

held across the Highlands to help families deal with the aftermath of the UK Government's new welfare reform bill. The proposal would see widespread changes to the country's benefit system which will affect millions of people currently receiving support.

Director of social work Bill Alexander said: "Once the details of the welfare reform bill become clear we will be talking to families to see how we can help them."

Top climber to give talk on safety

A Highland mountain instructor who conquered the world's Seven Summits will give a lecture on winter mountain safety at Aviemore later this month.

Di Gilbert, 37, who completed the series of strenuous climbs in 2010, has also previously worked as an operations manager in Antarctica. She will appear at the free event organised by the Mountaineering Council of Scotland at the Mountain Cafe, Grampian Road, at 8pm on January 25.

University staff off to Czech conference

Staff from the University of the Highlands and Islands are travelling to the Czech Republic next week to run a business culture conference.

The gathering, on Tuesday, brings together delegates from six other European regions to look at how collaboration between universities, industry and the private sector can help grow an innovative business culture, particularly in isolated regions. Professor of Sustainable Development and Head of Research and Post-Graduate Development at Lews Castle College UHI, Frank Rennie, will deliver the keynote speech.

Help on hand for coping with fuel bills

Rising fuel bills are stretching household finances and Nairn Citizens Advice Bureau plans to help.

The CAB will give practical advice and help throughout Big Energy Week (January 16-21) and will host an outreach event at Sainsbury's at Nairn on Saturday, January 21 between 9.30am and 3pm to encourage people to seek help with their energy bills.

Strathdearn communities, providing them with an income worth thousands of pounds.

And West Coast Energy has also promised to give money to Inverness College and the University of the Highlands and Islands if the development goes ahead.

The partnership could be worth £3.25million over 25 years and will be used to fund educational initiatives relating to renewable energy.

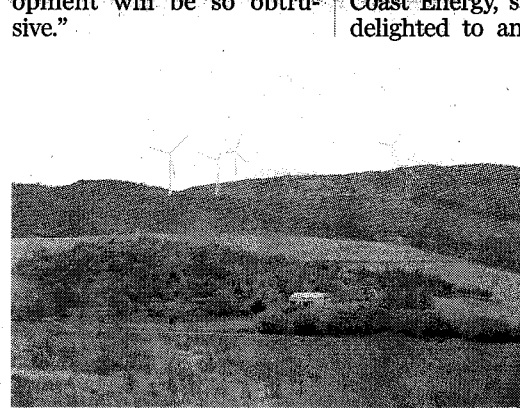
It would be the first windfarm project in the Highlands

west Coast Energy, Inverness College UHI and the University of the Highlands and Islands will shortly begin a consulting on how best to use the funds.

But last night one local householder said that residents in the area were worried about the impact of the windfarm.

Tony Kell, of Craggie, said that the turbines would affect more than 100 properties, as well as traffic on the A9.

He said: "People move to places like Daviot because



How the Daviot windfarm plan will look

Cairngorms fall climber has multiple injuries

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
have contributed to the best outcome for the climber."

The Cairngorm Mountain Rescue Team was alerted to the incident but was not called out.

An RAF search-and-rescue spokesman said: "We were contacted by police in Inverness at around 12.25pm with reports of a climber falling.

"The Rescue 137 Sea King from Lossiemouth was on-scene at 1.05pm.

"The male climber had received multiple injuries after falling more than 300ft from the Great Slab.

"He was taken to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and landed at 2.20pm."

Mr Sanderson and his wife,

Pauline, were the first British married couple to climb Everest together, reaching the 29,053ft summit in May 2006.

The Great Slab is a large area of smooth and steeply sloping glaciated rock at the centre of Coire an Lochan.

The dramatic rescue happened on the eve of a new safety measure being made available on Scotland's mountains and hills.

From today, personal locator beacons (PLBs) can be used legally on land in the UK.

It is hoped the new technology could potentially help save lives in the mountains, as well as reduce the risk to rescuers.

Beacon of hope to save lives in the mountains

New technology that could potentially save lives in the mountains and reduce the risk to rescuers can be used across the country from today.

Police at Inverness say personal locator beacons (PLBs) can now be used legally on land in the UK, and all who take part in recreational and outdoor activities are being urged to buy the device.

The public have to register their details with the providers of the devices after buying them and list their next of kin for emergency services to contact.

If an accident occurs, the owner can activate the hand-held device and send a distress message, which will be picked

up by satellite and relayed via the UK Mission Control Centre direct to the relevant authority. Deputy Chief Constable Andy Cowie, of Northern Constabulary, said: "Mountain and lowland search-and-rescue teams are busy all year round and, if we can take advantage of today's technology to help manage and minimise the risk to rescuers and help speed up the whole rescue process in an emergency, there is no doubt we can save lives that might otherwise be lost.

"It will also help reduce the burden on volunteer rescue teams and searchers across the UK. Satellite coverage is much wider than mobile coverage and we have to take advantage of that."

High heating bills blamed on tenants

HOUSEHOLDS 'DO NOT UNDERSTAND'

BY CHERYL LIVINGSTONE

A HOUSING boss said yesterday that Highland Council tenants' high heating costs were often due to a lack of understanding of the heating system.

Last year, Highland Council tenants blasted the controversial electric heating system, saying they were having to choose between paying their bills or their rent.

Inverness mother Diane Ramage, of Dalneigh, claimed her family had to sleep in one bed to stay warm after soaring energy prices forced them to switch off their electric heating system for good last year.

PROBLEMS

The local authority's director of housing, Steve Barron, told the housing and social work committee that his team were investigating alternatives to the often controversial electric heating systems, including using biomass fuel.

Mr Barron was responding to concern raised by Landward Caithness member David Flear.

Mr Flear told the meeting: "Householders are still experiencing considerable problems with the cost of their electric heating.

"The problem is mainly that they don't know how to run it. Families with low incomes are especially affected by the high costs.

"I just want to know if there

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Coast Energy, s
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are any plans in
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