

Barbara Vest

Doctor of Science

Durham Cathedral, 10 January 2020

Barbara Vest joined the Durham Energy Institute Advisory Board in 2016 and is now in her second term of membership.

Barbara was born in South Shields and raised in Boldon by her nanna following the untimely loss of her mum when she was 6. Whilst Barbara has achieved success on a national level, her heart and soul remain here in the NE with her family of daughters and grandson. Barbara was awarded a BSc in Computing for Business in 1996 by Northumbria University and has had a long career in the power industries. She is a Special Advisor to Energy UK. She has outstanding contacts and experience throughout the energy industry. She has also held the post of Regulatory Affairs Manager at Gaz de France ESS prior to joining the Association of Electricity Producers. She is also a member of the Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage Cost Challenge Task Force launched by Rt Hon Claire Perry MP in January 2018. Barbara chairs the Joint European Stakeholder Group, is on the National Grid Independent Stakeholder Advisory Panel and until September 2018 was an elected industry representative on the Balancing and Settlement Code Panel. She serves on the Executive Council of the House of Commons All Party Parliamentary Group for Energy Studies and is a Freeman of the City of London and most recently, following Durham University's footsteps Barbara has been awarded an OBE in the 2020 New Year Honours list.

As a member of the DEI Advisory Board, Barbara has, and continues to, serve Durham University exceptionally well, but it is not just the DEI that benefits from her involvement with the university. Barbara was instrumental in linking the recently formed (2015) Durham Student Energy Society to the Young Energy Professionals Forum which has led to mentoring events for Durham students. Barbara also works with Student Energy Durham to provide work placements for students at Energy UK.

She has also been at the forefront of suggesting new members to the Advisory Board, two of whom joined this academic year and has helped to strengthen Durham University's link with House of Commons All Party Parliamentary Group for Energy Studies (PGES) which has resulted in their Administrator coming to Durham events,

joining the DEI Advisory Board and the Director of DEI presenting at PGES in Westminster. Her links to industry has provided many DEI seminar speakers as well as linking the DEI Communications Officer to editors of Energy publications to publicise the work of the DEI.

Barbara frequently attended DEI events prior to her being invited to join the DEI Advisory Board. Barbara now attends DEI's three annual (termly) Advisory Board meetings as well as ad-hoc strategy group meetings. She has presented to the Energy CDT students in 2015 on the work of Energy UK, bringing with her another three members of senior staff for the talk. Barbara also chaired our 'What is the Future of Fossil Fuels' public lecture at the Durham Miners' Association in 2015. Barbara provided the round-up and final remarks at our annual symposium in 2018 and was been invited to chair a panel at the International Student Energy Summit in London last year.

Barbara keeps in regular contact providing useful information on the Energy Sector to share with our internal mailing list and advising on DEI strategy. She takes all and every opportunity to promote the university and the DEI brand in particular. Barbara provides additional support to DEI as part of the strategy team and shares the values of the DEI in creating a low-carbon-powered future for generations to come. Barbara is instrumental in strengthening Durham's links with energy industries and policy stakeholders.

Barbara serves on the Executive Council of the House of Commons All Party Parliamentary Group for Energy Studies (PGES), and often chairs the meeting in place of Iain Liddle-Grainger MP when he is absent. Barbara chaired January 2019 PGES meeting at which I spoke. This enabled her to further promote DEI and its activities in Westminster.

Of all of the activities Barbara does in support of DEI there is perhaps one area in which she excels like no other. Her commitment to helping and promoting undergraduate students, research students PDRAs and early career staff is without equal. Whether it be in meetings, at the DEI annual symposium or speaking in the House of Commons, she will as a woman from the NE refer to 'bairns' meaning not just babes in arms but students to early career academics; all of whom she helps get heard and promotes their cases. We could say that she is 'on Durham University message' or perhaps we have adopted her message in that our youngsters are our future, look

after them well. Something she delivers on through Durham University and through DEI.

The words I have spoken list Barbara's many achievements but tell little of the personality of the woman we honour today. To do that I will quote from Matthew Gordon with whom she works at the All Party Parliamentary Energy Studies Group.

"I don't think London was ever ready for one Barbara Vest, I first met her at a Parliamentary Reception, where she persuaded a highly regarded Peer to give us a guided tour of parts of the Palace. It turned out that she knew every policeman on duty, every member of the events team waiting staff, every MP in the room, every Peer and, probably everyone else in attendance.

Three phrases sum her up:

Hello pet, what do you do?

Shy bairns get nowt.

and, when asking the really telling question, "I'm sorry, I'm only a simple Geordie lass, but can you explain how..."

Barbara is leader on national energy matters in the UK and a huge supported and advocate of DEI. She is an inspiring example to us all. Chancellor, I present to you Barbara Vest, OBE, who is eminently worthy to receive the Degree of Doctor Science honoris causa.

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