



Powershift To Support Market Launch Of Toyota Prius Petrol/Electric Hybrid Car

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Powershift, the government-backed initiative which aims to kick-start the market for clean fuel vehicles, has today confirmed it will be providing financial assistance worth £200,000 to help fund the UK market introduction of Toyota's revolutionary new petrol/electric hybrid family car – the Prius.

The car, which launched here on 17 October, is a full-size five-seater saloon. It is being funded under Powershift's "demonstration project" scheme for 2000/2001, which aims to help bring to market clean fuel initiatives with real commercial potential. This funding will discount the first 200 vehicles purchased in this country by £1000 each. The pre-discount price is £16,495.

The grant will be administered by Toyota (GB) PLC. Dealers taking orders from customers will receive a confirmation number from a central Toyota office and this will ensure that the first 200 are the ones to receive the Powershift grant. Discussions between Toyota and Powershift continue regarding further funding beyond the first 200 cars.

Jonathan Murray, Powershift Programme Manager, says: "The amount of funding was agreed following vigorous independent testing of the car's emissions levels – a process which ensures that Powershift only funds the cleanest vehicles on the market and therefore provides the greatest benefit to the environment.

"The tests showed that emissions levels from the Toyota Prius not only surpass by a clear margin the current European (Euro III) standards, but that the car already meets Euro IV which is not in force until 2005."

Importantly, the Toyota Hybrid System (THS) which powers the Prius means that it produces around half the carbon dioxide emissions and just one tenth of the toxic emissions of conventional petrol engine cars of a similar size.

The Prius is called a hybrid because it uses computer software to control a combination of electric and petrol motors, matching the power source to the conditions. For example, when pulling away and at low speed the Prius uses electric power. At speed and when accelerating the petrol engine is used for power and to recharge the batteries. When stationary no emissions are created making Prius particularly good in towns and cities. Unlike pure electric cars, Prius requires no external charging. Those interested in the details of how Prius works should go to www.prius.co.uk.

Toyota is selling Prius via a nationwide network of around 60 Hybrid Technology Centres. These dealers, specially selected from Toyota's 230 strong network, not only have special training on selling and maintaining Prius, but are subjected to independently audited checks on their environmental performance as a business, allowing Prius drivers to be reassured the whole process of car ownership is as green as possible. Uniquely, Toyota has committed to be responsible for the safe recycling of Prius at the end of each vehicle's useful life. Again details and a full list of the names and locations of the Hybrid Technology Centres as well as an owner's forum are available on the Prius web site (www.prius.co.uk).

Another first for Prius is the five-year/60,000mile manufacturer's warranty offered with the car. This, along with fixed cost private leasing rates, mean that potential customers need have no worries about reliability or future resale values. Toyota expects to sell around 2,000 Prius each year in the UK.

"The Toyota Prius is one of the cleanest vehicles on the road in this country," continues Jonathan Murray. "What's more, we believe the hybrid concept is one of the most exciting developments in the clean fuel market to date. We are anticipating that it will open up a whole new market for clean fuel vehicles in this country, giving motorists the convenience of a petrol car while at the same time offering a large reduction in harmful emissions."

"We are delighted that Powershift has been able to support the market launch of the Prius in this way," said Graham Smith, Managing Director of Toyota (GB) PLC. "We have already sold over 40,000 vehicles in Japan since the Prius launched there in December 1997; and we are expecting strong demand across Europe as well."

Prius is the world's first mass-produced hybrid car, but not the last; only last month Toyota announced the intention to build a second hybrid based on the eight-seater Previa MPV. Toyota sees hybrid as a technology for the future and one that demonstrates its lead in the commitment to the further development of eco-friendly vehicle technology.

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Notes to Editors

1. Powershift is a government-funded initiative run by the Energy Saving Trust, which aims to create a sustainable market in the UK for vehicles which run on clean fuels such as LPG, natural gas and electricity. In the last four years, the programme has helped place over 3,000 new clean fuel vehicles on UK roads. It has helped significantly reduce emissions of NOx and particulates, which are implicated in city pollution and up to 24,000 early deaths every year. It has also reduced the rate of growth of CO2 output from traffic on our roads – transport being one of the major contributors to this global warming gas.
2. The Powershift demonstration project programme is designed to make support funding available to assist projects involving near market-ready clean fuel vehicle and engine technologies. Funding is intended to help projects involving vehicles that have the potential for full commercialisation but are inhibited by higher initial set up or scale costs. Funding is not given where a project is likely to go ahead in the absence of support. Support is only given to projects involving vehicles that have the potential to provide significant emissions and other environmental benefits compared with conventional vehicles.
3. The Toyota Prius is the world's first mass production hybrid car. It first went on sale in Japan in late 1997. It has won many international awards, including Japanese Car of the Year. The engineer responsible was honoured by the Royal Society. The car being sold in the UK has

been improved with suspension and engine changes to meet the higher speeds, road conditions and different demands of European drivers.

4. The UK network of Hybrid Technology Centres are fully trained and equipped to handle Prius. Details on their standards and location can be found on www.prius.co.uk

For further information about Powershift or its funding for the Prius demonstration project, please visit the website at www.est-powershift.org.uk OR contact Michele Wheatley/Gerry Brown/Colin Shevills in the Powershift press office on telephone: 01295 224400.