

# PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

## Inspiring Visit to Cornwall for European Energy Commissioner

Cornwall was the venue for European Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs' first official visit to South West UK last month. The Commissioner who is ultimately responsible for European energy policy and programmes across the 25 Member States visited Camborne, Penzance and the village of Ludgvan to gain first hand experience of the pioneering work undertaken by membership organisations of Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership (CSEP).

Commissioner Piebalgs, who before joining the European Commission was a Minister in the Latvian Government, began his visit by meeting leading executives from Cornwall and the South West at a meeting in Camborne. At the meeting the Commissioner heard about the innovative work of the Partnership, why energy sustainability is a crucial element of Cornwall's future socio-economic and environmental agenda and SWRDA projects such as the Wave Hub. Andris Piebalgs officially opened the new offices of CSEP and the organisations' managing company, Cornish energy charity Community Energy Plus.

The work of CSEP is regarded as best practice by the European Commission and over the past few years Cornwall has been prominent in promoting the importance of sustainable energy programmes in peripheral and maritime regions.

***"Local and regional communities play a key role in the development of renewable sources of energy and energy efficiency. The Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership is a good example of how bringing new forms of energy closer to the citizen can help to change the way we use energy towards a more sustainable model"***, said Commissioner Piebalgs.

The visit was arranged by CSEP in conjunction with Cornwall County Council and the office of Graham Watson MEP.

Graham Watson, Liberal Democrat Member of the European Parliament for South West England and Gibraltar said, ***"Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs' visit to Cornwall is another step towards maximising the advantages of British membership of the European Union. To give our projects a better chance of benefiting from Community funding, Commissioners - the top executives of the EU - must be aware of what is going on in my constituency. Cornwall is the county which has done the most in promoting alternative energy sources and it will be a pleasure to share our pioneering experience with the rest of Europe."***

The Commissioner and South West MEP Graham Watson were driven to meetings in the 2005 European Car of the Year, the environmentally friendly Toyota Prius, a hybrid vehicle that combines a petrol engine with a powerful electric motor to save on fuel and reduce emissions.

The 'host' of the visit Tim German, Director of Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership said, ***"The Commissioner's visit to Cornwall is a great boost for all those involved in achieving energy sustainability for the communities and businesses of Cornwall."***

***We have a very well progressed strategy here in Cornwall and are thrilled that the Commissioner is interested to know how Private and Public sectors combine to address issues such as fuel poverty, energy security and renewable energy generation in one of Europe's most peripheral regions."***

The visit comes at the end of the council year when all eight local authorities who are leading members of CSEP were awarded Beacon Council Status for Sustainable Energy. This year CSEP is taking the lead in a large micro generation project in agreement with the Government.

Andris Piebalgs visited Penzance harbour where he was shown bio-fuel research projects being undertaken by the University of Exeter, a partner member of CSEP. He saw working prototypes of a bio-diesel production plant and a jet turbine that runs on bio-diesel. He also went on board a fishing vessel which is being used to research how bio-diesel can be used as a 'green' fuel for fishing fleets - part of a Defra project currently managed by Seafish, where he meet the research team and other partners involved in the projects, including Seafish.

Project Manager Neill Wood, of Camborne School of Mines, which is part of the University of Exeter said, **"We were delighted to showcase what Cornwall has to offer the rest of Europe in implementing renewable energy projects. With fossil fuels depleting there is no choice but to look at renewable alternatives and bio-diesel is the best technology available at present. What we are looking to do at Camborne School of Mines is to facilitate the practical implementation of bio-diesel."**

Emphasis of the switched to a housing scheme at Ludgvan, believed to be the first of its kind in Europe to retrofit ground source heat pumps into a small estate of pensioner's housing. The Commissioner gained first hand knowledge of the socio-economic emphasis of energy work by CSEP partners. A tour of the 1960's houses will be given by Andy Moore, CEO of Penwith Housing Association, followed by a meeting with residents and project partners, GeoScience Earth Energy, Powergen and Penwith District Council at the village hall.

Commenting on the visit, Andy Moore said, ***"It is excellent news that the Commissioner visited an example of how renewable energy can help tackle the issue of fuel poverty, which affects many low income households across Cornwall. The work that has been carried out in Ludgvan is a good practical example of how measures can be taken to introduce renewable technology into existing homes. Our partnership with CSEP has produced a double benefit. Saving money for residents as well as reducing harmful emissions."***

**- ENDS**

## Notes to editors

### Biographies



*Commissioner Piebalgs giving the go-ahead at the Shell Eco-marathon car race*

**Andris Piebalgs** became Energy Commissioner in November 2004. Before joining the European Commission, he worked for almost a decade in diplomacy starting his diplomatic career in 1995 when he became the ambassador of Latvia in Estonia. Between 1998 and 2003 – he was the Ambassador of Latvia to the European Union, later – Undersecretary of State for EU affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia.

#### **MEP Graham Watson –**

*Seat:* South West England and Gibraltar

*Posts held in European Parliament:*

- Leader, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
- Member, Legal Affairs Committee

### Organisation Information

**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.

CEP, the lead partner of the **Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership** (founded in 2001), 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 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](http://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**.

**Camborne School of Mines** is part of the University of Exeter and is based at the University's Cornwall campus in Penryn. Camborne School of Mines offers the UK's first undergraduate programme in renewable energy.

The Sea Fish Industry Authority (**Seafish**) was established by the Government in 1981 and is a Non Departmental Public Body. From sea to plate, Seafish delivers expert knowledge, skills and support which help the UK seafood industry secure a sustainable and profitable future.