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Reflections on a decade of energy in Parliament: An interview with Greg Barker MP

UK solar will still shine brightly in a CfD world Jamie Richards, Foresight Group

Energy for Development Programme: Creating community-centric electrical mini-grids
Professor AbuBakr S Bahaj, University of Southampton

ENERGY FOCUS



Solar independence: Subsidy-free by 2020

Paul Barwell considers solar independence on page 4

The journal of the
Parliamentary Group
for Energy Studies





The Parliamentary Group for Energy Studies

Established in 1980, the Parliamentary Group for Energy Studies remains the only All Party Parliamentary Group representing the entire energy industry. We champion cross-sector energy research and development. The Group's membership is comprised of over 190 parliamentarians, 130 associate bodies from the private, public and charity sectors and a range of individual members.

Published three times a year, *Energy Focus* records the Group's activities, tracks key energy and environmental developments through Parliament, presents articles from leading industry contributors and provides insight into the views and interests of both parliamentarians and officials.

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CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD



With the General Election fast approaching, parties are beginning to set out their stalls on all aspects of energy policy. Thankfully, Ministerial teams and their Shadows are recognising that the energy challenge cannot be resolved without thinking seriously about the UK's long-term plans.

I am proud that PGES remains a vital resource for those grappling with these issues. We have been very pleased to welcome representatives from across the political spectrum to our recent speaker meetings and annual events. It serves as a constant reminder that energy of all kinds plays a central – although not always obvious – role in people's lives.

Indeed, the social value of a robust, sustainable energy policy was a key theme of HRH The Prince of Wales' "Happy Birthday" message to the sponsors of this year's Annual Summer Reception, the Energy Institute – which was delivered via video link as we celebrated their centenary on the House of Commons Terrace. It was a fantastic event and a great opportunity for members to catch up ahead of the Summer Recess, and we were delighted to welcome Katrina Williams, Director General for International, Science and Resilience at DECC, and Ian Marchant FEI, President of the Energy Institute, on the night.

Both Katrina and Ian spoke about the need to develop a legislative framework which allows all sectors to fully realise their potential. With that in mind, I'm delighted that this issue focuses on a nascent industry which, as our contributors make clear, holds great promise: solar energy.

Our expert contributors include:

- Paul Barwell, Chief Executive of the Solar Trade Association, discussing what is needed to deliver a subsidy-free solar industry (page 4);
- Jamie Richards, Head of Infrastructure at the Foresight Group, examining the changing regulatory environment for solar (page 6);
- Professor AbuBakr S Bahaj, Head of the Energy and Climate Change Division at the University of Southampton and Chief Scientific Advisor to Southampton City, explaining how solar can invigorate rural communities abroad (page 8); and
- Former Energy and Climate Change Minister Greg Barker MP, reflecting on his achievements during his time in Government – including the Green Investment Bank and the cultivation of "The Big 60,000" (page 10).

We are always delighted to hear from members, so please do share your thoughts and feedback by emailing our Editor, Sophie Fernandes, at sophiefernandes@pges.org.uk

Ian Liddell-Grainger MP
Chairman of the Parliamentary Group for Energy Studies

SOLAR INDEPENDENCE: SUBSIDY-FREE BY 2020

Paul Barwell, Chief Executive of the Solar Trade Association, considers what is needed for a subsidy-free solar future



Solar energy is a secure, home-grown solution to Britain's dual crises of security of supply and spiralling energy bills. Electricity from solar done on a big scale – on big rooftops and solar farms – has become so cheap that it could soon provide independence from energy imports and independence for consumers. This is the 'solar independence' prize that we should be aiming for.

Solar: The benefits

Solar makes no noise, creates no waste and emits no carbon. In fact, when screened from view with hedgerows or on rooftops, you wouldn't even know it's there. Solar is in fact the most popular form of low carbon energy in Britain, with 82% support¹.

An investment in solar is an investment in jobs. Over 60% of the value of installing and operating large scale solar

goes straight into the British economy.

And good solar farms do not displace food production. All members of the Solar Trade Association have signed up to our '10 commitments' for developing and building solar farms, and have pledged to focus on low-grade or non-agricultural land. Sheep can graze and free range chickens can be reared between the rows of panels.



Fig.1 - London King's Cross Solar Roof 4 (C) James Beard