

*Under embargo until 4 November 2013*

## **FINALISTS ANNOUNCED IN 2013 NATWEST EVERYWOMAN AWARDS**

**Christine Griffiths, of Bristol chosen as a finalist in the 2013 NatWest everywoman Awards with her company, 'Aeolus Power Group'.**

The finalists in the 2013 NatWest everywoman Awards are announced today, recognising the women across the UK who are showing the vital contribution that female enterprise makes to the British economy. With Britain ranked one of the top global countries for female entrepreneurs<sup>1</sup> and continued economic growth forecasted<sup>2</sup> these business success stories are a tribute to the women behind them and will inspire others to follow in their footsteps.

**Christine Griffiths**, from Bristol, aged 56, has been chosen as a finalist in the Hera category for female business owners aged 50 or over.

Having run a successful decorative paving company with her husband for twenty years, Christine Griffiths was inspired to set up Aeolus Power when faced with extortionate energy prices at their new home, a listed farmhouse near Bristol. Investigating renewable energy options, Christine considered installing a wind turbine and faced an uphill struggle as there was little information available about what the process involved. Finally sourcing a manufacturer in Scotland, Christine realised there were inevitably others in her position, wanting to know more about wind energy, turbine siting and output.

In 2007 Christine & her husband launched Aeolus Power, distributing and installing individual wind turbines. With a client base of farmers, landowners and businesses, it

---

<sup>1</sup> Dell Gender-GEDI entrepreneurship index 2013

<sup>2</sup> Deloitte Entrepreneurship UK 2013/14

Press information available from Cultural Communications 0203 286 6980:

Charlotte Heath-Bullock [charlotte@culturalcommunications.co.uk](mailto:charlotte@culturalcommunications.co.uk) 07788 870861

Victoria Evans [victoria@culturalcommunications.co.uk](mailto:victoria@culturalcommunications.co.uk) 07766 244322

provides guidance and expertise to help individuals navigate the complicated paperwork and planning procedure involved with turbine installation.

Christine has grown the company from a kitchen-table enterprise to a team of ten at the purpose-built offices in Pilning, South Gloucestershire, and in 2012 the company had an annual turnover of over £6 million. Aware that the wind turbine sector in the UK faces challenges in terms of public acceptance and local authority approval, Christine and her team explored other renewable energy options and in July 2013 Christine added biomass to the Aeolus Power Group portfolio.

Judges including business founders Chrissie Rucker MBE (The White Company), Wendy Hallett MBE (Hallett Retail), Camilla Stephens (Higgidy) and Anna Lee (Storm Watches) presided over a record-breaking number of entries for this, the most highly regarded awards programme for British female enterprise.

Britain's multi-cultural society is reflected in this year's finalists with entrepreneurs hailing from New Zealand, Romania, Poland and South Africa. Young enterprise was commended with the under 25 category showing the strongest nominees in the awards' 11 year history and demonstrating that entrepreneurship is now a first choice rather than a fall back. British manufacturing is also well represented with no less than 6 of the finalists opting to make their products in the UK.

The economic downturn has proven positive for women in enterprise with research by RBS<sup>3</sup> showing an increase of 300,000 self-employed women. Eschewing the lifestyle label, the GROWE report also cited women-owned businesses as more ambitious than their male counterparts<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>3</sup> Women in Enterprise: A Different Perspective 2013

<sup>4</sup> Women's Enterprise Task Force 2009

Press information available from Cultural Communications 0203 286 6980:

Charlotte Heath-Bullock [charlotte@culturalcommunications.co.uk](mailto:charlotte@culturalcommunications.co.uk) 07788 870861

Victoria Evans [victoria@culturalcommunications.co.uk](mailto:victoria@culturalcommunications.co.uk) 07766 244322

Speaking about this year's awards, everywoman co-founder **Maxine Benson MBE** comments, "Now is the time to shrug off the spectre of recession and celebrate the individuals who are contributing to economic recovery through their vision and success. This year's finalists unilaterally saw the opportunity for growth and have proven that the UK is enterprise friendly and open for business. Women-led SME's already contribute £70 billion to the economy. With an estimated 2.4m women not in work who want to work, if we could just equalise men and women's economic participation we could add 10% to the economy by 2030<sup>5</sup>. It is vital, therefore, that we foster entrepreneurial culture to ensure the UK economy continues its recovery and its ability to compete on a global scale."

**Anne McPherson**, Managing Director, Diversity in Business at NatWest says, "At NatWest, we recognise the importance of helping women set up and grow their businesses. We have over 200 externally accredited Women in Business specialists across the country who share and understand our customers' ambitions and provide coaching, networking and mentoring opportunities to help them fulfil their potential and build successful businesses. We are delighted to be supporting the NatWest everywoman awards for the 11th year running and are particularly pleased to see so many of our customers being shortlisted this year. This awards programme has created some amazing role models who inspire other women to take their first steps in realising their business idea. NatWest supports everywoman to demonstrate our commitment to Women in Business."

The NatWest everywoman Awards were launched 11 years ago to celebrate British entrepreneurship, creating female role models to demonstrate the benefits and

---

<sup>5</sup> Women's Business Council: Maximising women's contribution to future economic growth 2013  
Press information available from Cultural Communications 0203 286 6980:  
Charlotte Heath-Bullock [charlotte@culturalcommunications.co.uk](mailto:charlotte@culturalcommunications.co.uk) 07788 870861  
Victoria Evans [victoria@culturalcommunications.co.uk](mailto:victoria@culturalcommunications.co.uk) 07766 244322

rewards of business ownership. The finalists announced today are shining examples proving that with an idea, some tenacity and determination, success can be realised.

Several finalists have overcome obstacles such as redundancy and youth unemployment with others surmounting cultural and language barriers.

[www.everywoman.com/ewawards](http://www.everywoman.com/ewawards)

The winners of the five categories will be announced on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December at a lunch ceremony at London's Dorchester Hotel. The ceremony will once again be a high profile occasion attended by successful women in business and will be compered by acclaimed newsreader Mary Nightingale.

## ENDS

### About everywoman

Founded in September 1999, everywoman supports any woman at any stage in their career. Our clients range from companies who want to develop and retain a pipeline of female leaders, through to individual women, who believe challenge and change are essential to their future success. For those women starting out or looking to progress their careers or businesses, the everywomanNetwork provides personal development resources, connections, advice and inspiration to address the issues we know women face. As they progress, our events and leadership programmes support the development of confident, capable and charismatic leaders. Promotion to the top echelons of senior management or being at the helm of your own large business brings with it a different set of challenges, ones addressed by everywomanClub. Our Award programmes and projects such as The Navigator and Modern Muse showcase role models who inform and inspire future leaders and the next generation, positioning the organisations they work for as ones with career opportunities for women. [www.everywoman.com](http://www.everywoman.com)

### About NatWest

NatWest is proud to lead the way as the pioneering bank for female enterprise. The NatWest Women in Business service offers a network of locally based specialists dedicated to supporting the needs of female entrepreneurs. NatWest recognises the contribution that female business owners make to the economy and are proud to work with organisations such as everywoman that promote women's enterprise. For more information, visit [natwest.com/business](http://natwest.com/business), call 0800 041 3041, Minicom 0800 169 0088, or email [DiversityinBusinessB&C@natwest.com](mailto:DiversityinBusinessB&C@natwest.com)

Press information available from Cultural Communications 0203 286 6980:

Charlotte Heath-Bullock [charlotte@culturalcommunications.co.uk](mailto:charlotte@culturalcommunications.co.uk) 07788 870861

Victoria Evans [victoria@culturalcommunications.co.uk](mailto:victoria@culturalcommunications.co.uk) 07766 244322