

Since 2005, firmus energy has been responsible for installing and maintaining over 2,200km of pipeline across 35 cities, towns and villages in Northern Ireland. Based in Antrim, firmus energy has connected over 67,000 customers in its Ten Towns network area and supplies over 109,000 domestic and industrial customers across Northern Ireland.



Niall Martindale
Chief Executive Officer



Denise Curran
Director of Finance



Eric Cosgrove
Director of Engineering
& Sustainability



Paul Stanfield
Director of Sales, Marketing &
Customer Services



Mark Stevenson
Director of Regulation

**Together we will transition to a
net zero carbon future**

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Stakeholder Report 2023

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Foreword from Chairman

Challenging environment

I am pleased to report that over the last 12 months we have continued to successfully manage the significant challenges resulting from the Ukrainian war and aftermath of the COVID Pandemic. These two factors have both impacted on the supply and demand for energy and helped drive inflation and the cost of living crisis. Natural gas has been particularly affected by sanctions against Russia and the decision to move away from Russian oil and gas.

We are acutely aware of the challenges faced by our domestic and commercial customers across Northern Ireland. Over the last year we have continued to work tirelessly to support all of our customers, not least in our engagement with the UK government to secure support for domestic and commercial energy bills through last winter. During this difficult time we have continued to invest in our network, progress our transition to a renewable future and maintain excellent levels of service for our customers.

Gas prices now falling after steep increases

In the second half of 2022, energy prices rose dramatically across all sectors and for all suppliers, with resulting tariff increases for consumers.

Encouragingly, energy and gas prices have come off their highs on the back of reduced demand and Europe bringing on new facilities to import liquid natural gas (LNG). At firmus, we began 2023 by implementing the first domestic tariff reduction (circa 20%) to be announced in Northern Ireland. This was followed by a second reduction (circa 20%) from April, and from in October we are delighted to be able to implement our third domestic tariff reduction of the year (of c. 7%), just ahead of the next winter period.

However, Government support on gas and electricity costs has now effectively been withdrawn as energy prices fall below the supported level, meaning that businesses and consumers won't feel the full benefit of the fall in market prices. A note of caution that markets remain volatile and quick to react to risks to the gas supply such as threatened strikes and gas field maintenance issues. Having now secured the majority of this winter's supply we see gas tariffs to customers remaining stable with some slight optimism for further reductions providing markets remain relatively calm.

Reducing CO2

This summer we have seen the reported impacts of global warming with heat waves, fires and floods. These serve as a harsh reminder of the need to transition to net zero carbon which remains a core strategic focus for us and our continued investment in the network. Conversions to natural gas, from oil, are already making a significant contribution to CO2 savings in Northern Ireland and these savings are set to grow exponentially upon the introduction of locally produced renewable gases such as biomethane and hydrogen being injected directly into our network.

Over the last year, we have worked with the Utility Regulator to deliver a regulatory framework for the injection of biomethane into the gas grid in Northern Ireland, and we will see the first of these connections made in Q4 2023. Despite the absence of a government at Stormont, we have continued to work closely with senior officials in DfE and DAERA, to progress the goals of the Energy Strategy, published in December 2021, and to support pathways for lower carbon energy across all sectors of our economy in Northern Ireland.

We have also continued to work with many other stakeholders to progress opportunities for renewable gas in Northern Ireland, including the Gas Network Operators Energy Transition Group, the Inter-Departmental Biomethane Group and the many producers of renewable gas seeking to utilise the gas network as a route-to-market for their products.

We are also leading engagements with current and future producers of lower carbon energy, including producers of biomethane from Anaerobic Digestion (AD), as well as those engaged in projects to develop the production of hydrogen from renewable sources.

Need to increase the pace of decarbonisation

In March 2023, the Climate Change Committee (CCC) published a report on the status of Northern Ireland's transition to net zero. Whilst we do not underestimate the task at hand, we would share many of the CCC's views regarding the need to increase the pace of transition. The gas network has an important role to play in delivering net zero carbon in Northern Ireland by 2050, and at firmus we are already working to make this happen. Our assets are primed to deliver renewable gas to homes and businesses connected to our network. Government's focus must be the establishment of a defined, stable and predictable environment for investment in renewable energy, supporting those seeking to invest in large scale renewable energy assets such as renewable gas production facilities, as well as the many other parties with a role to play in the development of our renewable energy supply chain.

Firmus' network now extends to almost 2,200kms, passing 192,000 premises, with over 67,000 premises already choosing to connect to gas. The opportunity for immediate CO2 savings from heating in Northern Ireland remains significant with each domestic property switching from oil to natural gas reducing their CO2 emissions by up to 52%*.

We are a local company

We are proud to be local business headquartered in Northern Ireland with our administration, billing, customer and technical support entirely locally based. Our Board which oversee our operation is focussed on ensuring our business delivers for its customers as well as its shareholders. The fact that we are entirely owned by Equitix, who are an institutional infrastructure investor for pension funds, largely public sector, means that we are able to take a long term investment viewpoint.

We have had a number of changes around our Board table in the last 12 months. After 10 years' service on the board of firmus, Michael O'Sullivan, formerly CFO of Bord Gais, stood down from the board at the end of 2022. Also retiring from the board at the end of August after 10 years' service is Angela Reavey, Past Chair of Accountants Ireland. We are very grateful for the guidance and contributions made by both Michael and Angela, and wish them both well in their future endeavours.

We are delighted to have welcomed as new non-executive directors onto our Board, Stephen Elliott, a widely experienced finance and non-executive director, and Richard Oblath, Chair of H2 Transition Capital and formerly a VP of Shell. Both Stephen and Richard bring an enormous wealth of experience and knowledge, which will be invaluable to the success of our business especially as we progress on our transition to net zero.

These are very exciting times at firmus and within the energy industry of Northern Ireland. This Stakeholder Report provides an opportunity to update you on our activities and achievements as a business, as well as our strategic ambitions to transition to net zero. We very much value your support, and I would encourage you to get in touch with the firmus energy team if you would like to discuss natural gas or our work to deliver a net zero carbon future.



Dr. David Dobbin CBE
Chairman

*Based on switching your home heating system from a 15-year-old, Sedbuk F rated oil boiler without controls, to a new Sedbuk A rated natural gas boiler with heating controls used correctly.

Introduction



Niall Martindale,
Chief Executive Officer

It has been another eventful year for firmus energy. I am very grateful to our employees, our Board, our customers and our stakeholders, for continuing to support the success and growth of our business, particularly as we embrace Northern Ireland's transition to a renewable energy future.

Since our last Stakeholder Report, we have concluded two Price Control reviews with the Utility Regulator, namely GD23 (2023 to 2028) for our Distribution business and SPC23 (2023 to 2026) for our Supply business. The Price Controls provide an important line of sight within our regulated businesses, supporting our ongoing investment and the continued development of our network.

Today, 67,000 of the 191,000 premises passed by our network have already chosen to connect. Over the GD23 price control horizon (2023 to 2028), we plan to invest a further £120 million in the development of our network and connect a further 32,000 properties. Our network penetration will grow from 35% to c.50% by the end of 2028.

Within our Distribution business, we have worked with the Utility Regulator and the other network operators to deliver a framework to support the injection of locally produced biomethane into the gas grid. This work is now being built upon to include the injection of hydrogen and within-grid compression, which will augment capacity in the distribution networks as we grow the sources and volume of locally produced renewable gases being injected. Biomethane will lead the charge in this respect, with the injection of green hydrogen from curtailed wind also set to gather pace over the next number of years. Our modern network is primed for the injection of biomethane and blending of hydrogen up to 20%. For customers, the introduction of these renewable gases will be seamless, with no changes to boilers or appliances required within the homes and businesses we serve.

The Department for the Economy has been taking a more focussed assessment of Biomethane production in Northern Ireland over the last 12 months, and we welcome our engagement with them in this respect. The potential to produce Biomethane in Northern Ireland is enormous with a recent Queens University report stating that 80% of the current natural gas demand in Northern Ireland could be sourced from Anaerobic Digesters producing Biomethane from all current housed livestock manure and underutilised grass silage.

The first injection of Biomethane into Northern Ireland's gas grid is scheduled for October 2023, with the first injection into firmus' network scheduled in 2024. These early adopters and the investments they are making to utilise the existing gas grid as a route-to-market for their renewable gas provides strong support for the role of our network in Northern Ireland's transition to net zero carbon energy.

Firmus Energy Supply remains the largest supplier of natural gas, by volume, in Northern Ireland. Whilst commodity markets increased dramatically in the second half of 2022, we have seen a reduction to relatively stable prices throughout the first half of 2023.

Over the last 18 months, there have been remarkable changes within the supply chain for natural gas, with a reduced reliance on piped natural gas from Russia into Europe being replaced by an increased supply from imported LNG. Whilst this change has been impressively expedient, the importing of LNG into UK and Europe by sea vessels renders the supply of natural gas more sensitive to global commodity markets, providing yet more reason to promote and support the introduction of locally produced, sustainable, lower carbon fuel alternatives, such as Biomethane and Hydrogen, into Northern Ireland's gas network.



Pictured L-R:
Eric Cosgrove - Director of Engineering and Sustainability Mark Stevenson - Director of Regulation Denise Curran - Finance Director,
Paul Stanfield - Director of Sales, Marketing and Customer Services and Niall Martindale - Chief Executive Officer, of firmusenergy.



transitioning to net zero carbon

Pictured: Niall Martindale, CEO, firmus energy (Newry City Hall)

In 2023, we have already implemented two domestic tariff reductions in both our Ten Towns and Belfast markets, one from January and one from April, with each reduction being c.20%. We will be implementing a third reduction in both markets from 1st October 2023.

We very much recognise the challenging economic environment which persists for homes and businesses in Northern Ireland, with inflation remaining stubbornly high and interest rates stepping steadily upwards over the last 12 months.

In the absence of our Local Assembly, we have been engaged bilaterally with the UK government, since June 2022, to ensure their support for domestic and commercial energy users in Great Britain could be extended to gas customers in Northern Ireland. This support provided invaluable assistance to homes and businesses during the last winter period. However, it was withdrawn for domestic customers and significantly reduced for commercial customers from April 2023. We will continue to engage directly with the UK Government as we approach the next winter period, to ensure that any support made available in Great Britain is also made available to gas consumers, locally, in Northern Ireland.

As well as investing in the development of our network and supporting infrastructure, we have continued to invest in our corporate responsibility, working to give back to the communities we serve across Northern Ireland. Whether it is support for community organisations such as "In Your Space Circus" in Derry/Londonderry, or social enterprises such as "Cycle Recycle" in Newry, corporate social responsibility remains core to how we do business at firmus energy.

In February 2023, we were delighted to be part of the task force, established by BITC NI, which launched the Good Food Fund. The Good Food Fund links businesses to primary schools to help them establish or extend Breakfast Clubs, provide Classroom Grab and Go Baskets, or procure white goods, and aims to support 100 schools and 10,000 young people by the end of December 2023.

Every year, our staff at firmus nominate a charity, and in 2023 we are very proud to be supporting Turning Point NI.

It's an exciting time to be at firmus energy and to be part of Northern Ireland's energy transition.

Having demonstrated resilience, strength and continued growth in our Distribution and Supply businesses over the last number of years, we are firmly focused and committed to Northern Ireland's transition to net zero carbon energy. We are very grateful for your support and we will continue to work with Government, the Utility Regulator, our customers and our stakeholders to realise the enormous potential presented by our modern network assets to deliver a cleaner, greener future for Northern Ireland.

firmus energy Purpose, Mission and Vision

Alignment of Organisational Purpose

Our new Purpose, Mission & Vision statements for both Distribution and Supply were launched at a morning event in February 2023 where we shared a more meaningful Purpose, Mission and Vision that aims to unite, energise and engage everyone and ensure we're all pointing in the same direction

Distribution

Purpose Why we exist

Bringing the benefits of gas to homes and businesses across our network area.

Mission What we do

Developing a gas network that enables homes and businesses to connect to a lower carbon future.

Vision Where we're heading

Helping us live sustainably through a net zero carbon energy network.

Supply

Purpose Why we exist

Supplying homes and businesses with a lower carbon energy choice.

Mission What we do

Supplying lower carbon energy to homes and businesses with first class service to our customers.

Vision Where we're heading

Being the energy supplier of choice in a net zero carbon future.

firmus energy
transitioning to net zero carbon



Business - New Areas This Year

This year we have expanded our network, investing £4.4million to bring natural gas to a further 5000 plus potential customers across these rural towns in Northern Ireland.

Eglinton

Investment
£1,283,560

Properties passed
1,419

Portballintrae

Investment
£636,919

Properties passed
679

Warringstown

Investment
£1,283,952

Properties passed
1,686

Crumlin (Coming Soon)

Investment
£1,237,326

Properties passed
1,320

Consumers

Our consumers are at the core of everything we do each day and we pride ourselves on the high level of customer service we provide from our locally based team in Antrim. A recent update on our phone system and a new billing platform has reinforced our commitment to continuous improvement as we strive to be the supplier of choice in a net zero carbon future.

Thankfully current energy markets have enabled us to reduce tariffs in our Ten Towns area by a total of 40% since January 2023. This is very welcome news but we realise that many of our consumers still find themselves in difficult financial situations caused by the cost of living crisis.

Over the past year we have administered the Energy Price Guarantee scheme for Domestic customers' bills and Energy Bill relief Scheme for businesses on behalf of the UK Government and ensured that over £37million was discounted from consumers bills and reclaimed from the Government. This scheme yet again reinforced the commitment that government has for Northern Ireland gas consumers and highlighted one of the many advantages of being within a regulated industry.

In addition, we continue to support vulnerable consumers and work closely with external agencies that run support schemes and offer free impartial advice.

We purchased a mobile energy unit (picture below) to help educate consumers on the most effective ways to "save energy". This mobile unit arrives in communities that have been advised when it's coming and is manned by our city and guild qualified energy advisors. Advice is given on the most effective energy saving measures along with an insight into future renewable heating systems.



Our large Contract consumers continue to receive daily gas reports which along with our experienced account managers allows them to assess the market conditions and make individual future gas purchase decisions. We provide a suite of purchasing options to suit all customer requirements and are very proud that firmus energy is the largest supplier of natural gas, by volume in Northern Ireland.

With the first biomethane being injected into the gas network in Q4 of 2023 and the existing daily reduction of CO2 by c.52% already gained via every conversion from oil to gas, our industry and network is in a very good place to significantly assist Northern Ireland in achieving its carbon reduction targets.



Safety

Health & Safety is, has been & will continue to be our number 1 priority.

firmus energy is committed to operating its network safely and in line with all legal obligations and in accordance with the firmus energy Distribution Safety Case, which has been accepted by HSENI. Our Safety Case is a legal requirement under the Gas Safety Management Regulations Northern Ireland 1997. firmus energy, as the DNO, has identified and controlled the risks associated with the safe operation of our network, including:

- ✓ the safe flow of gas through our network
- ✓ the composition of gas being conveyed
- ✓ firmus energy's arrangements for responding to gas related escapes and incidents, and,
- ✓ arrangements for managing gas supply emergencies

We are committed to ensuring the Health, Safety and Welfare of our employees, contractors, visitors, gas customers and members of the public, who could be affected by our operations and activities; this includes the safe construction, operation, maintenance, integrity management and the response to all gas related emergencies occurring on our network. Health and Safety management is a core value of our business.



firmus energy's Health and Safety management system has been externally accredited to ISO 45001, and will underpin delivery of our GD23 Business Plan. The competency and development of all staff (particularly those with responsibility for the safe operation of the network) is a key focus of annual training and development plans to ensure the safe development and operation of the distribution network.

Two days of BSI external auditing took place against the standards ISO 45001 (Health & Safety Management System) and ISO 14001 (Environmental Management System). Both audits recommended continued accreditation.

Staff



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE
We invest in people Gold

Investors in People

We are delighted to have been recredited with the Investor's in People Gold status in September 2022.

The Gold standard recognises firmus energy as an organisation that improves its workplace culture specifically in areas around employee engagement, communication, organisational culture and work practices.

The IIP staff survey revealed that 83% of us either agree or strongly agree that firmus energy is a great place to work, a 7% improvement on the previous staff survey



Re-energising Project

firmus energy's ambition is to become an "Employer of Choice" and the company has embarked on a cultural transformation journey known as the "Re-energising Project". The aim of this project is to "help position firmus energy as an Employer of Choice; both for the benefit of our people and the organisation."

This project has been embraced across the entire organisation with buy-in from all levels of staff including the executive leadership team.

There are four key pillars to the project including:

-  Alignment of organisational purpose
-  Building career pathways
-  Creating the right leadership climate
-  Employer branding

The project will be key to the future attraction and retention of talent to the organisation and there is clear recognition that people are central to the future success of the business.

At firmus energy, the utmost importance is placed on the management and training of staff, with consistent mentoring and coaching. The organisation prides itself on staff feeling secure in their jobs and with continued success, there are opportunities for growth and progression.

It is not just staff that benefit, but customers too, both domestic and commercial. Through developing a local business that delivers the benefits of cleaner energy to local customers, firmus energy is offering significant environmental and lifestyle benefits for consumers.



Bronze Diversity Mark

firmus energy were awarded the Bronze Diversity Mark by Diversity Mark NI in January 2023. The Diversity Mark accreditation is a "Mark of Progress" that publicly declares commitment to building more diverse and inclusive workplaces beginning with Gender Diversity.

Diversity has been shown to improve retention and reduce the costs associated with employee turnover as well as attracting a wider pool of candidates. Furthermore it helps maximise productivity, innovation, and creativity among existing staff.



Staff briefings, held twice a year



Annual Staff team building day

Engineering

Environmental Management

firmus energy emissions are made up of the following elements:

Scope 1 – Direct emission from natural gas used to heat our buildings and fuel for vehicles used.
 Scope 2 – Indirect emission from purchased electricity.

As a Gas Distribution Network Operator, we also measure and report on emissions associated with Distribution Network Shrinkage. Network Shrinkage is defined as “gas lost from the Network and represents the difference in volumes between the gas entering the Distribution Network and the gas used by end users (as recorded by the metering equipment).” Northern Ireland Shrinkage Methodology - December 2017

Improvements in emissions of 27% (excluding Network shrinkage emissions) within Scope 1 have been achieved through the purchase of green gas (via renewable Gas Guarantees of Origin certificate) which supplies firmus energy office buildings. Emissions associated with Network Shrinkage has also reduced (6%) this is based on a slightly reduced network throughput.



Kier Utilities

In 2022 we diverted just over 60% of our excavated material waste going to landfill. This waste was repurposed to produce products for use in the wider construction industry including sand, drainage stones and concrete blocks, helping to promote a circular economy. As we, at a strategic level, are developing lower carbon solutions to offer our gas consumers in the future we are proud to tell customers of our sustainable practices and our success with waste management.



Working Sustainably - Biomethane Grid Injection

Reverse Compression site visit

In June 2023 our engineering team travelled to a site just outside Paris, France to see a reverse-compression biomethane injection facility owned and operated by GRTgaz. At this location gas is taken from the local distribution network and injected into the Transmission System when the volume of biomethane exceeds the local demand. Reverse compression will be an important feature of the gas networks, to support capacity management.



Stream Bio - Ballymena

At this AD plant biomethane is produced solely from chicken litter! Managers were invited to a site tour of the StreamBio AD Plant in Ballymena earlier this year. Staff will get the opportunity to visit the plant later in the year when they'll learn all about our work with StreamBio in facilitating the injection of renewable biomethane into our gas network.



Biomethane Grid Injection – Potential Cross-border project

firmus energy attended a public information evening in Burt, Co Donegal to learn about the proposed new community centred agricultural based biomethane plant, green education centre and native woodland park at Newtowncunningham, Co Donegal. We have been in early stage talks with the site developers and Gas Networks Ireland to explore the options to get the biomethane from this plant into our Derry network which is less than 10 miles from the site. This could be via a new distribution pipeline or utilising a virtual pipeline which would entail gas tube trailers bringing the gas to a centrally located grid injected site.



Working Sustainably - Hydrogen

To achieve the target of net zero by 2050, firmus energy will need to replace the natural gas which we currently transport in our distribution systems with a low carbon alternative. Northern Ireland has a €1billion gas distribution network built within the last 30 years which is 99% polyethylene in construction and is suitable for transporting blends of natural gas and hydrogen. Hydrogen is a zero-carbon gas. When burned it produces just heat and water. The Committee on Climate Change's 'Hydrogen in a low-carbon economy' report finds that hydrogen can make an important contribution to long-term decarbonisation.

Hydrogen deployment is now recognised as an important component of the UK's decarbonisation strategy, with blending identified as an early enabler of the hydrogen journey. In the recent past, hydrogen deployment was restricted by the somewhat 'chicken and egg' type scenario of hydrogen supply depending upon the availability of hydrogen appliances and vice versa, however the blended approach negates the need for specifically manufactured appliances. Mixing up to 20% of hydrogen with natural gas in our networks would mean that customers can continue to utilise their existing 'traditional' natural gas burning appliances as normal, without any changes being needed, while still cutting carbon emissions.

We are working closely with Mid and East Antrim Council (MEABC) and plan to commence a hydrogen heating test bed / blending trial in Q3 2025. The proposed trial will last up to 24 months and will include up to 100 domestic properties and 4 industrial & commercial units. The project aims to demonstrate how customers can continue to utilise existing natural gas burning appliances with no changes required while achieving an immediate reduction in carbon emissions through the introduction of hydrogen.



It will act as the first Northern Ireland demonstration blend of hydrogen and natural gas and will work in conjunction with other council backed clean technology innovations including industry training facilities, some of which are already operational in close proximity to the site. We believe small scale demonstrator projects are required now to develop solutions and to enable scaling up to deliver Northern Ireland specific solutions at the lowest possible cost and to confirm the viability of using hydrogen to decarbonise heating and to support other technologies in meeting Government Net Zero targets.

St. Patrick's Barracks



Innovation funding for gas networks in GB has allowed a number of hydrogen projects to proceed and this is likely to continue under the RIIO2 price control period, with projects planned through to 2025. Projects include hydrogen blending, repurposing the existing gas network for 100% hydrogen and new 100% hydrogen networks.

The proposed Ballymena trial would serve as a demonstration that NI has the necessary technology, equipment and techniques to produce, store, inject and blend green hydrogen into a typical gas distribution network with a variety of end users to demonstrate this fuel's suitability for a range of gas burning applications. The proposed trial would also support the aims of the Energy Strategy where Northern Ireland can become world leaders in the new hydrogen economy.

Visit to Hydrogen Gas Safe Training facility, Ballymena

We visited this site along with representatives from Cadent Gas, GB's largest gas network operator, to promote an understanding of aspects of training and development of operatives and engineers to work with Hydrogen transported in gas distribution networks and utilised in gas burning appliances. Radius housing also attended in order to understand utilisation of blended hydrogen which will be trialled in some of their new homes being developed on the former St Patricks Barracks site.



Hydrogen NI

Hydrogen will become an important source of renewable energy in the future. firmus energy has been active members of Hydrogen NI since 2021. In the Autumn, as part of the group, firmus energy had the chance to outline the full opportunity to Jayne Brady, Head of Northern Ireland Civil Service. firmus energy's network will play a pivotal role to assist the government in reaching its net zero carbon goals.



Working Sustainably

Planting Native Wildflowers & The All-Ireland Pollinator



In 2022 firmus energy established a native wildflower meadow adjacent to our head office in Antrim. This area has been added to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan's database and we are actively encouraging other businesses in the Kilbegs area to follow our lead and establish similar areas at or near their premises.

It has been recognised that on the Island of Ireland, modern farming and landscape management practices have led to one third of the 101 wild bee species being threatened with extinction (Source: Irish Bee Red List 2006, National Parks and Wildlife Service); effectively the bees are starving and have nowhere to live as a consequence.



This could lead to major issues for humankind if not addressed as 71 of the 100 crops providing 90% of the world's food supply are animal pollinated according to the United Nations Environment Programme.

The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is a simple method of helping by setting aside a small piece of land and providing a mixed planting area of native wildflowers, which can benefit the local bee population. The area to the rear of firmus energy's office was planted in June 2022 by a team of volunteers from the Engineering team and is left uncut throughout the year with a tidy-up at the end of winter to remove the last season's old growth and enable the self-seeded annual plants to start their growth cycle.

Communities and Sponsorship



Millennium Forum - FAME The Musical

firmus energy has pledged its support for an initiative in Derry-Londonderry that gives those aged between 14 and 21 the opportunity to take their very first steps into the world of performing arts. The countdown is on at the Millennium Forum for the Youth Musical production of the hit musical, 'Fame', which opens at the Millennium Forum, the North West's premier venue on Wednesday 26th July and runs until Sat 29th July.



This all-local youth version of one of the best-selling musicals of all time and featured the cream of local talent. The amateur production tells the story of a group of performing arts students who join New York City's much-celebrated High School in 1980 until they graduate from it four years later. Mike Braniff, firmus energy's Marketing Officer said, "firmus energy is proud to be actively involved in communities across Northern Ireland, especially in Derry-Londonderry – one of the first areas we brought natural gas to as part of our 10 Towns Network project back in 2015.

"firmus energy recognises that it is important to give back to the local areas in which it operates, wherever possible – that is why the company is giving its support to the Millennium Forum's Youth Musical FAME The Musical. "I would personally like to wish everyone involved with the show the very best of luck," added Mike.



Welcoming the partnership with firmus energy, Cara McCartney, Development and Creative Engagement Manager at the Millennium Forum said,

"We would like to extend our gratitude to firmus energy for their invaluable support as our show sponsor. As a registered charity, the Millennium Forum relies on the generosity of partners and funders like firmus energy to bring exceptional performances to over 300,000 people each year. This support enables us to reinvest in our community outreach initiatives, with our annual youth musical being a shining example. With firmus energy as our show sponsor, we can now reach even deeper into our communities and provide free professional arts facilitation to all our young participants of Fame the Musical during the summer period. The Millennium Forum's annual Youth musical serves as a significant milestone, often serving as the first step into the professional world of theatre for many of our talented participants.

Communities and Sponsorship

BITC Environmental Benchmarking Survey

firmus energy was awarded platinum level in the Northern Ireland Business in the Community Environmental Benchmarking survey. The survey ranks organisations against leading Northern Ireland organisations (including utility sector peers) and is based on environmental management and performance in key areas. Participating organisations are ranked by level: Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze or Green. The survey recognises and rewards organisations that are going above and beyond their legal requirements. This is the fifth year for firmus to enter the benchmarking survey (now in its 24th year) and our second consecutive year to attain platinum level.



Mid & East Antrim Borough Council Digital Skills Forum

In 2022 firmus energy was selected as a finalist in Business in the Community's prestigious Responsible Business Awards - Company of the Year category. The awards recognise companies that demonstrate positive impacts across people, places and the planet, and which are innovative in their approach to doing business responsibly. They are a leading celebration of responsible business excellence. The eventual winners will be selected by a senior judging panel before being announced at an awards ceremony in September later this year.



Cycle-Recycle Newry

Established as a Social Enterprise a decade ago by Newry man Gerard Hughes, Newry Cycle Recycle C.I.C is devoted to offering a wide range of bikes for adults and children, including safety gear and accessories. Each donated or reclaimed bicycle is fully serviced and handed a clean bill of health by Newry Cycle Recycle C.I.C - the only certified Velotech Bicycle Maintenance Course provider operating in Ireland. Gerard's interest in salvaging bicycles piqued when he came across examples that were destined to be crushed at his local amenity centre. Since then, thousands have been sold back into the community.



Niall Martindale, firmus energy's Chief Executive, said: "Like firmus energy, Newry Cycle Recycle C.I.C has a sustainability ethos and is committed to making a positive contribution to the people of Northern Ireland. "We are delighted to team up with Gerard and his colleagues at Newry Cycle Recycle C.I.C so that, as a local business, we can give back to the communities we operate in. That is something we always look to do. firmus energy introduced natural gas to Newry back in 2006." Since then, we have invested £16million to increase our network in the area where over 4,140 customers have already switched to natural gas.

UTV - Mahon's Way

Prime time favourite 'Mahon's Way' is making a welcome return to local television screens this week, with the latest instalment of the programme being sponsored by gas supplier, firmus energy. The first of 12 episodes will be broadcast this Tuesday (August 8th) from 8.30pm on UTV, with viewers following presenter Joe Mahon as he journeys across Northern Ireland and neighbouring Donegal. During the series, which is produced by Westway Film Productions, Joe Mahon will take time to delve a little deeper into the rich heritage, history and culture that makes this corner of the world so special. Paul Stanfield, firmus energy's Sales, Marketing and Customer Service Director - said: "firmus energy is delighted to sponsor the third series of Mahon's Way - one of the most popular and well-known programmes on local TV. "During the next 12 weeks, viewers can look forward to meeting interesting people, being treated to breath-taking scenery, and hearing truly fascinating stories. It promises to be another must-watch." The first episode focuses on the western shore of Strangford Lough near Killinchy before Joe continues his travels to Seskinore in County Tyrone, Poyntzpass in County Armagh, and Cullybackey in County Antrim prior to discovering the many secrets of the County Tyrone villages of Clogher and Augher. For episodes seven and eight, the focus then switches to Portrush on the north Antrim coast followed by trips to Cloghan in County Donegal, and Randalstown.



Welcoming the partnership with firmus energy, Nichola McElroy, UTV's Business Manager - said: "We are delighted that firmus energy is coming on board to sponsor this new series of 'Mahon's Way'." UTV has the most local programming of any of the ITV regions, so it is fantastic to be able to offer Northern Irish companies the unique opportunity to align themselves with a range of programmes that resonate so strongly with our local audience as part of an overall marketing strategy to increase brand awareness."

Communities and Sponsorship

firmus energy is committed to supporting local communities. This is engrained across our business and forms the lynch pin of our pledge to provide corporate social responsibility excellence as we strive to deliver a cleaner, greener future for Northern Ireland. Instilling a strong corporate responsibility culture is at the heart of the company. Our network stretches from Newry through to Derry /L'Derry and we employ staff who live in these areas who have an interest in improving local community life. They help us identify community projects in need. By proactively contributing to these important causes we create a positive workplace for our employees while helping to support the people, projects and places that are important to our customers and the society in which we live.

Today, the scale of firmus energy's operations in Northern Ireland is such that investing in the community requires an element of organisation. A dedicated CSR team ensures we deliver our corporate social responsibility programmes, sponsorships and donations across Northern Ireland. Since 2016 this team has coordinated fundraising of over €90k for local charities through Charity of the Year partnerships.

Ulster University - Renewable Energy Engineering Scholarship

"We are delighted to be teaming up with Ulster University, offering a Renewable Energy Engineering Scholarship to start engineering students' learning journey. Our focus on supporting and developing students for our energy transition" and how "we believe that it is essential that there is support for schools, colleges and universities who will develop future managers, engineers & technicians that will deliver Net Zero" Eric Cosgrove - Director of Engineering and Sustainability

Are you passionate about renewable energy and creating a more sustainable world for the future?

firmus energy, in partnership with Ulster University, is delighted to offer a Renewable Energy Engineering Scholarship to start your learning journey.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Students must be in their first year of study for the BEng Renewable Energy Engineering (Magee)
- Students must also:
 - have excellent communication, IT and interpersonal skills
 - have a Right to Work in the UK for paid placement experience with firmus energy
 - have a current UK/EU driving licence

What does the Scholarship offer:

- £2,000 annual bursary
- Paid Summer Placements for the duration of your studies (10 weeks)
- One year paid industrial experience (@ £22k p.a. plus benefits)
- Access to a company mentor and support through professional registration
- Eligibility to apply for the Graduate Engineer Programme following Graduation

For More information:

recruitment@firmusenergy.co.uk

firmus energy
Engineering
Scholarship



Ballymena Schools Cleantech Takeover

firmus energy was invited to give a presentation to a group of fifth year pupils from a number of schools in the Ballymena area to give an overview of our industry, our company and our plans for future renewable gas opportunities including the proposed hydrogen blending project in the town. Career opportunities and possible routes to employment for the school-leavers in all areas of our business were highlighted during the briefing.



In Your Space Circus NI - Community Days

Our collaborations with In Your Space Circus continue with our firmus energy Free Community Days, 16th & 17th of September. Where we host the amazing Frankie Magilligan's Comedy Juggling Show in the Walled Garden & Jitterbug Jackson in the Peace Garden, Derry-L'Derry. A fantastic weekend of mini-festivals for the whole family, with laughs, thrills and entertainment, bringing the big circus energy to the Maiden City!



firmus energy teamed up with In Your Space Circus and were able to bring the energy to the maiden city with IYSC NI's Summer Circus Camps. The first two weeks in August were all go! Teaching the kids all the tricks of the tent! It was great to get involved with the community in Derry - Londonderry.



firmus energy – in partnership with 'In Your Space Circus' – is offering school children in the Derry-Londonderry area the chance to be part of a summer camp with a real difference. Open to kids aged 9 and above, the 5-day Circus Summer Camp gives participants the opportunity to experience popular spectacles, from juggling and hula hoops to acrobatics and diabolo. They can also try to master walking the tightwire and learn the skills required to ride a unicycle – plus lots, lots more. Barry Cassidy, one of our Energy Advisors in Derry/L'Derry said: "This is the latest community initiative in Derry-Londonderry firmus energy has come on board to sponsor in recent weeks and it gives the company immense pleasure to be in the position to give something back as a way of saying thank you." As well as being educational for children, what really stood out for firmus energy about In Your Space Circus is the fun factor.

Charity and Volunteering



Turning Point NI - Charity of the Year

Turning Point NI is a local mental health hub for those experiencing any form of mental crisis. The organisation, within the Northern Health and Social Care Trust aim to reduce the intensity of suicide and self-harming behaviours by promoting positive mental wellbeing resilience and support to families who have been bereaved by suicide.



We have partnered with Turning Point NI as our "Charity of the Year" and are committed to developing fundraising activities which allows us to raise money and awareness of the charity. So far this year we have ran a wide range of events to fund money for this charity, including our team who ran the Belfast Marathon, regular in house bake off events and table tennis competitions.



FareShare NI - Food Donations

firmus energy dropped off food this August to Fare Share Northern Ireland in Mallusk as part of their ongoing food donation campaign. Fare Share Northern Ireland is directly tackling food poverty in Northern Ireland by collecting surplus food from industry and redistributing it to charities. We are privileged that we are able to play our part in helping local charities over the coming weeks.

