

PRESS RELEASE

Scotland Young Thinker Award – climate change not just hot air

Michael Mitton, from The Park, Findhorn, triumphed on Thursday 22 November when he scooped the gold medal in the Young Scotland Programme's contest to find Scotland's Young Thinker of the Year held at the North West Castle hotel in Stranraer from 19 - 23 November. Michael beat off strong competition from 36 other participants representing the fields of academia, finance, healthcare, government, power companies, and the not-for-profit sector.

His presentation focused on the need for renewable energy systems to combat climate change in Scotland, despite reservations we may have about the visual effect of renewable energy solutions on the Scottish landscape. Renowned Scottish writer, journalist and broadcaster Kenneth Roy adjudicated the presentations.

The Young Scotland Programme brings together young people from a cross-section of Scottish society for a week-long marathon of stimulating debate and discussion, presenting arguments on diverse issues affecting the nation today. The programme aims to stretch minds, stir the consciences and broaden the horizons of the participants, and eventually proclaim one as Scotland's Young Thinker of the Year.

Michael's gold medal winning presentation addressed the hot topic of climate change by highlighting the disastrous effects of rising temperatures worldwide. He argued that resistance to the provision of clean, green energy in Scotland on the grounds of a conventional view that such technology is ugly, is unfounded and counterproductive.

When asked why he put that topic at the top of the agenda, he said, "Everyone needs to be made aware of how crucial the situation has become. Global warming and its effects is not a debate any longer, it is a fact. There would be no resistance to windfarms or the Beaulieu-Denny power line if everyone knew how important it is. Instead, we would be welcoming them. We have an incredible opportunity, here and now, to become world leaders in renewable technology."

Michael said in his presentation, "I live in a community that provides itself with a surplus of energy from windmills. They dominate the landscape, they can be seen from miles around and they are beautiful." Michael emphasised the huge potential in Scotland for utilising both wind and tidal power in the race to combat global warming, and that these technologies need to replace CO2 emitting energy production very soon, or else there will not even be a Scottish landscape to appreciate.

Michael, born in Inverness and a former pupil of Kinloss Primary School and Forres Academy, was brought up in the Findhorn Foundation community. He works in the Foundation's Communications and Maintenance departments.

When asked how it felt to win Scotland's Young Thinker he said, "What I feel I really won was the opportunity to spend a week with some of the most inspired and inspiring young people I

have ever met. From the quality of the arguments, which were all very impressive, I could see Scotland's great intellectual heritage in the likes of Hume, Napier and Adam Smith, still alive today. I learnt so much from everyone that took part."

He now goes forward to represent Scotland in the Young UK and Ireland finals to be held in Scotland in March 2008.

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For more information, photos of Michael or text of Scotland Young Thinker of the Year presentation, contact:

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