

West Midlands HECA Forum Towards a West Midlands Energy Strategy

Speaker Biographies

Paul Cobbing, Senior Advisor, Government Office for the West Midlands

Currently Senior Advisor in the Sustainability Team for Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM), I worked until September 2003 in a similar position with the Rural Team with particular interests in environmental issues, land management, food and drink, designated areas, market towns, urban rural issues, etc. Both roles in GOWM involve encouraging the delivery of Government policy, coordinating activity between different organisations at regional level and providing feedback to Whitehall on Regional issues.

Between 1992 and 2001 I worked on the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (an agri-environment scheme for farmers) in various roles including advisor and regional coordinator. I was part of the team that prepared the Arable Stewardship Pilot and was also heavily involved with developing and writing the West Midlands Chapter of the England Rural Development Plan.

Previous roles have included land management of a large country park in Cornwall, running a field studies centre and working as an ecologist and a forestry contractor.

My qualifications include a degree in Environmental Science and a masters degree in Rural and Regional Resource Planning. I am a member of the Institute of Ecologists and Environmental Management.

Lynne Jones, MP for Birmingham Selly Oak

I have a PhD in Biochemistry and worked as a research fellow at the Departments of Biochemistry and Cancer Studies at the University of Birmingham until 1986. Between 1984 and 1987, I was Chair of Birmingham Council's Housing Committee and left science to pursue a career in housing. I obtained a Postgraduate Diploma in Housing Studies and went to work for one of the largest housing associations in the West Midlands. I was selected to fight the Birmingham Selly Oak Constituency for Labour in 1990 and won the seat in April 1992, May 1997 and June 2001. My main interests are the Economy, Social Security, Housing and Science, I chair the Parliamentary Forum on Transsexualism and the All Party Group on Mental Health.

Lisa Trickett, Head of Housing Strategy, Birmingham City Council

Lisa Trickett has been Head of Housing Strategy at Birmingham City Council nearly 2 years. Key priorities for Lisa during this time have been the development of a comprehensive housing strategy, and the establishment of effective partnership working in the city, which has involved the setting up of Housing Market Area "Networks" with Housing Associations and other partners. Further strategic development work includes action planning to address housing need and aspiration, including the evolving BME and Homelessness Strategies. Lisa has also been working closely with the Regional Housing Board on the development of the Regional Housing Strategy. She has previously worked on a number of initiatives for Birmingham City Council including the Rough Sleepers initiative and North West

Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder study, and in the field of social policy in both the voluntary and private sector.

Ruth Luckett, Energy Efficiency and Corporate Responsibility Manager, British Gas

Ruth Luckett is responsible for planning and implementing energy efficiency, fuel poverty and corporate responsibility programmes and communications within British Gas. These include the British Gas 'here to HELP' programme, Warm a Life, REECH and British Gas' community investment programme. Ruth has over 5 years communications and project management experience across a range of industries. This has included managing the award winning corporate responsibility fundraising event, Byte Night, which raises money for the children's charity NCH.

Ruth has a degree in Visual Arts and English from Keele University.

Lucy Southgate, Senior Engineer, IT Power

Lucy Southgate is a Senior Engineer working in IT Power's Solar Group. Her background is electrical engineering and she works on a wide range of renewable energy projects, from feasibility studies and dissemination projects through to installations. Her specialism is photovoltaic (PV) solar systems of which she has a wide range of technical experience, including extensive testing experience, monitoring experience and practical experience of the management of turn-key installations of PV systems for a variety of clients. Lucy holds a first class MEng (Hons) in Electronic and Electrical Engineering with French.

Chris Endacott, Gfleet Services

Chris Endacott set up the sustainable transport consultancy Gfleet Services over two years ago, prior to that he worked for environmental consultancy Aspinwall & Co, now known as Enviros. During his time at Aspinwall Chris directed the implementation of a company Green Fleet strategy which was one of the first in the UK. Subsequently he has worked with large and small organisations in both the public and private sector to assist them develop Sustainable Transport strategies and to improve their fleet operations. The team from Gfleet has helped many organisations successfully reduce the carbon dioxide and toxic emissions of their transport as well as their operating costs. They have also been involved in producing Travel Plans and Sustainable Transport training packages. Gfleet are panel consultants for the TransportEnergy and Motorvate programmes run by the Energy Saving Trust and the Department for Transport. Chris is a member of the Regional Energy Strategy - Transport Theme Group working on transport's contribution to a regional and national energy strategy.

Jane Poxon, Community Energy Manager, British Gas

Jane and her team of five Energy Advisers work on EEC (Energy Efficiency Commitment) schemes across the Midlands Region including Wales and East Anglia. Jane is also responsible for the delivery of the British Gas 'here to HELP' programme, which aims to address the root causes of household poverty in Britain's most deprived areas. Jane has worked for British Gas for 10 years. She has two children Matthew 8 & Amber 12.

Richard Davies, Director of Marches Energy Agency

Marches Energy Agency (MEA) the sustainable energy charity works with individuals and organisations in the rural West Midlands to promote appropriate renewable energy, energy efficiency and clean transport.

Richard is a Chemical engineering graduate of Nottingham University who took nearly 10 years designing, constructing and commissioning chemical plants in the UK and America before deciding that he would really much rather do something more positive for the planet!

The Agency has been established for some 8 years making it the oldest such organisation in the UK. The work of the Agency is driven from the premise that the UK is currently failing to embrace the opportunities offered by a sustainable energy future. The UK is running to stand still with regard to renewables generation, with the last 18 months growth in electricity consumption effectively cancelling out all of the progress ever made in Britain generating renewable electricity. This is in the country that has the best wind resource in Europe.

If business as usual continues, the UK has little or no chance of addressing the insatiable demand that the country seems to have for fossil fuel energy – energy that is becoming relatively less expensive as the wealth of the nation increases. People appear to be largely ignorant of the true costs of the unsustainable use of energy. Energy is reliable, cheap and appears clean. Climate change, air pollution and the finite nature of fossil fuels is something that to most is a low priority.

Richard endeavours to direct the Agency to be passionate, professional, inclusive and honest; and to inspire, encourage and help others to use and produce energy more sustainably, whilst providing a positive, enjoyable and rewarding work and volunteering opportunities. Something that he acknowledges is going to occupy him for a few more years yet.

More information about Marches Energy Agency and its activities can be found on the MEA website at www.mea.org.uk