sale on the national grid—they are in the process of developing a portfolio of other renewable energy technologies including biomass, hydro and solar.

Neil Farrington, Sustainable Energy Projects Manager at Community Energy Plus, the Cornish Social Enterprise which played an instrumental role in the creation of Community Power Cornwall in partnership with Kabin - the Cornwall-based co-operative development body, said: "It's a tremendous honour to be shortlisted for such a prestigious European award. Community Power Cornwall has already made massive strides in the delivery of community-owned renewable energy projects which we hope will be a beacon of inspiration for other communities across the region and further afield. The recognition from Managenergy means that our achievements in Cornwall could now help to influence projects on a European scale which is a really exciting proposition."

Alongside Community Power Cornwall, the other two finalists are from Denmark and Latvia. The winner will be announced at a gala awards evening on 19th June at the Théâtre du Vaudeville in Brussels in the presence of the EU Commissioner for Energy, Gntner H. Oettinger. The Awards dinner is the highlight of the EU Sustainable Energy Week (EUSEW), during which stakeholders and policymakers generate new ideas and actions to help Europe reach its energy goals.

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Photo: Launch of Community Power Cornwall's share issue in March 2011. The three men in the front row are, from left to right, Ian Smith (Managing Director of Community Energy Plus, Neil Farrington (Sustainable Energy Projects Manager of Community Energy Plus) and Paul Martin (Director of Kabin, the Cornwall-based co-operative development body) – plus shareholders.

Notes:

Community Power Cornwall: Sharing in the profits of sustainable energy

Community Power Cornwall is a pioneering co-operative that enables local communities to own and benefit from renewable energy installations. It was established in response to the growing demand of local communities in Cornwall to address the challenges of climate change, energy security and rising fuel costs.

The two most significant barriers facing communities that wish to install renewable energy facilities are a lack of options for raising finance and difficulties in securing planning permission for projects. Community Power Cornwall assists with both.

To raise capital for projects, the co-operative issues shares to interested investors—mostly to members of the community in question—that can then be used to leverage loans and grants for the installation of renewable technologies. All shareholders have an equal vote in how the co-operative is managed and developed. The objective, though, is always to consider the triple-bottom line: financial, social, and environmental responsibility.

Low carbon funds are also set up in each of the host communities, and surpluses made through the ventures can be allocated to re-investment in future local renewable generation capacity and broader low carbon activities.

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Community Power Cornwall, whose financing model has already proven valuable to local communities like Gorran, would be easily transferrable around the UK and more widely across Europe. The cooperative offers inspiration to other communities that share similar characteristics to Cornwall (e.g., are rural, not connected to a gas grid and have poorly insulated buildings), and who wish to reduce carbon emissions while securing their energy supply through investment in the local economy.

For more information on Community Power Cornwall visit: <http://www.communitypowercornwall.coop/>