

HECA AND BEYOND... THE ENERGY FRONTIER

the national home energy conference 2006

Held on 16 & 17 May, 2006, at the Hilton Blackpool Hotel

UK HECA would like to thank the Conference sponsor, Powergen, as well as this year's speakers, workshop facilitators, exhibitors, and, of course, all of the delegates and everyone else who has helped to make this the largest Home Energy Conference ever!

Visit the HECA Website to download slide show presentations and view videos of many of this year's main room presentations as well as the Q&A Sessions and the ceremony of the Annual HECA Awards.

www.ukheca.org.uk/conference



Conference Report 2006

After the early sell out of the 2005, Conference the steering group decided to look at larger venues for 2006, extending the capacity with the intention of accommodating all aspects of the conference under one roof. This was an ominous task with only three venues fitting the bill. It didn't take much persuasion in choosing the Blackpool Hilton as it could accommodate up to 800 delegates and had 250 bedrooms - Slightly over our initial requirements, but our aim was big!

Again, this year, the Conference sold out quickly with 280 delegates and exhibitors attending, making it the

largest conference specifically for domestic energy officers in the UK. One aspect of the conference that benefited from the venue's size was the exhibition area. Twenty companies had ample room to encourage officers to sign up to their products and services. The room, which also hosted the gala dinner drinks reception, was the hub of activity throughout the conference.

The main aims of the conference are to provide information through speakers and workshops and to host a networking event with opportunities for dialogue between the public and private sector, cementing relations within the energy field. Delegates that opted for two night's accommodation were treated to a pre-conference networking drinks reception which was jointly hosted by UK

HECA and our sponsor, Powergen. Time was well spent between the drinks table and chatting with colleagues. When prompted on the feedback form about the best aspects of the conference, one delegate summed it up perfectly "Getting an overview of activity throughout the UK and networking (as always!)", we couldn't agree more.

Day One

There was a varied selection of speakers on the first day with the previous National Chair of UK HECA, Don Lack, at the helm chairing proceedings. Don welcomed and introduced delegates to the conference before giving a brief



presentation. He was followed by a welcome address given by the Worshipful The Mayor of Blackpool. This was Councillor Andrews first public engagement as Mayor, after only being appointed the day before. With the welcomes finished, the morning session speakers took to the stage. Paul Stowers from the Local Government Office took to the podium first with a national overview of the Government's Expectations of the Energy Agenda. He looked at the current energy position, the Government's Energy White Paper, energy review and the role regions play in its delivery. Richard Davies from Marches Energy Agency, a charity based in Shropshire, followed giving a motivational presentation on climate change with a reflective view on the timelines of our changing climate and possible future. He then expanded on this by providing a personal example of how communities can do their part in alleviating climate change. The final speaker of the first session was Ray Morgan, now Chief Executive of Woking Borough Council. As Finance Director, Ray was a key driver in many successful energy efficiency projects, which have won the Council awards for their approach and success. The key message from Ray was that securing backing, and subsequently funding, from senior members of the Council is fundamental for projects to get started and succeed.

Before, and again after, lunch delegates could choose between five workshops per session, three of them repeated in each session (HECA review, Home Information Packs / Energie Cités Display Boards and Resources) and two workshops filled with best practice examples from across the UK. We couldn't, and didn't, anticipate the amount of delegates that wanted to attend the best practice workshops and had to unfortunately turn some delegates away. We would like to thank everyone who facilitated a workshop and hope that your projects have inspired others. Don't forget that all the slide-show presentations, from both the main room sessions and workshops, can be viewed on-line at www.ukheca.org.uk/conference, along with videos of many of the main room speakers, the Q&A sessions and the HECA Award ceremony.

Colin Green captured delegates' attention after the workshops with a lively and speedy account of how to cope with climate change in the garden. He gave suggestions on appropriate planting for a changing climate, water conservation and environmentally friendly pest control. Simon Roberts, Chief Executive of Centre for Sustainable Energy, presented next on an effective local authority response to the new Climate Change Programme. Simon focused on 'Wilful Individuals' and the local and regional carbon management matrix, a per-



Above: Delegates networking at The Conference Exhibition

Far Left: Registering delegates on the first morning

Centre Left: Sixteen separate presentations were given during the workshop sessions. Thanks to everyone involved! The slide-shows are available to download from the HECA Website

Near Left: Don't forget, videos of the Q&A sessions are also available to view online as well as videos of many of the main room speakers at: www.ukheca.org.uk/conference

formance assessment and improvement tool which aims to move local authorities away from copying best practice examples and becoming leaders. Peter Brunt from DTI gave the final presentation of the day with a National Policy Picture.

Gala Dinner

After a hard day's learning, delegates found time to relax in the exhibition area at the Lord Mayor of Blackpool and Blackpool Council's civic drinks reception, another networking opportunity before guests were called to the main room by our Toastmaster, aka John Davis. After the four course dinner had been served, John welcomed the Worshipful the Mayor of Blackpool to announce this year's regional HECA Award winners. Congratulations to all the award winners and we hope that you liked your sustainable bespoke awards. After the awards had been presented, a special announcement was made; the second ever Maddock Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Brian Sexton of Manchester City Council. Brian gave an impromptu acceptance speech thanking everyone from his aunt to the Debenhams' Blue Cross

Sale, while inconspicuously trying to hide the pâté stain on his trousers. To celebrate, award winners and colleagues retired to the Trafalgar Suite for a bet on the casino tables while the disco was hotting up in the Royal Suite.

Day Two

While Stewart dashed off to pick up Baroness Maddock, Don held the reins for the morning session on the second day. Ian Robinson, an independent environmental consultant, spoke about the issues of implementing renewable technology. He gave an overview of the past, what's going on presently and how we can act for the future. Following on, was a presentation given by Debbie Critchley, our second speaker from Government Office North West. Debbie showed how partnership working in the North West had proved successful with an end result of the public and private sector working together to produce an approved programme of action for domestic energy in 2006/07. David Weatherall from the Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes donned his Energy Saving Trust hat and explained how EST can sup-



Scenes from the Conference Gala Dinner

Toastmaster John Davis and Official Photographer Paul Mapelthorpe quickly hide the candle when the paparazzi show up at their quiet dinner-for-two

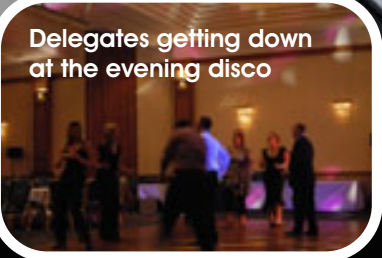
Many thanks to the hotel staff for their excellent service throughout the evening



Casino tables were brought in for the Conference evening entertainment. Don't worry, it was free to play, so no HECA Budgets were lost!



Were you one of the 'lucky' delegates immortalised by the Conference Caricaturist? Visit the Conference website to see if you recognise anyone.



Delegates getting down at the evening disco



Someone tries desperately to stay in the game by gambling their HECA Award



Brian 'the Icon' Sexton ASBO (Hons), winner of the Maddock Lifetime Achievement Award in the middle of his hilarious, off-the-(Debenhams'-BOGOF)-cuff, acceptance speech (see page 10)

port local authorities with programmes and partnerships. He also mentioned the new Local Authority Energy Day which is planned for 25 October, 2006, and its supporting toolkit, which will be sent to all local authority officers in July. Baroness Maddock joined the top table and gave an impromptu address, before taking over chairing the remainder of the day's presentations. HECA is close to Diana's heart and she is a keen supporter of the Conference and UK HECA and promised to do her best to be at the Conference again next year.

After the last workshop session, delegates were back into the main room for the final presentations of the Conference. Diana introduced the first speaker, an old friend of hers, Angela Mawle, who is Chief Executive of the UK Public Health Association (UKPHA). In 2005 the UKPHA set up the Housing, Health and Fuel Poverty Forum which consists of key players from both health and energy sectors. The Forum's aim is to

establish ways of minimising fuel poverty. The group has instigated a number of projects such as models for delivery and referral processes. Due to illness, Jerry Harrell was unable to attend the Conference and, at short notice, Lorraine Donaldson from National Energy Action agreed to fill his place. She spoke about NEA's work plan for the next year. It's NEA's 25th birthday this year and they will celebrate with a special anniversary Conference in September. Also being launched this year is their 'Heat is On' DVD.

To close the Conference Barry Steele from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive enticed delegates to the 2007 conference, which will be held at the Europa Hotel in Belfast on 17-18 May, with a video presentation about the city and its many attractions. We do hope that you will join us in Northern Ireland and maybe stay on a few days to enjoy the local attractions. See you next year!

Helen Atkins - UK HECA Secretariat



Wish you'd been here?
If you couldn't make it to
this year's Conference,
don't miss out on Northern
Ireland in 2007!

2006 Annual HECA AWARDS

This year's Annual HECA Awards were sponsored by the Energy Saving Trust and were presented by The Worshipful The Mayor of Blackpool, Councillor Alan Matthews, during the National Home Energy Conference Gala Dinner. The trophies were specially designed by the UK HECA Secretariat and constructed by Roy Tam Design of Dorset using wood from sustainable sources. Special thanks to John Davis who performed his role magnificently as the official Toastmaster for the occasion.

After the regional awards, the second ever Maddock Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Brian Sexton for his tireless work and enthusiasm in housing and energy over the past 34 years. His many achievements include:

- Chair of the North West HEON Group since 1997
- Delivery of the UK's first PFI Energy Scheme for social housing which won many awards
- Production of the UK's first Affordable Warmth Strategy
- Six National Home Improvement Awards for Outstanding Housing Projects
- Management of over £1 billion of capital spend with millions attributed to energy projects
- Double chartermark success for Excellence in Project Management

The video of the award ceremony, including Brian's unforgettable acceptance speech is available to download, along with videos of many of the plenary session speakers' presentations, from the HECA Website:

www.ukheca.org.uk/conference

Congratulations to all of this year's award winners!



Special thanks to The Worshipful The Mayor of Blackpool, who presented this year's awards, and John Davis, the evening's compere



Baroness Maddock congratulating Brian Sexton after he became the second ever recipient of the Maddock Lifetime Achievement Award



London - Simon Evans



HEON NW - Alison Hartley



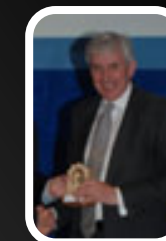
Northern Ireland - Pauline Beattie



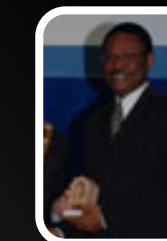
Wales - Adrian Roberts and Gerry Baker



Jarrold Hut - South West



NEDEF - Ken Ansley



Scotland - Osato Osaghae



West Midlands - Robin Dunleavy



East Midlands - Northamptonshire Energy Efficiency Partnership (collected by Dave Malone)



HEON Eastern - Teresa Howarth (Collected by Julia Blackwell)



South East - Verena Skinner (Collected by Brian Mannian)



East Pennine - East Pennine HECA Forum (collected by Paul Mapelthorpe)



Feedback Report

We asked delegates to give feedback on the eight main points of the Conference by ticking option boxes and writing their thoughts on the best aspects and improvements. They were also asked to fill in a separate workshop feedback form after each workshop session. Separating the two forms gave us a clearer understanding of delegates' preferences as well as gaining a better response rate.

The first, and most important, section on the form asked delegates to rate plenary session speakers and provide any additional comments. As detailed in the chart opposite, the majority of delegates were happy with the speakers, rating them good, with nearly 20% rating them as excellent. As with every Conference, the perceived standard of speakers and content varies from one person to another. However, two speakers in particular rated highly, with delegates citing Richard Davies from Marches Energy Agency and Ray Morgan from Woking Council as excellent and inspiring. Also mentioned for his outstanding presentation was Colin Green. Some delegates stated that, even though the content wasn't directly linked with domestic energy, his presentation was interesting, refreshing and a welcome alternative. The lack of Government representation was noted by a few. The former Energy Minister had been booked to make a presentation but, due to the cabinet reshuffle earlier in the month, Government was unable to provide a speaker. There were also a few other last-minute changes to the schedule when speakers dropped out. Replacements were sought, and our thanks go to those who volunteered, but the flow and content of the schedule were affected. Some other comments received included a request for more relevant topics (such as the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, decent homes, excess cold, affordable warmth), technical information, updates on renewables and comparing and contrasting the devolved nations' approaches. Another suggestion was the theme of the conference being 'Working with Primary Care Trusts'. The amount of time given to speakers was an issue for some, as they felt speakers were rushed trying to fit their presentations into short time slots. We will look at this for next year's conference.

I'm sure you are bored to hear us, each year, respond to criticisms about location with the same response: we change the location each year to accommodate local authority officers from around the UK that make up the regional Fora of UK HECA. Travel is always an issue with some delegates having to travel quite far to get to the venue, however the rating for location was divided between

good and excellent with only 10% rating it fair. The hotel itself was located within easy reach of Blackpool North Station, the airport was a short journey away and most rooms had a sea view. Unfortunately, venues with a train station, airport and motorway right on the doorstep are few and far between (and the noise would be atrocious!). As mentioned in the Conference Report, we were limited in venue choices as we wanted to extend the Conference capacity to 300 and accommodate all aspects under one roof, something that was achieved. Responses about accommodation were similar to those about the location, with a rough 60/40 split between good and excellent. There were a few 'fair's' ticked which were possibly in reference to the main and workshop rooms being "too cold/hot" and "cramped". Although delegates didn't mention it on our feedback forms, the hotel told us that they have noted the complaints about the lack of low energy bulbs used at the hotel. Let's hope they do something about it!

Although most delegates rated the catering as being either excellent or good there were a number of comments about the lack of green and healthy options, especially at the lunch buffet. We also noted this and were disappointed that our specification of a range of healthy options (and less fried food) wasn't adhered to. Even though the menu choices for the Gala Dinner was limited - catering individual choices for 300 people is near impossible - the food fared well with mainly positive comments, although this could be more to do with the free wine rather than the food. The introduction of an early lunch for exhibitors went down very well and will be continued each year.

Literature scored well with nearly half (48%) rating good and 26% excellent. The 10 (20%) 'fair' ratings reflected in some of the comments, which included requests for less "freebies", inclusion of a note pad and pen and more detailed information about presentation content. As mentioned in the speaker section, because of the last minute speaker alterations, some of the literature and biography sections were wrong and sticky labels were used to amend the schedule. There was a suggestion to give delegates memory sticks instead of paper, as we did at the launch of UK HECA. However, there are a number of flaws with this. In particular, delegates wouldn't be able to reference the literature at the conference unless near a computer and not all delegates bring laptops with them. In addition, it is difficult to gather speaker presentations beforehand, which, in addition to a desire to save paper, is also a reason why we don't provide printed copies. Also, each memory stick would have to be manually loaded with the files, which would be very time consuming. Presentations are made available to download from the HECA

website afterward the event.

Entertainment received a mixed review, but the majority said it was excellent or good with only a small percentage grading it fair or poor. We have excelled ourselves in previous years and decided this conference to scale things back a bit, providing basic entertainment but increasing the amount of wine instead. The casino tables were very busy, as were the disco and bar, providing an after-hours networking opportunity with a mixture of work and fun. One delegate found the hotel's size a disadvantage as they thought the "entertainment was disjointed". However, many people find the loud music in the disco a bit overpowering, which is why we separate out the rest of the entertainment from the dance floor. And finally, no, I can't help the delegate who wanted me to fix the champagne draw!

Most delegates were satisfied with the organisation, 58% rating excellent and another 40% good. One delegate sums up the conference organisation perfectly: "keeping up a high standard with a minimum cost" and another personal favourite of mine: "seamless". There was a good suggestion from one delegate to introduce a "buddie scheme for newbies". This will be trialed next year with an option when registering to attend a pre-conference welcome and introduction and book a seat at the Gala Dinner with other Conference virgins.

The 'overall' section is also quite important, as it tells us what the most favoured parts of the Conference are and where we can make improvements. Most of the comments about the best aspects of the Conference stated networking; this was closely followed by speakers and workshops. Feedback on suggested improvements doesn't hold the same trend, with a mixture of comments. The early finishing time on the second day was also noted by some delegates as being a good introduction.

All the workshops seemed to be appreciated, with particular praise for a number of the best practice workshops.

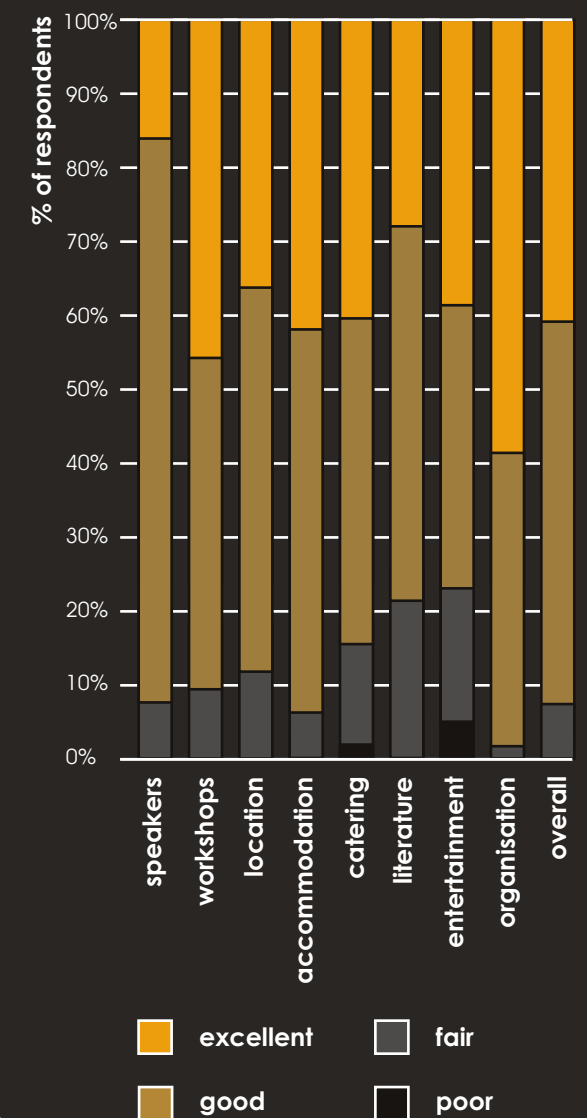
The HECA review and HIP/Display Boards workshop was run over three sessions, while the resources workshop was held in only two of the three. Therefore the results are an amalgamation of results from the sessions.

Workshops that received excellent feedback were those that were innovative and hadn't been showcased or reproduced. There was also more appreciation for workshops that included technical information, detailed explanations and costing information.

(See www.hecafora.com/conference for full feedback details of each workshop)

- Helen Atkins, UK HECA Secretariat

Delegate Feedback



Delegates' Comments:

"Organisation was seamless and flawless - well done! Workshops were good."

"Speakers on the first day all seemed a bit rushed as if they didn't have time."

"Richard Davies and Ray Morgan both gave engaging and particularly stimulating presentations - need more high quality speakers like this."

"A good balance of work and socialising. The networking was excellent! I look forward to Belfast!"

Conference Chair's Report

It has been pleasing to receive a lot of positive feedback following what has been another successful Conference, which again offered excellent networking opportunities for delegates and exhibitors. The Conference Steering Group will reflect on all comments received from the feedback reports when we begin the planning process for next year's conference in Belfast.

UK HECA would like to thank our main sponsors Powergen for their sponsorship and support with the Conference, which we hope they found fulfilling. Thanks also to the Energy Saving Trust for their continued sponsorship of the HECA Awards, and congratulations to all the award winners. It was particularly pleasing to see Brian Sexton receive the Diana Maddock, Lifetime Achievement Award.

The Conference venue, the Hilton Blackpool Hotel, provided for excellent exhibition space and again the Association would thank all exhibitors for their support in making the Conference a success.

Unfortunately, the UK HECA Chair, Bruce Pittingale, was unable to attend this year's Conference, therefore the Association are very grateful to Don Lack and Baroness Maddock for their assistance in chairing the Conference. I would also congratulate John Davis for his sterling work during the Gala Dinner and evening entertainment.

A special thanks goes to all plenary speakers and workshop facilitators, for their professionalism and expertise in fulfilling the Conference programme, which, we are sure, can only add value to the work, colleagues undertake in their day-to-day duties.

And finally, (yes) thanks to the Steering Group

What can I say, the Steering Group have now successfully delivered a number of Conferences, but that does not make the organisation of the Conference any easier. Each Conference brings its own difficulties. However, with the experience gained, we manage to overcome the problems without too much disruption to the Conference programme.

It was particularly pleasing to receive the positive feedback and comments on the organisation of the Conference, and we will endeavour to maintain this standard at next year's Conference in Belfast.

I would like to pass on my congratulations and thanks to all members of the Steering Group for their hard work, and a special thank you to Paul Maplethorpe who volunteered his services to undertake the photography work.

See you next year in Belfast, on May 17 & 18.



- Steve Martin
Conference Steering Group Chair

Powergen

Sponsors of the National Home Energy Conference 2006

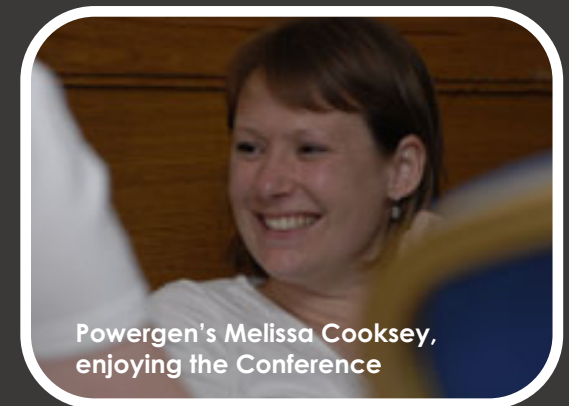
Powergen which is part of E.ON - the world's largest private-sector energy services company, sponsored the National Home Energy Conference 2006. We were proud to be the sole sponsor and delighted with how the Conference was organised. UK HECA, who have been working closely this year with Powergen, were excited by the sponsorship offered and have enjoyed the support presented by Powergen.

Melissa Cooksey Social Homes Project Manager said afterwards:

"We have enjoyed our close relationship with UK HECA and were proud to be sole sponsors of this year's Conference, especially as, by HECA standards, this was the biggest yet, bringing together around 280 delegates. It also proved to be a great opportunity for new colleagues to develop relationships with partners across the UK."



POWERGEN
A company of **e-on**



Powergen's Melissa Cooksey, enjoying the Conference



Don't forget to visit the Conference website: www.ukheca.org.uk/conference to download all of the speakers' and workshops' slide-shows, check out the photos and view videos of many of this year's presentations.



**See you next year
on 17 & 18 May in BELFAST...**