

**THE ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FOR**

**BRITISH BIOETHANOL**

**Inaugural and Annual General Meeting Minutes**

11th September 2017, 12:00

Room O, Portcullis House

**Attendance**

* **Members in attendance:**
	+ Nic Dakin MP (Chair)
	+ Paul Williams MP
	+ Lord Prescott
	+ Alan Brown MP
	+ John Grogan MP
	+ Simon Clarke MP
* **Also in attendance:**
	+ Richard Royal, Vivergo Fuels
	+ Grant Pearson, Ensus
	+ Clare Wenner, Renewable Energy Association
	+ Nick Thompson, Vivergo Fuels
	+ Lucie Rohani, Finn Communications
* **Apologies:**
	+ Andrew Bowie MP
	+ Andrew Percy MP
	+ David Drew MP
	+ Dan Poulter MP
	+ Rt Hon Caroline Flint MP
	+ Alan Whitehead MP
	+ Lord Haskins
	+ Duke of Montrose

**Agenda**

1. **Welcome from Nic Dakin MP**

ND welcomed attendees to the group.

1. **Introduction from Clare Wenner, Head of Renewable Transport at the Renewable Energy Association.**

Clare Wenner addressed the group to talk about the importance of the bioethanol industry to the economy and to British agriculture, and explained the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation consultation (see appendix).

**Action – CW to share a briefing note with the group on the RTFO consultation result on its expected release on 12 September (UPDATE: The release has been stalled again but is expected in the next few days).**

The group discussed the key issues around the RTFO consultation result, including the proposed crop cap and the introduction of E10 fuel, which has been stuck for several months.

* ND asked if there was any hint as to what would be in the report.
* CW answered that there were a number of key issues in the report, especially the recommendation of a crop cap, but that there was no hint as to what the level would be. She stressed that the bioethanol industry needed a sensible crop cap to be able to continue, along with the introduction of E10.
* CW discussed compatibility of E10 with car engines.

GP made the point that new cars are optimised for E10.

* The group discussed air quality and the Government’s proposed move to electric vehicles by 2040. CW suggested that E10 could be a transition until that point.
* CW evidenced the SMMT stats which show how consumers are moving to petrol, and petrol hybrids, in the wake of the diesel scandal. She said that it is important to keep the pressure on Government for the sake of the industry, jobs and the economy.
* CW stressed the important role of the group in getting the Government behind a public awareness campaign for the roll-out of E10 as we haven’t had a new fuel introduced at the pump for a number of years. She said that we need the Government to explain to consumers why E10 is good and to combat some of the scare stories that might surface.
* ND asked what the Government’s line on E10 is at the moment.

CW: Their analysis tends to show it is the best option but they’re likely to leave it up to the fuel manufacturers.

* Lord Prescott suggested that the key argument that should be made in the context of the Northern economy and the development of an energy estuary on the Humber. The group agreed that the same argument could be made about Teesside.
* ND asked if this issue was the same in Scotland?

Alan Brown answered that for Scotland the arguments around agriculture and air quality are important, and asked if the Climate Change Committee is taking a view on E10?

CW answered that that the Climate Change Committee has said that at this point 8% of our transport fuels should come from biofuels. At the moment we’re at 4.75%.

Lord Prescott reminded the group that the UK is the only country which has these targets written into policy.

1. **Election of Chair & Officers**

The following roles were agreed:

* Nic Dakin – Chair
* Emma Hardy - Vice Chair
* Simon Clarke – Vice Chair
* Anna Turley – Vice Chair
* Andrew Percy – Vice Chair
* Paul Williams – Vice Chair
* Alan Brown – Vice Chair
* Andrew Bowie – Vice Chair
* Lord Haskins – Vice Chair
* Lord Prescott is happy to support the APPG but did not want to be a named officer

**Action: RR to share information about Finn Communications with the group. On receipt, the group to agree the role of Lucie Rohani / Finn Communications as Secretariat.**

1. **Notification of forthcoming meeting: ‘Drop-in’ event on 27th November, 12-4pm, Room 18 Palace of Westminster**

RR explained the format for the next event.

**Action: Group to circulate information re the drop-in session.**

1. **Any other business**

N/A

1. **Appendix**

Clare Wenner introductory notes

Delighted to see you all here and add my thanks

The industry

Bioethanol has been a key sector in the UK renewable economy:

* nearly £1 billion invested
* over 3,500 jobs up and down the supply chain from farming to science and engineering
* in some of the tougher areas of the UK – you will know all about that
* low carbon renewable fuel to replace fossil fuel
* AND high protein animal feed to substitute for imported protein – UK 80% deficient
* UK agriculture is a key partner industry in this business. The arable sector supplies the feedstocks, worth at least £10/tonne to farm income compared to exporting this surplus. And the livestock sector takes the animal feed which saves on import bills and allows our farmers to buy British.
* This has to be a major benefit as Brexit looms and the Common Agricultural Policy is dismantled.

The timetable

I have been working in the renewable transport fuels sector with the REA since 2006 – it seems a long time ago that we were talking about putting the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation on the statute book. But we made it in 2008.

Investment flowed until the Coalition Government got cold feet. Since 2012 the UK renewable fuels industry has been waiting for policy to support the market and to prevent more companies going out of business.

The political situation – 2 General Elections and the EU Referendum – hasn’t helped. This has caused political indecision and the industry has been left in limbo.

The Consultation on amending the RTFO was delayed until last November and the industry has been left hanging since April awaiting the Government response.

BUT – we understand that, after these months of waiting, this response and the accompanying Cost Benefit Analysis will be laid in Parliament tomorrow, 12 September.

Then the draft legislation amending the RTFO – a positive Statutory Instrument - will come to Parliament for debate when you get back from the Party Conferences - as a positive Statutory Instrument

Role of the APPG

Your role must be to keep pressure on the Government for the sake of industry, jobs the farmers and the environment. Seeing this key piece of legislation through will be fundamental.

And it won’t stop there. Provided we get the right signals in tomorrow’s announcement there will be on-going work in the coming months and years to make sure that British Bioethanol has a bright future

E10

We will start with the roll-out of E10 – 10% bioethanol in petrol

Consumers are switching of their own volition to petrol cars following the diesel emissions scandal and real concerns about air quality

Bioethanol has a great story to tell for low carbon petrol which is a better air quality bet than diesel.

What better way to decarbonise the increasing up-take of petrol vehicles than by introducing E10?

But there will need to be a sustained public information campaign and again, you will be key.

BREXIT

And then there is BREXIT

The bioethanol industry will not be immune from its effects, but with your help I am confident that we will get sensible trade and other arrangements in place.

The industry is part of a strong domestic circular economy and will play its part in supporting agriculture as we move beyond the CAP.

This is the perfect time to be backing this innovative industry.

I wish the new Group all the very best and I know we can count on your support and those of many of your colleagues in both Houses.

We’ll make a start by getting you a full brief on the content of tomorrow’s Government RTFO response.

Thank you.