

On the Record with BWEA's New Chairman

By Chris Shears, BWEA Chairman

It is a great honour to be Chairing the Association at such an exciting and crucial time in our evolution. I would like to thank Alan Moore for his huge commitment over the last two years; it is a comfort to know his wise head is still on the Board. The membership is a broad church but we have a common aim – the delivery of more quality wind and marine energy schemes as quickly as possible, with as much UK content as possible. I am truly humbled by the enthusiasm and expertise of the staff, Board and membership and look forward to working with all of you.

Wind energy is in the political and energy spot light as never before and the chance to be, and importantly be seen to be, a real, credible and popular component of the UK's energy mix is I believe within our reach. However, it seems axiomatic that the more success we have the greater the challenges become! We have now passed the 1 gigawatt barrier and getting there has at times seemed like pulling teeth. There will doubtless be a few more teeth lost along the way but I'm confident that the second gigawatt will arrive in not much more than 14 months rather than the 14 years it took to reach the first.

We should therefore be positive – we know we have a strong technology that can deliver. However, we must also now be more realistic that if the barriers to development be they, technical, non technical or institutional are not constantly kept in focus we will under perform. We are not masters of our own destiny and much depends on the positive cooperation of government in all its guises. I believe there is now the need and the opportunity to take a more forceful approach to dealing with the barriers to delivery. I do not mean we moan more, I mean we offer to help and we present solutions. The message is simple, the success of the RO, and therefore the renewables future of the UK, depends on us building more wind farms on and offshore more quickly. The more we build the cheaper we will be. The headline message to all decision makers should be that the best way to control wind development is to take proactive sequential decisions – good or bad, but do not delay or prevaricate. There are quick wins to be had, for example, additional human resources in consenting teams would I'm sure deliver quicker decisions.

I am acutely aware that most of what the public read about wind energy is in a Sunday broadsheet which I have noticed are often not altogether complimentary. The Embrace campaign has set us on a proactive path that we need to build on by getting the true facts out there about



BWEA Chairman Chris Shears © BWEA

our technology. Our first priority should be to nail the intermittency issue once and for all because I think it underpins a lot of the 'intellectual' opposition to wind. However, a constant source of amazement to me is the unwavering massive support we have amongst the public despite all the nonsense that gets printed. That bedrock of support gives me great confidence for the future.

BWEA is battling for all of us on many fronts and I am aware that because we are all busy, communicating everything that is going on to the membership is difficult. I hope that this quarterly publication will help. Somewhat foolhardily I have established a new Chairman's email address chairman@bwea.com. I would welcome any and all thoughts and ideas you have about the priorities and work of the BWEA. I look forward to meeting you at our October conference if not before. □

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