

Cross Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Science and Technology

Minute of meeting held on 8 October 2013

- 1. Attendance:** Dr Elaine Murray MSP (Co-Convener); Dr Neil Roberston (guest speaker); Clare Adamson MSP (Co-Convener); Dr William Duncan (RSE); Brian McLeish (Scottish Enterprise); William Hardie (RSE); Kimberley Thomson; Bristow Muldoon (RSE and RSC).
- 2. Apologies:** Iain Gray MSP; Patrick Harvie MSP; Liam McArthur MSP; Drew Smith MSP; Dr Stephen Benn (Society of Biology).
- 3. Transforming Scotland with Solar Energy:**

Dr Robertson, of the School of Chemistry at the University of Edinburgh, gave a presentation where he outlined the opportunities that existed in Scotland and the United Kingdom of developing solar power capacity as a means of contributing to electricity generation needs by non fossil fuel sources.

His particular area of research was in developing new materials to capture solar energy at increasing levels of efficiency.

Contrary to common perceptions he explained how even in northern European countries solar power could make a significant contribution to energy needs. He commented that Germany already has considerable installed solar capacity, and also that in southern England solar generated energy was already cheaper than nuclear generation. Scotland is a little behind in its potential to exploit this energy, but even in Scotland the irradiation level is about 85 – 90 % of that of the South East of England or northern Germany. He predicted that grid parity would be achieved throughout the UK within 10 years due to the development of new technologies.

He recognised that solar power was not the complete answer to future energy needs as peak demand and peak potential production did not match up, however solar could make a significant contribution to Scotland's reduction in CO₂ targets both by generating electricity that can be fed into the grid and as a source of heating water in domestic homes and business premises.

H indicated that he was working with a number of partners, including Scottish Enterprise, SDI and the Big lottery Fund and that by Spring 2014 the various partners intended to launch a report setting out a Vision for Scotland on solar energy that he hoped would be taken to board by Government, individuals and businesses.

Copies of Dr Robertson's slides are available by contacting Bristow Muldoon through bmuldoon@royalsoced.org.uk

B Muldoon (Secretary)