

**Cross Party Group on Malawi**  
Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2017  
Scottish Parliament, Committee Room 5

**MINUTES**

**Co-Conveners: Liam McArthur MSP and Alexander Stewart MSP**  
**Renewable Energy Partnerships**

**Attendees**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Liam McArthur – MSP                              | 23. Alan Kimmitt – SMP Member  |
| 2. Patrick Harvie – MSP                             | 24. Archie Marshall - The Community School<br>of Auchterarder        |
| 3. Claire Haughey – MSP                             | 25. William McQuilter - SMP Member                                   |
| 4. John Mason – MSP                                 | 26. Susan McQuilter - SMP Member                                     |
| 5. Stuart McMillan – MSP                            | 27. Helen Mein - SMP Member  |
| 6. Elaine Smith – MSP                               | 28. Jim Mein - SMP Member  |
| 7. Colin Smyth – MSP                                | 29. Ruth Milliken – Scotland Lights Up Malawi                        |
| 8. Alexander Stewart – MSP                          | 30. Ian Mitchell – Beath High School                                 |
| 9. Janey Andrews – University of Strathclyde        | 31. Tione Mtalimanja - SMP Member                                    |
| 10. Richard Bates – University of St Andrews        | 32. Silas Ncozana - Chuluchosema                                     |
| 11. Sam Baumber – Social Enterprise<br>Academy      | 33. Grace O'Donovan – SMP  |
| 12. Jonathan Bowes – TownRock Energy                | 34. Siri Pantzar- TownRock Energy                                    |
| 13. John Burton – LUV +                             | 35. Ewan Ramsay - International Resources<br>and Recycling Institute |
| 14. Karen Chinkwita – S.E.A. Malawi                 | 36. Tim Raub – University of St Andrews                              |
| 15. Georgy Davis – Community Energy<br>Scotland     | 37. Chris Rendall  |
| 16. Aran Eales – University of Strathclyde          | 38. Kelvin Segula - Chuluchosema                                     |
| 17. Georgia Forsyth Sijpestijn – TownRock<br>Energy | 39. Katija Suzumire - Chuluchosema                                   |
| 18. Bob Garrow – R S Garrow                         | 40. Marvellous Tembo - Chuluchosema                                  |
| 19. Nigel Harper – LUV +                            | 41. David Townsend - TownRock Energy                                 |
| 20. Chris Hay – SMP Member                          | 42. Abi Wardlaw - Tearfund   |
| 21. David Hope-Jones – SMP                          | 43. Barry Weaver – Broadway Partners                                 |
| 22. Brian Kerr – The Soko Fund                      | 44. Kathy Wright – SMP   |

**Apologies**

Jackie Bailie MSP	Madeleine van Hilten – MicroLoan Foundation
Christina McKelvie MSP	Dave Walls – TownRock Energy
Annie Wells MSP	Darren Watt – University of Edinburgh
Mike Beresford – Zambesi Mission	Peter West – Hon Consul to Malawi
Alastair Evans – Wood Group	

**1. Welcome, apologies and minutes of the last meeting**

The CPG on Malawi Co-Convenor Liam McArthur MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting. A number of apologies were noted (see list above). Minutes were approved from the previous CPG meeting in May, proposed by Helen Mien, seconded by Brian Kerr.

## **2. Malawi Cross Party Group AGM.**

In line with parliamentary guidance each CPG must hold an AGM within 11-13 months of the previous AGM of the CPG. Liam McArthur MSP (Lib Dems) and Alexander Stewart MSP (Cons) agreed to continue as co-conveners. Clare Haughey MSP (SNP) expressed her intention to stand as co-convenor. David Hope-Jones (secretary) established it was permissible to have three co-convenors.

Clare Haughey MSP (SNP), Liam McArthur MSP (Lib Dems), Alexander Stewart MSP (Cons) were duly elected (proposed by Patrick Harvie MSP, seconded by Elaine Smith MSP).

Elaine Smith MSP (Lab), Christina McKelvie MSP (SNP), Patrick Harvie MSP (Greens) were duly elected as Co-Vice-Conveners (proposed by Stuart McMillan MSP and seconded by Clare Haughey MSP).

David Hope-Jones (ex officio, Scotland Malawi Partnership) was duly re-elected as secretary for the group (proposed by Liam McArthur MSP and seconded by Elaine Smith MSP).

Liam McArthur MSP thanked David Hope-Jones and the Scotland Malawi Partnership team for the support and hard work that goes into organising these meetings.

## **3. Presentation: Energy access in Malawi and building markets for renewables**

*Brave Mhonie, SunnyMoney/SolarAid Malawi (via video) & Ruth Milliken, Scotland Lights Up Malawi*

Brave Mhonie from SunnyMoney/SolarAid Malawi gave a pre-recorded presentation on pico solar products and business-based solutions in tackling energy access in Malawi. Watch the video here: [goo.gl/HRVltE](http://goo.gl/HRVltE)

Ruth Milliken followed on from Brave's presentation, introducing herself and the Scotland Lights Up Malawi (SLuM) campaign. SLuM was created by the 2020 Climate Group in response to Mary Robinson's challenge to the business world on Scotland's role in tackling climate change. The campaign brought together Scottish businesses with Glasgow Caledonian University, Keep Scotland Beautiful and SolarAid/SunnyMoney in Malawi. The campaign worked to raise awareness of Climate Justice in Scotland, especially among young people, and to raise funds for energy access.

Ruth spoke of the need for tackling energy access in Malawi: in a population of 17 million, 15 million have no access to electricity. She demonstrated one of the means of lighting homes for those living off-grid: a kerosene lamp. Ruth described the dangers and expense of using kerosene, or one of the other methods for off-grid lighting such as torches or burning grass or candles.

The SLuM campaign continues to build partnerships across Scotland and Malawi. Current projects include work with the Fistula Foundation on their Empowered with Energy project. The campaign continues to help people to step away from kerosene and to stand for doing business differently. They are looking to continue the conversation and Ruth invited others who are interested to get in touch.

## **4. Renewable energy partnerships with Malawi:**

A number of speakers working in the field of renewable energy in Malawi shared their projects, learning and experiences.

Tione Mtalimanja, Malawian energy expert working in wind energy in Scotland

Tione is currently working for Scottish and Southern Energy. Previously, he was employed by ESCOM [Electricity Supply Commission of Malawi] in the Southern Region, working on rural community electricity provision. Tione outlined three major challenges many businesses met when they wanted to move into this sector:

1. Lack of standards for products: Malawi Bureau of Standards is being bypassed and the market is being flooded by sub-standard products which break easily and reduce trust in this technology.
2. Local technical capacity: projects are being implemented without consideration of local capacity. As a result, projects do not have the capacity to sustain the technology; for example in 2007 a hydro system was installed in three villages; within a few years it was decommissioned because there was no technician to maintain the batteries. There are lots of technical experts in urban areas but not in rural settings.
3. Sustainability is key for business ventures: the challenge is that tariff and income levels are miles apart. People cannot afford electricity around the clock so they become disconnected from supply. Economic empowerment for these communities is key.

Tione asked for these challenges to be considered when applying for funding for projects.

#### Aran Eales, University of Strathclyde

Aran introduced himself as a researcher and project manager at the University of Strathclyde. He highlighted the issue of capacity building and training needs with the Malawi government. The government is focused on grid expansion and it is less clear what their role is in rural settings. Aran explained there are no district level energy officers – creating these roles was a recommendation made to the Malawian government.

Aran went on to highlight a number of University of Strathclyde renewable energy projects:

- A feasibility study into energy production as a business. The highest need identified was in agriculture; however sales and services are likely to start up sooner based on rent-to-own systems.
- Creation of a Toolkit – introduction to renewable and start-up guide to starting a business.
- Sustainability study in PV for the Malawi Renewable Energy Acceleration Programme (MREAP), showing projects are slightly more sustainable because of community engagement.
- UNDP project on sustainable business models.
- SOGERV project – the Sustainable Off-Grid Electrification of Rural Villages project is operational in four villages, with a community solar PV system, small solar products and home systems. There have been challenges with the PV installation.
- Micro-grids – these are 5-10kW PV systems, domestic supplies paid for through mobile money.

#### Ewan Ramsay, International Resources & Recycling Group

Ewan introduced himself as the Director for the International Resources and Recycling Group (IRRC) which was founded in 2007. In 2011/12. IRRC received funding from the Scottish government to set up two rural off-grid solar kiosks with the aim of making them sustainable by the end of the funding period. The kiosks were sited outside Blantyre and set up with the local communities.

There were a number of challenges during the project, particularly with the technology. IRRC drew on their experience from working on similar projects in the Arctic Circle. In both settings, they found community engagement and local capacity building were key.

The project is called Renew Enable Malawi and has been working for five years to get the kiosks running sustainably. It is still not quite sustainable. The funding from the Scottish government ran to 2015, the company themselves have funded it to 2017 and they have secured additional funding to 2018 with a real push for independence by March.

Richard Bates introduced himself as a Senior Lecturer at the University of St Andrews. Richard explained that Malawi and Scotland have things in common when it comes to geothermal energy. In Scotland, there are islands coping with being off-grid, just as many communities in Malawi do.

Geothermal production can be seen all over the world. There is potential production in Malawi, some of which is being tapped into already. Through a GCRF project, an evaluation of potential was undertaken through desk-top review, reconnaissance survey in Malawi and delivery of results at a workshop to local stakeholders.

There is additional funding to return to the site for further field tests, as well as to bring a team of Malawian engineers over to visit geothermal sites in the UK and across Europe to see small sites. It is recognised that any solution must be an integrated solution at the right scale.

David Townsend introduced himself as CEO of TownRock Energy, which was founded four years ago and is Scotland's first deep geothermal energy company. In Scotland geothermal potential is very deep, in contrast Malawi has hot water coming out at the surface.

## **5. Open discussion and Q&A**

Nigel Harper from LUV+ asked Aran Eales if cropping twice per year would be feasible and if there were suitable pumps available. Aran responded that feasibility studies show demand is there and there are plenty of commercial examples but the barrier is the high start-up costs. There are some big operations there already at scale, for example with Practical Action and Christian Aid. Maize milling is the top choice but greater crop diversification is really needed. A USAID study showed maize is the most suitable crop for 5% of Malawian soils but it is grown on 90% of it.

Karen Chinkwita from Social Enterprise Academy Malawi asked two questions:

- A Malawian in Nkhata Bay called Hastings has already developed several hydro plants. Financing was a huge issue so he used materials he sourced locally and raised £554. Karen asked if there had been any discussion or progress on licensing from MERA? Hastings had not been allowed to generate a grid himself, it had to be done through ESCOM, due to licensing laws.
- Were the speakers and attendees considering the possibilities of working with the TVET programme? There are several technical colleges and they are training engineers – this could be a way of tackling issues raised by speakers around sustainability and local technical knowledge, and also creates jobs.

Aran Eales responded that MERA has been a big stumbling block. Regulation is needed for 1MW and 500kW. Standards for products is also a major issue – Malawi is flooded with low quality products. Not only do they break easily leaving people without access to energy, they also create electronic waste and people's perception of solar goes down. To try and tackle this they have made a recommendation to the government of Malawi to introduce District Renewable Officers. Regarding TVET, his understanding was that it was mainly woodwork and welding; it could include renewable. Mzuzu college and Community Energy Malawi also do training and capacity building.

Tione Mtalimanja also responded that Feed-in Tariffs don't exist in Malawi. If the government wants small scale success, they need Feed-in Tariffs. MERA have started with utility scale rather than small scale. The market doesn't currently allow small scale development.

Tim Raub added that geothermal can bypass electricity in some settings, although it is location specific. ESCOM has to come to the source. A plant can add 10-20% grid capacity. The World Bank committed to a geothermal plant in Malawi.

John Mason MSP asked for further details on the IIRC solar kiosk and why it is not quite sustainable. Ewan Ramsay responded that although the cost of solar has gone down, the capital to renew the technology every 3 years is a challenge. Also the on-going costs of security and maintenance.

Georgy Davis spoke about the work Community Energy Scotland has done in supporting the development of MREAP, and this work finding a real need to build a Malawian organisation. Following this, they have supported Community Energy Malawi who are finding solutions for themselves in communities in Malawi. Georgy reminded attendees of the importance of supporting Malawians and avoiding the flying in and out of consultants. Aran Eales agreed and thanked Georgy for raising this.

David Hope-Jones asked what the ideal scenario looks like in renewable in Malawi in 2030. Aran Eales responded that by 2030 he expects to see more progress at the lower end of the grid and predicted:

1. Increased affordability on the small scale e.g. the work of SunnyMoney is key
2. Increase in home systems – following the success of Kenya, Tanzania and Bangladesh
3. Increased in mini-grids
4. An unreliable grid

He also noted that the Malawian government are likely to put out a tender for solar PV. JIKA has also done a feasibility study for increasing hydro and has identified 10 sites. The Malawian grid is currently operating at 300 MW but it is isolated – they could connect to e.g. Mozambique.

Silas Ncozana visiting from Malawi thanked the group for allowing him to participate. He raised that it is critical to accelerate energy in Malawi, and that to think of 2030 population growth must be considered. To accelerate provision of renewable energy, the politicians must be educated. MERA must not block entrepreneurship and opportunities to grow energy locally.

Karen Chinkwita raised that Malawi has all the resources it needs – technically, financially through the Scottish government and with the passion of the people – communities just need more local capacity to build this vision.

## **6. Any other business**

- The Scottish government's Climate Week is happening next week; there are already 107 events registered; follow on twitter #scotclimateweek
- There is a [Westminster debate](#) happening at the same time as this meeting celebrating Scotland's links with Malawi. The intention is to create a Malawi APPG.
- The next Malawi CPG may be used for the RCPSG to launch a report on Scotland's Global Health Collaborative.
- Scotland Malawi Partnership's AGM is taking place on 30<sup>th</sup> September at Stewart's Melville College – all are welcome.
- Visas continue to be a challenge and David Hope-Jones extended a warm welcome to the Malawians in attendance and asked others to do the same.
- Liam McArthur recognised the opportunity for collaboration with the Malawi APPG and that the more work that can be done with Westminster the better.

Liam McArthur thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 19.30.

**The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> November, 18.00**