



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Energy Security for Cornwall - critical or plentiful?

Following the lead by Npower, the first of the energy giants to raise prices at the turn of the year, most of the UK energy suppliers are engaged in a new year round of price increase announcements, resulting in significantly higher fuel costs for all of Britain's 24 million homes.

With average gas and electricity bills almost doubled from just 5 years ago, the latest price shock in the energy market comes just as the British weather threatens to bite with the first significant signs of a winter cold snap. Now Cornish charity Community Energy Plus is voicing concerns that more homes in high risk communities like Camborne Pool and Redruth, will be pushed into the fuel poverty trap, and face tough choices when it comes to keeping warm or running into debt.

So is the answer for Cornwall blowing in the wind? Certainly we have one of the greatest opportunities to take advantage of our natural resources, and both wind and wave power will make significant contributions to the solutions Cornwall needs, but the Aspire Project team at CSEP have high hopes of something much more innovative to provide long term solutions in Camborne Pool and Redruth, with development for a local Energy Services Company forming part of the regeneration plans, and offering a very real opportunity to provide energy security and price control at local level. For the first time since the mid 1950's, Camborne Pool and Redruth could have its own energy supplier, generating greener power and supplying it to the community, with surplus energy being sold to the grid to the benefit of Cornwall.

Director of Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership Tim German said "Together with reducing economic drain from the county, the contribution to research and development, the delivery of an all important knowledge based economy in Cornwall, and the bonus of reduced carbon emissions, an ESCo could offer both the business and domestic community in CPR a unique opportunity to fend off the serious social, economic and environmental threats posed by national and worldwide energy shocks".

Officially, one of the key reasons given for this latest incidence of energy price hikes is the rising cost of oil, which topped \$100 a barrel last week for the first time. Certainly the future of cheap energy and the end of our complacent dependency on fossil fuels must surely be on the horizon now, and if we want to stand any chance at all of returning to affordable and sustainable energy, its time to urgently embrace the opportunities from renewable technologies.

The actual amount customers pay for energy also depends upon where they live, with some areas of the UK paying significantly more for their energy than others. CSEP fully expects that peripheral areas like Cornwall will, in the future, experience the worst of financial impacts arising from reliance on an aging fleet of power stations, increases in imported fuel costs and mitigating the cost of power losses attributable to the national grid. Even the new Langage power station expected on line later this year is disappointingly vulnerable to the UK's new addiction to gas imports, and offers no basis to reduce the price its customers in Cornwall will pay to stay warm.

Business customers are likely to feel the pinch as well, with downturns in consumer activity, and the threat of a period of economic slow down, it's just as important for companies based in Cornwall to think in terms of not simply an energy audit of their business, but an oil dependency audit, including that of their supply and customer chains. Those that adopt a long term plan ahead strategy could protect their profits ahead of their competitors.

To find out more about the Aspire Project, visit the website www.aspire-project.eu, or contact the project officer at CSEP on 01209 614973.

- Energy Efficiency is the best, cheapest and quickest way to cut fuel bills, and making sure your home if properly insulated is the first step. Free and impartial advice on how much you could save on your household bills can be obtained by calling The Energy Efficiency Advice Team on 01209 614

- **ENDS**

Notes to editors

Picture caption:

The Cornwall Electric Power Company - circa 1950, picture by kind permission of South Western Electricity Historical Society

- **Community Energy Plus (CEP)** is a registered charity (Number 1068990) and profit-recycling company. Established in 1998 with financial support from Carrick District Council, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Health Authority and the Energy Saving Trust. CEP manages the international award-winning* Home Health project which was developed by the 72 members of the Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership.

- The **Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership** (founded in 2001) and managed by CEP, is a consortium of 72 organisations from the public, private and health sectors that are committed to a multi sector approach to a sustainable energy and low carbon competitive future for Cornwall. It is the first partnership of its kind in the UK and is providing a model for other parts of the UK. www.csep.co.uk
- CEP manages the **Cornwall Energy Efficiency Advice Centre** supported by the Energy Saving Trust (EST) and the County and District Authorities of Cornwall. It is one of 52 independent centres across the UK, providing free, impartial and locally relevant advice to households. Please call free on 0800 512012.
- The **ASPIRE** project was launched in October 2006, bringing together a partnership of 12 organisations representing 10 communities across the EU. The main objective of the project is to develop a replicable model for creating 'Sustainable Energy Communities' in peripheral areas of the EU. The county of Cornwall is represented in the ASPIRE project by the three neighboring towns of Camborne, Pool and Redruth (CPR).

For more information please visit the ASPIRE website at <http://www.aspire-project.eu/>

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