

BioNETT South West Biofuels Forum,

Note of meeting at 2.00pm, 13th April 2007

Attendees

Alan Scragg, UWE	Malcolm Shepherd, Biofuel Matters
Archie Montgomery, CORE SW	Andrew Butler, NFU South West
Simon Graham, Commercial	Arthur Llewellyn, HFH Management
Mark Russell, SWEA/RAC	David Martin, Energy Consultant
Guy Hitchcock, Sustainable Transport Solutions	Peter Wortley, Federation of Petroleum Suppliers
Graham Ayling, SWEA	Susan Rabbich, National Rural Knowledge Exchange
Stuart Shales, UWE, Bristol	Robert Cooper, Thomas Silbey Ltd.
John Pitts, e-jet International Ltd.	Alan Stewart, Knowledge West
James Hygate, Green Fuels	Andrew Thomas, Green Fuels

Apologies

Craig Frost, Regional Assembly

Peter Wiggins, Gloucestershire County Council

Study Tour – Green Fuels Ltd.

Green Fuels Ltd. kindly provided a study tour of their premises. Green Fuels are a Gloucestershire-based international biofuels company. They market systems for refining biodiesel and are developing a number of other new business activities involving other biofuels. Forum members were shown several different biodiesel refining kits of different scales.

Matters arising from previous minutes

- GA agreed to follow up with Mike Twomey re: implications of biofuels use for Bus Service Operators Grant.
- GA suggested putting the BioNETT biofuels training materials on the website rather than emailing them round the network, due to the size of the files.

Stuart Shales – Presentation on fuel farm concept

Stuart Shales from the University of the West of England made a presentation based on his work on the concept of “fuel farms” where farmers run different bioenergy processes in parallel (e.g. Anaerobic digestion and biodiesel).

The presentation stimulated a wide-ranging debate on the future of UK manufactured biofuels.

Round table update

Forum members provided a brief update of work related to biofuels including:

- Alan Stewart from Knowledge West is conducting research on the environmental, economic and social impacts of biofuels.
- Thomas Silbey Ltd. are currently supplying biodiesel to fleets and businesses
- Stuart Shales of UWE is preparing case studies of the use of bioethanol and biodiesel in the South West
- Simon Graham informed the group that Commercial Ltd. is including the use of biodiesel within their fleet as part of their carbon management programme.
- Peter Wortley highlighted the “Worldwide Fuel Charter” available from the Auto Alliance website, which covers biofuels and may be useful reference material for forum members. A hyperlink to the charter was circulated subsequently. The Federation of Petroleum Suppliers has also updated its biodiesel briefing note for members which is available online at: www.fpsonline.co.uk under the “info” tab.
- Mark Russell will be joining the team providing the secretariat of the SW biofuels forum and the BioNETT project.
- Mark Russell pointed out that the Rural Enterprise Gateway can help groups of rural businesses to work together (including £1500 grants) so could be relevant for biofuel producer groups.
- Guy Hitchcock is establishing a biomethane for transport working group to be launched at a conference on the 1st May.

Report back from biofuels meeting with SWRDA

Graham Ayling informed the group that he and Guy Hitchcock had met with SWRDA to follow up on the earlier meeting. SWRDA had responded very positively and had asked for a proposal for research work on biofuels to inform the development of their future work programme.

SW biofuels work programme

Guy Hitchcock provided more detail on the nature of the work discussed with SWRDA.

In particular the work would focus on determining the potential benefit to the South West from the development of biofuels and to review market failures that might create barriers to the development of biofuels in the SW. The work will be divided into two phases:

- Scoping – information on the different biofuels and the potential of each for the SW and reviewing the benefits from and barriers to each fuel.
- A feasibility study into a model to take forward local biofuel supply and the business case for SWRDA supporting that model.

Guy informed the group that the proposal had been submitted to SWRDA and he was currently awaiting a reply on whether SWRDA could support the proposal. Forum members suggested following with SWRDA by letter to see if a decision had been taken.

GA agreed to circulate the proposals made to SWRDA to the SW Biofuels forum members.

2007/08 BioNETT work programme and steering group

GA asked for further suggestions on the content and management of the training programme planned for the BioNETT project. James Hygate offered the Greenfuels premises as a possible venue for a training session; he also suggested that the forum could collate a list of fleets interested in using biofuels.

GA requested volunteers from the forum to join the BioNETT project steering group. Steering group members will meet on a quarterly to six monthly basis to oversee the work of the forum and the European partnership BioNETT project to promote appropriate use of biofuels.

AOB

RTFO consultation

Guy Hitchcock suggested making a joint response to the consultation on the Road Transport Fuels Obligation (RTFO). James Hygate informed the group that Green Fuels had produced a standard letter lobbying in favour of small scale biofuel production. It was agreed that a co-ordinated response should be prepared on behalf of the forum; Malcolm Shepherd, James Hygate and Guy Hitchcock will work together to develop it. Members are also encouraged to make their own submissions if they wish.

DTI funding

Stuart Shales suggested that there may be opportunities for joint working on an upcoming call for proposals from DTI covering a range of different renewable energy technologies including “Advanced Conversion of Biomass”, in particular developing “viable, cost effective supply chains and processing concepts”. Further details have been forwarded separately; Expressions of interest are due by the 11th of June.

The group expressed their thanks to Green Fuels Ltd. for hosting the meeting and for a stimulating and useful study tour.

Action points

- GA: to follow up with Mike Twomey re: effect of using biofuels on bus service operators grant

- SWEA: to place BioNETT training materials on the BioNETT website
- SWEA: to circulate proposals to SWRDA
- ALL: volunteers for the BioNETT steering group welcome, contact; graham@swea.co.uk.
- .James Hygate: to circulate letter on RTFO
- SWEA to confirm date of next SW Biofuels meeting.