

Conversation 3 - Local Energy

Wednesday 16 November, 2016

Fairmilehead Church, 1a Frogston Rd West, Edinburgh EH10 7AA.

Speakers

Bill Elliot and Rachel Picken from Scottish Water shared their experiences of harnessing local water systems to generate electricity.

A representative from Millerhill Waste to Energy updated us on their new facility

Anne Schiffer, Friends of the Earth Community Energy campaigner set the wider context of communities across Europe taking control themselves.

Then participants discussed the main concerns arising from these introductory remarks.

Summary of the outcomes of the discussions

- Local energy was taken to mean local renewables including biomass, but also touched on waste management and transport.
- Local energy concerns communities as well as businesses like Scottish Water or the Forestry Commission. Creating communities with the capability to take advantage of opportunities for generation or saving energy is a challenge.
- Local and national governments seem to be essential to setting ambitious targets and expectations. The resulting efforts do not seem to be easy to coordinate – the need for joined up planning and action is a recurring theme. There is a need for tight regulations and planners must be required to ensure that developers comply.
- The participants wanted more green generation of electricity – PV solar, wave power, anaerobic digestion (wind is not listed with little mention of hydro power).
- Transport improvements should move us towards electric vehicles. This should reduce road side air pollution.
- Consideration of heat led to wanting more district heating schemes. A need was expressed for more research into ways of storing electricity to meet seasonal variation in demand.
- The use of anaerobic digestion to generate electricity and produce heat led to some discussion of waste treatment. Incineration was seen as a strategy of last resort.
- Behaviour change to promote the more efficient use of electricity (and heat) was another recurring theme.