

Carradale Community Trust Report - EKREG

It is a year now since East Kintyre Renewable Energy Group (EKREG), a small group of local volunteers, came together, as a sub-group of CCT, to explore the opportunities that consented renewable energy developments might offer the communities of East Kintyre.

In particular, the group sought to maximise the community benefits from new developments while investigating the opportunities for community shared ownership in local projects. This was very much in line with newly published guidance from the Scottish Government and in particular its desire to see at least half of all newly consented renewable developments having an element of shared ownership by 2020.

The group quickly realised any new windfarm in Kintyre would impact on more than one community council area, while developers would require to deal with a single body to deliver shared ownership. Consequently, members of the group spoke to neighbouring community councils who agreed EKREG should work in partnership with them and represent their interests in securing shared ownership.

As well as East Kintyre, community councils from West Kintyre, Campbeltown, Southend, The Laggan and Gigha are all now represented by EKREG.

Once Covid 19 restrictions are lifted, members will speak to representatives from Tarbert & Skipness and South Knapdale to hopefully secure a Kintyre-wide agreement to speak as one voice with developers.

The group recently received approval from the Financial Conduct Authority of model rules for multi-community shared ownership in renewable developments. Establishing this form of shared ownership is groundbreaking work for the group, developers and regulators and the structures and processes will be trialled at the Beinn an Tuirc 3 Windfarm. Much of the foundations and infrastructure for this farm are now in place and the first turbines expected to be erected in August.

EKREG is hopeful impacted communities (East/West Kintyre and Campbeltown) will receive the details of the shared ownership offer the developer, Scottish Power Renewables (SPR), is offering in early Autumn. The financial and legal details of the offer will have to be considered in detail (funded by a CARES grant won from Local Energy Scotland) by the communities involved before the project is taken forward to the next stage.

EKREG and community representatives have already held a virtual meeting with SPR and agreed an outline for both community benefits and shared ownership.

With 7 windfarms currently operational in Kintyre, 4 consented and awaiting construction, 2 currently under construction, 2 being considered by the Scottish Government and one seeking initial consent, there are busy times ahead for the group who seek to gain some financial compensation for the community from approved developments.

For up-to-date information on the group's activities and windfarm developments visit the windfarm pages of eastkintyre.org