Cross Party Group on Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

18 November 2025

Meeting Notes

Minute

Present

MSPs

Sarah Boyack (Chair)
Audrey Nicoll

Invited Guests

Maggie Olson-Jow, Scottish Renewables
David Thomson, Green Cat Hydrogen
Niamh Carr, James Hutton Institute
Kirsty MacColl
Artemis Pana
Euan Scott

Non-MSP Group Members

Alan Beal
Roderick Golbraith
James Owens
Angus Mathias
Sian McGuinness
Anna Gardiner
Gordon Thomson
Alistair Hill
Jillian Edmund
John McFarlane
George Colcomb
Jemma MacVicar
Colin Pritchard
Catherine Wales
Jacqui Lang
James Calder
Cameron Wilson
Amanda Fairman

Elaine Waterson

Apologies

Brian Whittle MSP

Agenda item 1 – Introduction by chair

Sarah Boyack MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting the focus of which was green hydrogen development in Scotland.

Agenda item 2 – Approval of minutes from the last meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 3 June 2025, had been sent round to group members in advance. The secretariat received one request for a correction which was incorporated: the addition of Neil Kermode to the attendee list.

The group agreed that these provided an accurate account of the meeting (proposed by Sarah Boyack MSP, seconded by Elaine Waterson).

Agenda item 3 – Presentation from Maggie Olson-Jow, Scottish Renewables

Maggie introduced Scottish Renewables as the Trade Association for renewable energy in Scotland with more than 360 members. Maggie highlighted that, in relation to hydrogen, Scottish Renewables' work primarily focuses on green hydrogen, which is produced by the electrolysis of water using renewable electricity.

Maggie went on to highlight ambitions for green hydrogen set out by both the Scottish and UK Governments:

- Scottish Government targets: 5GW renewable/low-carbon hydrogen by 2030; 25GW by 2045.
- UK Government Hydrogen Strategy: 10GW hydrogen capacity by 2030, including 5GW green hydrogen.

Maggie then presented a map of the hydrogen production pipeline in Scotland, which currently totals 1.1GW in development, noting that the barriers to deployment that must be addressed in order to grow Scotland's green hydrogen, include:

- Strategic Planning CSNP will be incredibly relevant to Green Hydrogen given its post 2030 timeline. Maggie noted the importance of effective coordination

between NESO's planning, the gas network and the wider regulatory framework in understanding how much green hydrogen capacity can be delivered.
- High Cost of Hydrogen - Hydrogen projects are being supported by UK Government's hydrogen allocation round administered by DESNZ, which works in a similar way to the CfD mechanism.
- Electrolyser and supply-chain costs: The high cost of electrolysers, together with wider supply chain and project costs is making it difficult for projects to compete with some becoming unviable.
    - Lack of certainty over demand for green hydrogen. There remains a lack of certainty around demand for green hydrogen, with further support needed to stimulate offtake across sectors such as heavy industry, alternative fuels and food service.

Maggie concluded by outlining the current policy work underway at both Scottish and UK levels, including ongoing collaboration with the Scottish Government on consenting and planning, and the Scottish Government's commissioning of the SSEP and future Strategic Energy Plans to support the growth of a green hydrogen economy across production, demand and infrastructure.

Agenda item 4 – Presentation from David Thompson, Green Cat Hydrogen

Green Cat Hydrogen was founded in 2022, and design, build, and operate green hydrogen production facilities. As part of the Green Cat Group, they have particular expertise in design, consultancy, planning and contracting of large infrastructure projects.

David highlighted of the current challenges facing electrification in Scotland, noting that the grid is currently at capacity at the B6 boundary. David went on to explain that some users, including distilleries are facing grid connection costs of up to £40 million grid connection, with connections likely to take several years to deliver.

David went on to give an overview of Green Cat Hydrogen's four green hydrogen development projects located across Scotland:

- Hammars Hill Hydrogen in Orkney;
- Strathallan Hydrogen in Perth and Kinross;
- Binn Ecopark Hydrogen in Perth and Kinross; and
- Creca Hydrogen in Dumfries and Galloway.

David then explained the UK Government's Hydrogen Allocation Rounds (HAR), which provide ongoing revenue support for a 15-year period to bridge the gap between the cost of producing hydrogen and the cost of natural gas.

- HAR1: Eleven projects awarded in Dec 2023 (including Cromarty and Whitelee in Scotland), with first projects due online from late 2025.

- HAR2: Shortlisting announced April 2025 — 27 projects selected, including 7 in Scotland (3 led by GCH).

However, as of October 2025, three Scottish projects have been paused, reflecting the challenges in the sector. These projects include the Cromarty project, both phases of the Whitelee project, and the Irvine project.

David then explained the difficulties facing green hydrogen projects in Scotland, despite their success in the UK Government's Hydrogen Allocation Rounds. Projects are currently facing high capital development costs, alongside high electricity prices.

To unlock the potential of hydrogen in Scotland, David highlighted the need for continued backing from the Scottish Government and Scotland's enterprise agencies, to support projects moving from from early-stage development through to final investment decision (FID).

Support mechanisms were described as being particularly essential for the success of commercial scale projects, especially at off-taker level to help cover costs such as feasibility studies, equipment upgrades and process changes. This would help increase demand for hydrogen.

Agenda item 5 – Presentation from Niamh Carr, James Hutton Institute (HydroGlen)

Niamh outlined that the James Hutton Institute is a research organization based in both Aberdeen and Dundee, focusing on environmental, social and economic development.

The James Hutton Institute initiated the HydroGlen project at its research farm in Aberdeen in 2021. A feasibility study was undertaken with support from CARES, and the project subsequently received a £6.2 million grant from the Just Transition Fund to develop a demonstrator project.

HydroGlen offers the opportunity to explore decarbonisation within the agricultural sector and for heavy duty machinery, in North East Scotland.

The project has four key goals:
- Ability to build using commercially available technologies
- Showcasing hydrogen and vehicles
- Replicability – both on- and off grid
- Modularity and scalability

Niamh then explained the project's operating model. HydroGlen is grid connected and makes use of existing solar generation and a refurbished wind turbine. Renewable electricity produced at the farm is fed into a microgrid, where water on

site is split into oxygen and hydrogen. The project has no impact on the day to day running of the farm.

Niamh went on to outline the HydroGlen project timeline, covering the design, delivery and operational phases, and noted that the project is expected to become operational in 2026. The HydroGlen project gained planning permission only four months after submission. The HydroGlen team worked with a number of stakeholders during its development including local councils, the Scottish Government hydrogen team, hydrogen and renewable experts, cooperative interests and the National Farmers Union Scotland.

Niamh outlined the research and development opportunities that HydroGlen will support, including:

- Improving understanding of how hydrogen can be used to decarbonise rural areas, while creating a transformative model and supports Scotland's net zero goals and new revenue streams;
- Delivering greenhouse gas emissions reductions in the agricultural sector, noting that Scotland has 45,000 farming sites;
- Using demonstrator projects to kickstart knowledge sharing and inform policy development across a range of stakeholders.

Niamh concluded by thanking the Scottish Government's Just Transition Fund and the Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES) for their support of the HydroGlen project.

Agenda item 6 – Q&A and Discussion

A range of questions were directed at the panel and included:

Sarah Boyack MSP asked how best practice and the knowledge shared by the presenters could be more widely disseminated.

Sarah Boyack MSP asked how green hydrogen can be used to help address grid constraints.

Allan Beal asked whether, in terms of application, there was a need to develop new areas of demand or use.

Allan Beal asked what was happening to the oxygen produced at HydroGlen.

Roderick Galbraith asked how a common understanding of the definition of green hydrogen could be ensured, given the range of low-carbon energy sources on the electricity system.

Sian McGuinness asked what water source HydroGlen is currently using.

Euan Scott asked whether there was scope under the RESP to make a case for hydrogen in island communities?

Sian McGuinness asked whether, once the grid is upgraded and in 10-15 years time, there is potential for the grid upgrade to hinder the production of hydrogen if grid connection becomes available for a wind farm?

Sarah Boyack MSP thanked the two speakers, everyone attending and everyone involved in organising the meeting.

Agenda item 7 – Dates for future meetings

Sarah Boyack noted that the next meeting of SPREEE would be a joint meeting with the Cross-Party Group on Islands on January 13.

Agenda item 8 – AOB

No other business was raised.