Speakers’ Biographies

Tim Yeo MP, Chairman

Tim Yeo has been MP for South Suffolk since 1983. He was Minister of State for the Environment in the last Conservative Government and held a number of shadow cabinet positions when the Conservatives were in opposition.

In 2005 he resigned from the Shadow Cabinet to speak more freely on climate change and from 2005 to 2010 he chaired the House of Commons Environmental Audit Select Committee. In 2010 he was elected as Chair of the Energy and Climate Change Select Committee.

David Mercer, Construction Manager, Major Works, National Grid

David Mercer is National Grid’s Construction Manager for its UK Major Works - delivering new generation connections to help meet the UK’s future energy challenge.

David has an honours degree in Power Engineering from the University of Aston in Birmingham, is a Chartered Engineer and a Fellow of the Institution of Engineering and Technology.

Since graduating in 1983 David has spent his entire career working in the Power and Gas Industries with CEGB and British Energy prior to joining National Grid in 1990. David has held a number of management positions within National Grid and was the Senior Project Manager for the construction of the 75km 400kV Overhead Line route through the Vale of York, which is the largest power line that has been constructed in the UK post privatisation.

In 2005 David was appointed Senior Project Manager for the construction of the 316km natural gas pipeline to connect two major new Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) importation facilities at Milford Haven. The two terminals will provide around 20% of the UK’s natural gas requirements and the extensions and modifications to the National Transmission System were the most extensive undertaken since its original construction and cost £1bn.

David is now leading National Grid’s project teams responsible for delivery of connections to major new wind farms and nuclear power stations.

Richard Smith, Future Transmission Networks Manager, National Grid

Richard joined National Grid in July 2000 following a degree in Civil Engineering at the University of Nottingham, a Doctor of Engineering and an MSc in Astronautics & Space Engineering at Cranfield University. He was Investor Relations Manager from 2006, representing National Grid in all aspects of its engagement with financial market stakeholders.

Richard has recently been appointed as the Future Transmission Networks Manager, where he is responsible for the development of strategic positioning
and business model, supporting and developing energy policy, which will help ensure that National Grid plays a pivotal role in enabling the UK Government to meet its 2020 renewable targets and 2050 carbon emission targets.

David Walker, Offshore Development Director, ScottishPower Renewables

David joined South of Scotland Electricity Board in 1987 prior to privatisation as ScottishPower and has worked in a variety of roles in the Energy Networks engineering and construction business including Network Development Director prior to joining the Renewables business in 2007 as Project Director with responsibility for development of new onshore windfarm sites.

David is the Offshore Development Director for ScottishPower Renewables, which is the UK arm of Iberdrola Renovables – the largest renewables company in the world. His responsibility encompasses all of the company’s offshore wind development activities including the Round 3 East Anglia programme in the UK and various major offshore developments across Europe. This includes the design, scoping, environmental assessment, planning and consenting activities.

A chartered electrical engineer and MBA, David is married with 2 children.

Paul Hipwell, No Moor Pylons

Paul chairs No Moor Pylons, one of the many Somerset community groups opposing National Grid’s plans to install pylons across the Somerset levels.

He is a chartered chemical engineer by profession with a background with one of the world’s leading chemical companies. He now runs a consultancy business in the regulated UK water industry.

He is passionate about protecting the countryside for future generations to enjoy, an avid windsurfer and plays an active role in his local community, he is an ex Parish Councillor.

John Foster, Suffolk and Essex amenity groups

John grew up in the wooded valleys of the Sussex Weald, on an isolated family farm that had never been connected to the electricity supply and struggled without power, even after a string of pylons arrived.

After graduating he moved to Suffolk to become a journalist, specialising in farming and the rural economy before setting up his own PR and marketing consultancy over 20 years ago. Clients have included utilities, such as Eastern Electricity at the time of privatisation and he has carried out extensive research in the civil engineering and construction sectors.

He has come to love Suffolk’s estuaries and open vistas, whether from the water when sailing, or with his family on their smallholding.
Tom Luff, Head of Network Delivery & Access, DECC

Tom Luff is the Head of the Electricity Network Delivery and Access team in the Department of Energy and Climate Change. His team is responsible for ensuring the right investments are made in the electricity network to meet the Government’s policy objectives.

On loan from the Cabinet Office, Tom has worked on a range of policy areas, predominantly in the field of energy and climate change (including household energy efficiency, international energy policy and the National Security Strategy).

Before joining the UK Government, Tom worked in Belgium and Japan.

Iain Morgan, Senior Regulatory Economist, Ofgem

Iain is a senior member of the policy team working on the transmission price control review (RIIO-T1) to be implemented from April 2013. Before this he worked in the RPI-X@20 team working on Ofgem’s fundamental review of how energy networks should be regulated in the future.

Iain’s background is as a regulatory economist principally working in the rail sector for the Office of Rail Regulation (and its predecessor the Office of the Rail Regulator) between 1999 and 2008. In the 2008 determination of Network Rail’s outputs and funding Iain led work on incentives and access charges. Iain has a masters degree in economic regulation and competition from City University, London.

Colin Johnston, Corporate Account Manager, Siemens Energy

After joining Siemens in 1992, Colin focussed initially on business development with UK customers for control system applications for electricity networks. After this became an established business, Colin moved into an Account Management role, becoming responsible for the establishment and maintenance of relationships with a number of key UK customers in the Electricity Industry.

In 2008, Siemens restructured into Units addressing the vertical market sectors Industry, Energy & Healthcare, supported by a number of cross-sector Units. Colin is currently a Customer Account Manager, based in the Energy Sector, but taking the lead in establishing and developing business across Siemens’ entire capability.

Prior to joining Siemens, Colin was with a company that supplied IT systems fundamental to the privatisation of the Electricity Industry. His professional interest in the evolution of the Industry now spans over two decades.
Steve Aughton, Corporate Account Manager, Siemens Energy

Steve Aughton is Business Development Manager for Siemens Transmission and Distribution Ltd. Steve is responsible for developing Siemens’ off shore wind farm grid connections business across North West Europe, building on the substantial experience that the business has gained in the United Kingdom.

Steve has an unusual background for this industry having graduated with a degree in modern history from Oxford University and previously specialising in Human Resource Management. Steve has worked for Siemens for more than ten years, previously being employed by BAE Systems.

Steve lives in Manchester with his wife Juliette and one child

Allan Provins, Senior Consultant, eftec

Allan is an environmental economist and senior consultant with eftec.

Since 2002 he has worked on over 30 projects mainly focused on valuation of environmental and cultural goods and services and the use of this evidence in cost-benefit analysis and policy and project decision-making.

His recent work includes a study for CLG to value the impact of regeneration, including improvements to local environmental amenity. He has also recently completed a project for Defra to provide guidelines for valuing environmental costs and benefits of proposed projects and policies. Other work includes reviews for Ofwat and UK Water Industry Research (UKWIR) of the use of cost-benefit analysis and economic valuation by water companies in the preparation of business plans for the 2009 Price Review.