

# Northern Ireland Energy Forum 2026

Northern Ireland's major annual energy conference...

Wednesday 9th September  
Titanic Belfast



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William Orbinson <sup>K</sup>C

# NORTHERN IRELAND ENERGY FORUM 2026

## ► KEY TOPICS COVERED

Energy policy & regulation

The Northern Ireland Energy Forum, now in its 25th year, has firmly established itself as the annual conference for Northern Ireland's energy sector and is a not-to-be-missed event for anyone with an interest in the local energy industry. The 2026 Forum will once again bring together all the key players, from Northern Ireland and further afield, to focus on the most important aspects of energy policy and the latest developments across the sector. It provides a unique opportunity for all those operating within the sector to come together for networking and discussion.

## Energy in an uncertain world

The decarbonisation of the economy is one of the key priorities set out in the Programme for Government and the recent energy market turmoil and the increasing anxiety over energy security has only accelerated the drive towards developing indigenous renewable energy sources. There is an urgent need for delivery right across the energy sector. In electricity, the first RESS auction is planned with 2 GW needed to achieve the 2030 target of 80% of electricity from renewable sources. The electricity sector will see significant investment in the coming years as the trend towards the electrification of the economy increases. The use of battery storage is also accelerating with utility scale storage projects now coming on stream. In heat, the focus for the sector is now on the development of biomethane, heat networks and geothermal sources. Looking further into the future, there is the prospect of green hydrogen and the development of a long term storage solution for the energy system as a whole. The 2026 Forum comes at a time when developments are accelerating right across the energy sector and will bring together all these issues with a range of expert speakers.

## 2026 themes

**This year's Forum will look at some of the major issues shaping the energy landscape including:**

- |                                                         |                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| ✓ Decarbonising the Northern Ireland economy            | ✓ Developing a biomethane economy in Northern Ireland       |
| ✓ Regulatory outlook for the energy sector              | ✓ The role of wind and solar energy in achieving 80 by 2030 |
| ✓ How geopolitics is shaping our energy future          | ✓ Sustainable heat and district heating networks            |
| ✓ Planning and environmental aspects of energy projects | ✓ Meeting the need for long term energy storage             |
| ✓ The future of the electricity grid                    | ✓ Future outlook for green hydrogen                         |

**This event will bring together a mix of local industry leaders and visiting experts to look at these issues in detail.**



Future electricity  
grid

Planning and  
environment

AI and energy

Gas infrastructure

Green  
hydrogen

Energy storage  
systems

Biomethane  
economy

Energy system  
flexibility

#### Not-to-be-missed conference

The Northern Ireland Energy Forum is Northern Ireland's longest established energy conference. The conference is the major annual event in the local energy calendar and one not to be missed. Key features of the event include:

- ✓ Ministerial address
- ✓ Update from energy regulator
- ✓ In-depth examination of key policy issues
- ✓ Overview of Northern Ireland's major energy projects
- ✓ Attended by all the key players in the Northern Ireland energy sector
- ✓ Major networking opportunities

[www.nienergyforum.com](http://www.nienergyforum.com)

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# CONFERENCE PROGRAMME MORNING

0830 Morning coffee and registration

## 0900 ENERGY POLICY AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

Chair: **Sam Mc Closkey**, Country Director, Northern Ireland  
**Simply Blue Energy**

MINISTERIAL  
ADDRESS



*The path to net zero: secure, affordable, clean*  
**Caoimhe Archibald MLA**, Minister for the Economy

GEOPOLITICS

*How geopolitics is shaping our energy future*  
**Malcolm Moore**, Energy Editor, **Financial Times**

ELECTRICITY

*Growth through collaborative infrastructure planning and delivery*  
**Ciarán McManus**, Managing Director, **NIE Networks**

GAS NETWORK

*Biomethane economy: an unmissable opportunity*  
**Niall Martindale**, CEO, **Kinecx Energy**

ELECTRICITY GRID

*Enhancing the grid for a secure and sustainable future*  
**Emma Morris**, Director of Operations, **SONI**

Questions & answers / Panel discussion

1100 Morning coffee / networking break

## 1130 BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE ENERGY TRANSITION I

REGULATORY  
OUTLOOK

*Regulatory outlook for energy in Northern Ireland*  
**John French**, Chief Executive, **Utility Regulator**

PLANNING AND  
ENVIRONMENT

*Planning, environment and delivering energy projects: The pressure is on*  
**Andrew Ryan**, Partner, **TLT Solicitors**

ELECTRICITY  
GRID

*Investing in transmission grid assets*  
**Glen Evertsen**, Project Director, **Transmission Investment**

AI AND ENERGY

*AI deployment in the energy sector: opportunities and challenges*  
**Lucy Yu**, AI Champion for Clean Energy, **Department for Energy Security and Net Zero** and CEO, **Centre for Net Zero**

Questions & answers / Panel discussion

1315 Networking lunch



# CONFERENCE AFTERNOON

## 1400 BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE ENERGY TRANSITION II

Chair: **Edel Creery**, Director of Customer & Market Services, **NIE Networks**

ELECTRICITY  
MARKET

*The future strategy of the SEM to deliver Ireland's energy future*

**Tanya Harrington**, Commissioner, **Commission for Regulation of Utilities** (invited)

BIOMETHANE

*Delivering a biomethane economy in Northern Ireland*

**Ian Marshall**, Head of Business Development and Policy, **Centre for Advanced Sustainable Energy (CASE)**, **Queen's University Belfast**

Questions & answers / Panel discussion



## 1500 PANEL DISCUSSION: SHAPING NORTHERN IRELAND'S FUTURE ENERGY LANDSCAPE

FUTURE  
OUTLOOK



**Paddy Larkin**, Chief Executive Officer  
**Mutual Energy** (invited)



**Ian Marshall**, Head of Business Development and  
Policy, **Centre for Advanced Sustainable Energy  
(CASE)**, **Queen's University Belfast**



**Sam Mc Closkey**, Country Director, Northern Ireland  
**Simply Blue Energy**



**Richard Rodgers**, Deputy Secretary, Head of Energy  
**Department for the Economy**

1600 Conference close



# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



**Caoimhe Archibald MLA** was appointed **Economy Minister** on 3 February 2025. Previous to this, Caoimhe served as Finance Minister from February 2024. She was elected as an MLA for East Derry in May 2016 and re-elected in March 2017 and again in May 2022. She is formerly Chair of the Assembly's Economy and Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs committees. Prior to being elected in May 2016, Caoimhe had worked for almost a decade in applied horticulture and plant pathology research including on collaborative EU funded projects.



**Edel Creery** is Customer and Operations Director at **NIE Networks**. Edel joined NIE Networks in 2004 and has worked in various roles during her time in the company including as Head of Procurement and Supply Chain, Connections Manager and more recently as Head of Communications and Stakeholder Engagement before joining the Executive Committee in August 2024.



**John French** became Chief Executive of the **Utility Regulator** in November 2020. Prior to joining the Utility Regulator, John was Chief Executive of The Consumer Council from July 2015. Before this, John was Director of Regulation and Pricing at firmus energy, Investment Planning and Regulatory Reporting Manager at NIE Networks, Head of Policy at the UK Business Council for Sustainable Energy, Network Director at the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership in Vienna, and a diplomatic policy advisor on climate change and energy issues within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. John is a chartered director, chartered manager, and a fellow of the Institute of Directors. He has a master's degree in accountancy, and an honours degree in accountancy and business finance, both from the University of Dundee.



**Ian Marshall** is Head of Business Development and Policy at the **Centre for Advanced Sustainable Energy (CASE)**, Queen's University Belfast, where he builds strategic connections between research, industry, and government across bioenergy, energy systems, decarbonisation, and the circular bioeconomy. He previously held a similar role at the Institute for Global Food Security (IGFS) at Queen's, advancing research and industry collaboration across food integrity, agricultural and environmental resilience, nutrition, and data analytics. In 2018, Ian was elected to Seanad Éireann, serving as an Independent Senator until 2020. He is a former President of the Ulster Farmers' Union and former member of the Northern Ireland Agri-Food Strategy Board.



**Niall Martindale** is the CEO at **Kinecx Energy**. He has over 15 years' experience working in Northern Ireland's regulated energy industries. Niall joined firmus energy in 2015 as Director of Regulation and Pricing and became CEO in early 2022. He is a graduate of University of Ulster, Coleraine, studying BSc (Hons) Science with Business and holds a number of APICS qualifications. Niall is responsible for the strategic direction and governance of Kinecx Energy as well as spearheading the pivotal role they will play in Northern Ireland's transition to lower carbon future.



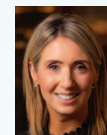
**Sam Mc Closkey** is Country Director at **Simply Blue Group**. She joined Simply Blue Group in January 2023 to lead Northern Ireland operations, overseeing projects including the Olympic and Aird Mhór Na Mara offshore wind farms in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. With a 30-year career in sustainability and energy, she has held senior consultancy roles at WYG and Tetra Tech and served 10 years as Director of the Invest NI funded Centre for Advanced Sustainable Energy. With over a decade of hands-on offshore renewable project management, Sam is a Fellow of the Energy Institute, Chair of its Northern Ireland branch, and has recently become Chair of the Northern Ireland Maritime and Offshore Network (NIMO).



**Ciarán McManus**, Managing Director, **NIE Networks** joined the company in April 2026. Ciarán held a number of positions in the ESB Group his most recent being Head of Generation Major Projects. Prior to that Ciarán was Head of Offshore Wind Delivery and was previously Plant Director at ESB Carrington in the UK and HSE Manager in ESB Generation in Ireland. He also previously worked for PPS Group in Kansas, USA as their Director of Asset Management and Operations before moving to Georgia Renewal Power as Director of Operations and Asset Management.



**Malcolm Moore** is the energy editor of the **Financial Times**, based in London, where he leads the newspaper's reporting on the subject. He was previously in charge of the paper's technology coverage and ran the UK news operation during Brexit. Before joining the FT, he was a foreign correspondent in Italy and China.



**Emma Morris** is Director of Operations at **SONI** (System Operator for Northern Ireland), leading the strategic and real-time operation of Northern Ireland's electricity transmission system. Having joined SONI as a graduate in 2006, she has held a range of senior leadership roles across grid operations and innovation. Previously Head of System Operations, Emma oversaw the real-time management of the transmission network and the Castlereagh House Control Centre. She plays a key role in delivering a secure, reliable and sustainable electricity system. Emma holds a Master's degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering from Queen's University Belfast.



**Richard Rodgers** is Head of Energy at the **Department for the Economy** where he led the development of the recently published Northern Ireland Executive's Energy Strategy – The Path to Net Zero Energy. He has almost 35 years' experience in the energy industry, including British Gas for eight years, Phoenix Natural Gas for 12, as MD (International) at Eaga for five years (responsible for the delivery of fuel poverty programmes for Governments across the world), five years as Strategic Advisor (Energy) at the Strategic Investment Board and for the past three years as Head of Energy in the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland. Richard was also a non-executive director on the Board of the Utility Regulator for nine years (ending in March 2019).



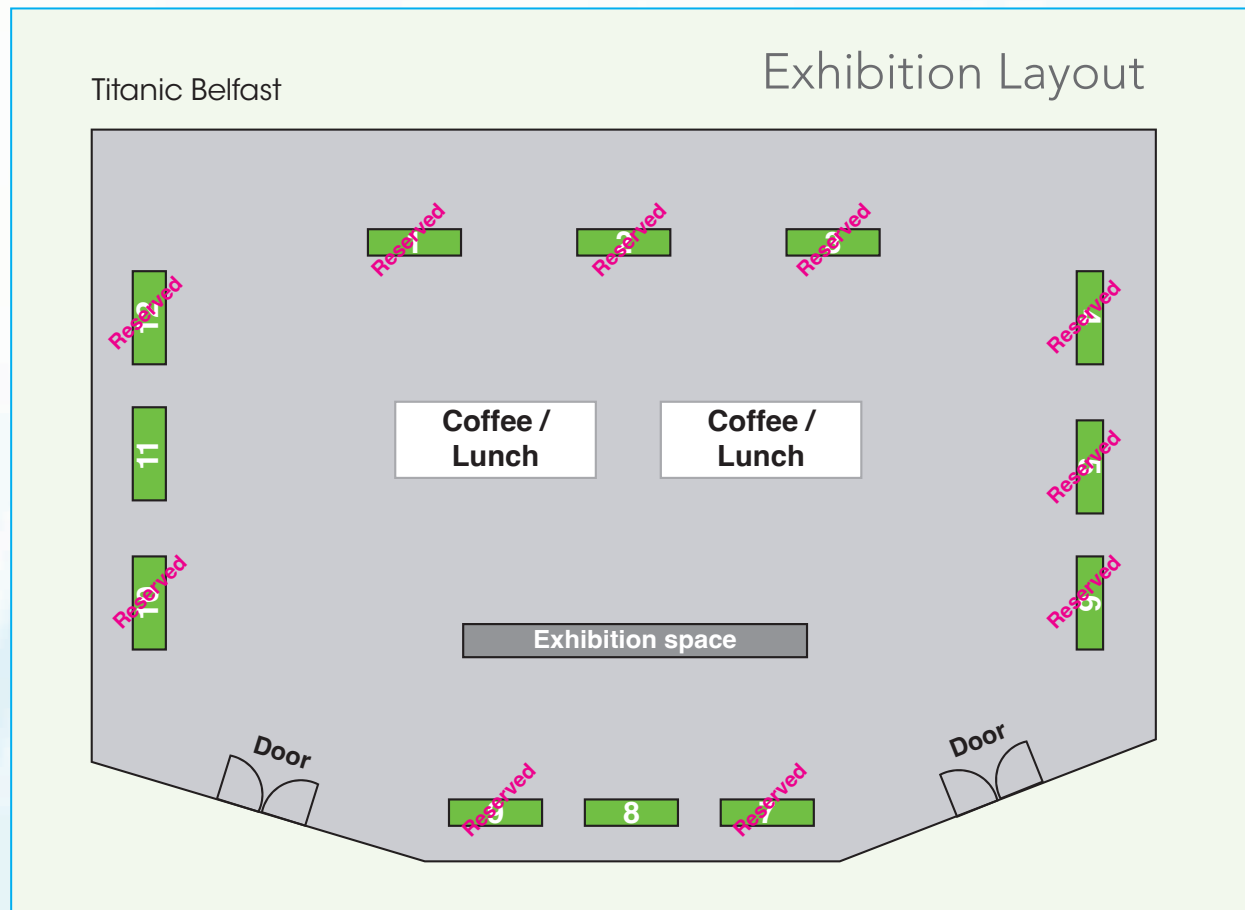
**Andrew Ryan** is a planning and environment partner in **TLT LLP**'s UK-wide team, heading up the Belfast practice. He has worked in Northern Ireland since 2006 and has been involved in many of the most significant development projects in NI over the last decade including wind farms, regionally significant waste facilities, major residential and commercial developments, fuel storage facilities, electricity transmission infrastructure projects and road schemes.



**Lucy Yu** is an award-winning technologist, venture builder, and policymaker with over 20 years of experience across deep tech, AI, and global tech policy. She is CEO of **Centre for Net Zero** (Octopus Energy Group's non-profit research institute) and the UK Government's AI Champion for Clean Energy. Her extensive board portfolio includes Chair of Wikimedia UK, non-executive director at E3G, and co-founder of the Institute for Ethical AI & Machine Learning. Lucy is an alumna of Imperial College, Harvard Kennedy School, and Oxford's Saïd Business School.

# CONFERENCE EXHIBITION

There are a limited number of opportunities for interested organisations to become involved with this conference as an exhibitor. This is an excellent way for organisations to showcase their expertise and raise their profile with a key audience of senior policy and decision makers from across Northern Ireland's energy sector. The 2026 Northern Ireland Energy Forum provides a great opportunity to make contacts and network. For further information on how your organisation can benefit, contact [Rebecca Sterritt](mailto:rebecca.sterritt@agendaNi.com) on **028 9261 9933** or email [rebecca.sterritt@agendaNi.com](mailto:rebecca.sterritt@agendaNi.com).



**I WISH TO:**

- ☐ Reserve \_\_\_\_\_ places at the Northern Ireland Energy Forum 2026  
**Delegate fee £345 + VAT**  
Fee includes documentation, lunch and other refreshments served during the conference and is payable in advance. Fee does not include accommodation or travel.
- ☐ Receive details of future agendaNi events and publications
- ☐ Receive details of sponsorship and exhibition opportunities at the Forum

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### Other ways to book...



By email  
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Online  
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**By telephone**  
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## Acknowledgement of registration

Confirmation of registration will be emailed to all delegates following receipt of registration details.

If you have not received your acknowledgement within 48 hours of registering, please contact us at [registration@agendaNi.com](mailto:registration@agendaNi.com) to confirm your booking.

## Terms and conditions

Once booked places may not be cancelled.

If you are unable to attend, you can send a substitute participant instead, at no additional charge.

Failure to attend requires full payment.

Conference fees includes entry for one person per ticket.

We intend to photograph this event. Any photographs will be used only for our own publications.

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