

Energetic growth

Changes of Government policy over feed-in tariffs may have created an unsettled climate in the sector, but wind turbines specialists Aeolus Power still finds plenty of energy for growth.

The Bristol-based business has not long finished supplying and installing two turbines for the Gorran Community Project in Cornwall.

Community Power Cornwall assisted residents of Gorran and Aeolus was chosen to work with Capture Energy Cornwall to install the Endurance Wind Power E-3120 50kW wind turbines.

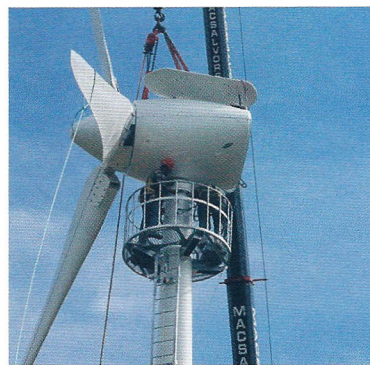
The small community in south Cornwall has now begun generating its own energy and exporting surplus to the national grid with the income it receives being used to support additional energy saving projects.

Aeolus has now installed six more in Cornwall, two in Scotland and one in Leicestershire. At an average wind speed of 6.5 metres per second the turbine generates an income of around £59,000 per year.

Kevin Heaney, VP worldwide sales and marketing of Endurance Wind Power said: "The company's expertise, experience and know-how are exceptional."

All of which has helped take turnover at the South Gloucestershire business to £1.5m turnover with five employees in just four years. Annual revenue is expected to double this year.

It is now wonder then that Christine Griffiths, which founded the company with her husband Peter in a makeshift cabin, won Gloucestershire Media's Women in Business Rising Star Award



TAKING OFF: (Top) Peter and Christine Griffiths, of Aeolus Power, and turbines being installed with the help of the Bristol firm

"showing outstanding ability within her sector" and was keynote speaker at the Enterprising Women Make a Difference conference in Gloucester.

Aeolus Power (Wind-Energy) Limited supplies and installs micro-generation wind turbines, ranging in size from 4.2kW up to 100kW and has customers across the UK including the Environment Agency, Bristol Airport, Giggleswick School in Yorkshire and a large number of farmers and landowners from Scotland to Cornwall.

It all started when Christine and Peter moved to their Grade II, listed farmhouse near Bristol the high fuel bills at home led them to purchase a wind turbine and it was then her business idea was born.

In a young industry she was on a sharp learning curve. It was necessary to understand the workings of a turbine, siting requirements, legal issues and how to install a 25m high turbine safely. Travelled to Canada, to meet the manufacturers of the world's most powerful 50kW – Endurance Wind Power and crucially in 2010 Aeolus Power (Wind-Energy) Limited became one of only four UK suppliers and installers of this powerful, sought after E-3120 wind turbine.

As the business has expanded so Christine has set in place an infrastructure to assist with that expansion – purpose built offices in Pilning, IT and marketing expertise, administration and sales support and a new business development manager.

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POWER OF THE SUN: Solar panels being installed

Renewables firm secures £2.4m deal

A St Austell-based renewables company has secured a £2.4 million funding deal to back a project providing 'free solar' for more than 20 clients across the South West.

Ethical Power won the backing from venture capital trust provider Downing LLP to roll out rooftop solar PV installations at sites throughout the region.

The funder backing will see the company, established by Tom Kneen and Peter McIntosh 18 months ago, install the panels on 23 individually-owned, commercial premises, at no cost to the client.

Under the scheme, resident businesses will be able to consume as much of the electricity generated as they require, which could save them up to £7,000 on their annual electricity bills, while Ethical Power will earn revenue from the solar panels via Feed in Tariff payments.

The Government review on FIT payments this summer saw the prospective development of large-scale commercial solar farms restricted by a 50kW limit to the maximum annual output of any given solar development. The move was designed to encourage the wider uptake of energy-from-solar, by domestic and smaller commercial property owners.

Ethical Power's £2.4 million backed project will see the installation of panels worth up to £100,000 on the roof top of commercial units, each capable of generating up to 50kW a year.

Under the FIT, revenue is earned for every unit of electricity produced, consumed and exported to the National Grid, via an indexed payment which has been guaranteed for the next 25 years.