

Reflections on the World Biogas Summit 2026

Dr Angela Bywater on behalf of EBNet's Anaerobic Digestion WG

Introduction

In July 2026 Dr Angela Bywater attended the World Biogas Expo hosted by the UK's Anaerobic Digestion and Bioresources Association (ADBA) and the World Biogas Association. This report summarises her reflections on the event, for the benefit of members of EBNet's AD WG and others interested in the area of anaerobic digestion.

Report by Dr Bywater

Nearly a month has passed since the World Biogas Summit in Birmingham, but many of the themes discussed there have become even more relevant. Looking back, one message stood out above all others: anaerobic digestion and biomethane are no longer niche technologies. Across Europe and in other parts of the world they are increasingly recognised as strategic infrastructure, capable of delivering energy security, emissions reductions, waste management and rural economic growth simultaneously. Yet turning that potential into reality still depends on clear, long-term policy and investment certainty.



The opening session captured this perfectly. Charlotte Morton OBE reflected on ten years of the World Biogas Association and highlighted how countries across Europe are continuing to strengthen policy and regulatory frameworks to support renewable gases. At a



time of geopolitical uncertainty, the importance of domestically produced energy has become impossible to ignore. Biomethane offers a rare opportunity to improve energy security while delivering wider environmental and agricultural benefits. Here in the UK, however, the recent change in government leadership inevitably brings a period of adjustment. New ministers, officials and priorities take time to settle, and such transitions often slow policy development. The challenge is to ensure that this pause does not interrupt momentum in a sector that is ready to invest and expand.

Since the Summit, there have been encouraging signs. NESO's recent report, "Biomethane: Exploring the Role of Biomethane in the Energy System to 2050," is an important milestone because it places biomethane firmly within the UK's future energy system rather than treating it as a niche technology. The report recognises biomethane's value in providing flexible low-carbon energy, supporting industry and transport, contributing to greenhouse gas removals and strengthening overall system resilience. It represents an increasingly evidence-based recognition that achieving net zero will require multiple complementary technologies rather than a single solution.

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Another theme that has continued to gather pace is artificial intelligence. Several excellent presentations demonstrated that AI is rapidly moving beyond research into practical deployment. David Payne of Zebra EM showed how AI can help operators predict equipment failures, optimise biological performance and convert operational data into better decisions, while Alan Beesley outlined how whole-site optimisation is already improving plant performance and reducing costs. Importantly, the message was not that AI replaces experienced operators, but that it enables them to make better decisions using higher-quality data and more sophisticated analytical tools. The sector appears to be reaching the point where there is increasing focus on digitalisation and operational excellence is as important as hardware innovation.

Perhaps the strongest signal that the sector's momentum is continuing came this week with the Green Gas Taskforce's open letter to government, reinforcing biomethane's strategic importance for energy security, economic growth and decarbonisation, and calling for long-term policy certainty to unlock investment. Combined with the publication of the NESO report, it demonstrates a growing consensus across industry that biomethane has a significant role to play in the UK's future energy system.



Further reading:

NESO (2026). *Biomethane: Exploring the Role of Biomethane in the Energy System to 2050.*
<https://www.neso.energy/document/384986/download>

Green Gas Taskforce. Recent open letter to Government on the strategic value of biomethane.
https://www.linkedin.com/posts/gb-green-gas-taskforce-last-week-23-chief-executives-in-the-green-activity-7488886217120497664-IP5Y?utm_source=share&utm_medium=memb er_ios&rcm=ACoAAAdalTwBlu7rWE7oLKMBWc1XR-R_RPIWTbk

For information on ADBA and the WBA see:

<https://adbioresources.org>
<https://www.worldbiogasassociation.org>

EBNet's AD WG is coordinated by Dr Mark Walker:
<https://ebnet.ac.uk/wg-details/wg-ad>

Dr Bywater is a former Network Co-Manager of EBNet. She currently manages the UK side of the Global Center for Sustainable Bioproducts (GCSB), led by Prof Jhuma Sadhukhan of the University of Surrey. She is an ADBA Board Member and an active contributor to [RASE](#), [IFEAA](#), [REA](#), [IEA Task 37](#) and other key groups working in the AD sector.

