

A TEAM of pupils from Launceston College are taking to the racetrack this year as part of the Greenpower Electric Car Racing series.

A group of budding designers and engineers from across the year groups have set out to design and build a full size racing car to compete in heats against schools from around the country.

Using a standard motor and batteries supplied by the event organisers, teams must construct a vehicle capable of completing four hour endurance races, covering as much distance as possible.

This is the first time the college has entered the well established competition, so it is a fresh challenge to all those involved, including Andy Blackburn the DT teacher leading the project.

He said: "There is a real buzz of excitement building in college. We had a huge number of applications from students wanting to take part, and have selected a

strong team with a range of skills and lots of creative ideas. It's a great opportunity for pupils to engage in some really exciting design and engineering tasks, expand their knowledge, and put what they are learning in the classroom into practical use."

The team have worked hard to secure funding for the project and thanks to the support of two local companies, managed to secure a healthy budget. Launceston packaging company D S Smith were the first to offer their support, agreeing early on in the planning stages to be the main sponsors.

Steve Porter from the firm explained that they have a keen interest in the green aspect of the venture, and added: "D S Smith Packaging became involved with the Greenpower project because it likes to support the local community wherever possible, and particularly the college with which it has had close links for many

years.

"The environmental aspect of this project also excited us; we believe that the project fits nicely with our business policy and objectives (D S Smith Launceston won two environmental awards in 2007, Environmental Packaging Company of the year and a National Green Apple Award as a Champion of the Environment). It will also encourage people to think about the environment, particularly children who will be the decision makers of tomorrow."

Additional support comes from Podium Technologies, another local company this time specialising in diagnostic software for motor racing applications. The team hope this expertise will come in useful when it comes to getting the most out of their car on the racetrack.

The South West heat of the Greenpower series takes place at the Royal Cornwall Showground in September.

