

9 June 2008

PRESS INFORMATION

Power to the people

The Phone Co-op has provided a financial boost to the UK's first community-owned hydro scheme.

The co-operative has recently invested £5,000 from its Co-operative & Social Economy Development Fund in innovative community energy project Torrs Hydro New Mills on the edge of the Peak District National Park.

Work has already started on the scheme to install a huge reverse Archimedean screw which will be used to generate 260,000kWh of green, renewable electricity every year, enough to power around to 70 homes. The first electricity will be generated in the early autumn and one of the very first users will be the local co-operative retail store.

An artists impression of New Mills [is available at www.thephone.coop/pics/new_mills.jpg](http://www.thephone.coop/pics/new_mills.jpg)

The Phone Co-op's Co-operative & Social Economy Development Fund is used to support new and developing social enterprises. With the approval of members at its AGM each year, the co-operative pays a proportion of profits into the fund and has allocated £110,161 to it over the past ten years. The fund is administered on The Phone Co-op's behalf by Co-operative & Community Finance.

Meanwhile the Westmill Wind Farm Co-op, in which The Phone Co-op has invested £20,000, has switched on their five turbines. This is the first onshore wind farm to be built in the south-east of England and is 100% community-owned. The scheme is producing enough renewable electricity to power more than 2,500 homes.

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Notes to editors:

The Phone Co-op is the UK's only telecommunications co-operative, procuring telecommunications services on behalf of its customers, many of whom are co-operatives, charities and other not-for-profit organisations. The Phone Co-op's service has been taken up by over 15,000 customers, including Christian Aid, Amnesty International, Triodos Bank, the Centre for Alternative Technology, Salford City Council and Unison.

The Phone Co-op was voted runner-up in the 2007 Fixed Service Provider of the Year awards organised by the Federation of Communication Services. As a co-operative owned by its customer members, The Phone Co-op distributes any profits which are not re-invested back to members via a dividend based on each member's spend and through a loan fund which supports other co-operatives. For more information, visit www.thephone.coop

Photo caption: Artist's impression of Torrs Hyrdro by Water Power Enterprises

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