

Budding engineers spin into action at Findochty Primary

Over 40 pupils from Findochty Primary School have taken part in an innovative workshop delivered by renewables company, Vattenfall, to help develop STEM skills.

Pupils learnt about different types of energy and the importance of transitioning to renewables before being set the task of designing and building a wind farm which met certain criteria, within a set time limit and specific budget. Pupils were also asked to create a company name and brand to accompany their design.

After the workshop, the tables were turned and Vattenfall's team were put to work by the pupils to help them plant around 50 sapling oak trees in their school garden.

Lucy Blake, Vattenfall's Project Manager for Aultmore Wind Farm, said:

"The pupils were a joy to engage with and a real credit to the school. It was great to see confidence build as pupils got to grips with the task, allocated roles, and started the design and build process. We were very impressed with the final designs, most of which achieved rotating blades - which is no mean feat!"

"The workshop was carefully designed to encourage team-building, critical thinking, budgeting and time management – all key skills required for the workplace – and we had a lot of questions from the pupils about what it was like to work within the renewables industry, so hopefully we've inspired some of them to consider a career in this field."

Dawn Thomson, Headteacher at Findochty Primary School, added:

"Everyone was fully engaged in the task set and the challenges that arose. The children worked in cross age and stage groups supporting and encouraging each other. There was a real buzz of excitement across the school and the children could not wait to share their learning with the wider school community. The event helped to ignite curiosity and wonder around science, technology, engineering and maths and left the children wanting to find out more."

"Our school children are passionate about tackling the opportunities and challenges of the world and the chance to be involved in real-life hands on learning has provided them the avenue to share their outside-the-box ideas and opinions of the world around them. After all, our future is in their hands."

In addition to STEM activities with local schools, Vattenfall is developing an onshore wind apprenticeship programme for Scotland that would secure 50 apprenticeships by 2030, subject to planning consent. Aultmore Wind Farm proposal in Moray would be considered as part of this initiative should it receive consent.

With the Scottish Government's net zero targets and ambition to effectively double onshore wind to 20GW by 2030, the renewables sector is set to continue to grow significantly. In December, Scottish Renewables reported that in 2021 Scotland's renewable energy industry and its supply chain supported more than 42,000 jobs and generated over £10.1 billion of economic output, with over 12,000 (FTE) of these jobs stemming from onshore wind.

Furthermore, a report released this week by ClimateXChange - focusing on Skills requirements in Scotland's onshore wind industry - found that in order for Scotland to meet its 2030 ambition, the workforce serving the industry will need to treble by 2027 and that over 90% of these roles will be in the construction and installation of wind farms¹. As such, it's critical that the younger generation is encouraged to start thinking about potential careers within the growing renewables industry.