



Hi-tech bus shelter unveiled

It may seem unlikely, given Scotland's changeable weather, but the UK's first ever solar and wind powered bus shelter has been unveiled in Lanarkshire. Based in Motherwell, the new shelter will be lit up at night using the energy stored up from its very own in-built solar panels and wind turbine.

For its official opening today, the sun shone on the newest addition to Motherwell's Airbles Road - much to the relief of Grahame Lawson from North Lanarkshire Council who said: "Our nightmare was that it was going to rain as that was the one eventuality we hadn't catered for. Maybe we should have put in a watermill as well."

The council says using such technology is not only better for the environment but solves their logistical problems of powering shelters in difficult to reach locations. Energy is gathered using a series of solar panels on the roof and when the sun does not come out there is a wind turbine.

Graham Norris from Adshel said: "We are working on the principle that if it is not sunny that it will be windy, so we'll get enough power during the day to power the lighting during the hours of darkness."

If this shelter is successful, it could eventually replace existing designs across the country.

A shelter from the elements - James Doherty

The first of a new generation of environmentally friendly bus shelters has been installed in North Lanarkshire.

The wind and solar-powered shelter, which will serve passengers in Airbles Road, Motherwell, is designed to be fully self-sufficient, delivering enough power to light the shelter and advertisements.

The shelter, which was developed in partnership with Adshel, the advertising company, is a first for the UK.

Karen Thomson, the development director at Adshel, said: "Bus shelters powered by wind and solar energy will be commonplace in the future.

"We'll be looking closely at this trial before deciding whether to extend it to more of our 40,000 bus shelters in the UK."

Councillor William Wilson, the convener of the roads and transport committee at North Lanarkshire Council, said: "This latest technology being used by the council is not only economical, but also helps to protect our environment."

The solar panels used in the design are located on the shelter's roof, while a five-metre wind turbine is hidden by foliage. Even a small breeze is enough to power the unit.