



The Westray congregation have offered Presbytery £36,000 to promote renewable energy projects in Orkney Churches from a legacy given by J Foulis.

Churches applying for grants to install heat pumps, wind-

back into the very heart of the community.

A typical project for wind turbine with direct heating would cost around £24,000. Orkney Islands Council have recently agreed to provide grants of around 25%. This leaves a

whilst repayment of the loan would be covered entirely (or close to) by Renewable Obligation Certificates (ROCs) over a 2 or 3 year period. A fund which simply paid grants out of fixed capital would be used up very quickly.

Congregations (particularly smaller ones, assuming grants were capped) would therefore be assisted to develop renewable energy projects that otherwise wouldn't happen. This, in turn, apart from the obvious environmental benefit, would save huge amounts on heating bills and also generate some long-term congregational income through ROCs payments.

That it should spread benefit widely throughout Orkney is also very much in line with the Eco-congregation agenda.

Such a fund inevitably involves some administrative work, particularly in assessing applications and there may also be legal or accounting costs in setting things up. However, by including a clause that all ap-

J FOULIS RENEWABLE ENERGY GRANTS

turbines etc. can currently expect to receive about 50% of costs in a Scottish Community & Householder Renewables Initiative (SCHRI) grant so long as their project meets appropriate criteria, most notably that *there is an appropriate community element to future building use*. This is encouraged as one small but important way to put the Church

25% (approx £6,000) shortfall, which is far too big a gap particularly for congregations with low reserves or income.

A separate fund has been set up to provide grants and loans (of up to £3,000 each). This would bridge the gap. By giving part grant (part loan at a low interest rate) the length of the fund would be extended

plicants must be recipients of a SCHRI award, the bulk of the assessment will already have been done by the Initiative's local Project Manager (currently Sam Harcus, Property Convener in Westray!)

In practice, it's envisaged that Sam would be able to confirm whether a project has or has not met the SCHRI standard.

Presbytery would then award up to £3,000 grant and £3,000 loan (at an interest rate comparable to the ROCs benefit).

The Presbytery is willing to take this on, with a small group to handle it, including two people from Westray. Applications for the grant should be made to the Presbytery Clerk at the Presbytery Office.

The following points were agreed by the Westray congregation and the Presbytery:

- The fund should be open to Church of Scotland (and partner) congregations within the bounds of Orkney Presbytery.
- The title of the fund should include the name of J. Foulis whose legacy has made it possible.
- Grants should be a maximum of £3,000.

- Loans should be a maximum of £3,000.
- The amount of grant and loan awarded need not be equal.
- In exceptional circumstances the group or Presbytery should be at liberty to waive the rules.
- Other sums can be added to the fund.
- Applicant congregations should be encouraged to join the Eco-congregation programme as part of the exercise.
- Any unused funds (original capital only) should be offered back to the Westray Kirk Session after a period of 5 years.
- The fund should meet all its own running costs

(eg. travel costs to meetings, any legal fees, accountancy etc.) so that it does not become burdensome on Presbytery funds.

- Congregations should still be encouraged to apply for other funding (eg. General Trustees etc.)
- Applications for smaller energy efficiency or generation projects which don't involve SCHRI grants (eg. renewable bulbs throughout the building, extra insulation etc.) could be considered on merit. Maybe a lower limit would be set for that type of project.

*Presbytery of Orkney
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