

SSE Airtricity to Hand Out Record Breaking Community Fund from Slieve Kirk Wind Park

Tuesday 13 May, 2014

More than £300,000 will be handed out to communities this year around Northern Ireland's largest Wind Park, Slieve Kirk, as SSE Airtricity prepares to award its largest-ever Community Fund supporting energy efficiency as well as to launch a new Regional Fund to support Third Level education.

Now in its second year, the Slieve Kirk Community Fund has already handed out around £75,000 to help fund 24 community-backed energy efficiency projects from areas such as Ardmore, Curryfree, Claudy, Dunamanagh, Dromahoe, Lackagh and Magheramason.

With the completion last November of 46MW of extended connected capacity at Glenconway, the Slieve Kirk Wind Park Community Fund has increased to a record-breaking £190,000 per annum, further supporting local communities delivering important energy efficiency projects. SSE Airtricity is now inviting applications from interested groups and organisations for funding under the Slieve Kirk Community Fund. The closing date for the receipt of applications is Friday 23 May.

In the coming months SSE Airtricity will launch a new £115,000 Annual Regional Fund from the Slieve Kirk Wind Park. The Regional Fund will support education bursaries with affiliated and accredited institutions to those aged 18 and over living in the vicinity of Slieve Kirk Wind Park and will operate alongside the existing Community Fund.

Sarah Hoolahan, SSE Airtricity Community Development Manager commented:

"At SSE, we believe passionately in doing more to support the local communities in which we operate. SSE Airtricity is the industry leader in community funding to rural and regional economies and communities. Through the SSE Airtricity Community Fund, the company empowers communities to become greener and more sustainable.

"We're delighted this year that through our Community Fund for Slieve Kirk Wind Park we will hand out a record-breaking £190,000 in funding support for local energy efficiency projects. We're extremely proud that this is not only the largest annual payment that we have made to a local community but that is also the largest single wind farm community fund in Northern Ireland. Through this support, as well as through the new Regional Fund which we shortly launch, we'll support communities in Derry-Londonderry and Tyrone over the 25 year lifetime of Slieve Kirk Wind Park through community payments totalling over £7.6 million."

To apply for this year's Slieve Kirk Wind Park Community Fund contact anne.reynolds@airtricity.com or visit our community page to find out more. Details of the new Regional Fund will be published in the coming months.

Since 2008, SSE Airtricity has invested over £450,000 in community funding to around 130 communities around its Northern Ireland wind farms. More than 230 projects have benefitted from the SSE Airtricity Community Fund, including schools, community halls and sports clubs.

Slieve Kirk Wind Park has been delivered through the development of the original 27MW Slieve Kirk wind farm near Ardmore with a 46MW extension of capacity developed at Glenconway Hill outside Limavady at a total investment cost of £125million. Completed in November last year, Slieve Kirk Wind Park was developed by SSE Renewables, Northern Ireland's No.1 renewable energy developer, in association with principal contractor Gaelforce Renewables, Omagh and Newtownabbey.

The 73MW Slieve Kirk Wind Park has been built at a total capital investment cost of £125 million of which £36 million has been spent directly with around 75 local supply chain businesses supporting local jobs and enterprise.

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