

Science Policy Newsletter – a weekly round-up of policy headlines and stories

17 July 2018

News

Royal Society of Biology blog

[Interning with the RSB science policy team](#)

When an email dropped into my inbox advertising the opportunity to undertake an RCUK policy internship, I was initially apprehensive about applying.

[What exactly is the Industrial Strategy?](#)

Despite the hot weather there was “standing room only for science” according to Chi Onwurah MP at the 30th anniversary of Parliamentary Links Day, the 10th event in this series to be opened by Speaker of the House of Commons Rt Hon John Bercow MP.

Health and biomedicine

[Genetically modified babies given go ahead by UK ethics body](#)

The Nuffield Council on Bioethics says changing the DNA of a human embryo could be ‘morally permissible’ if it is in the child’s best interests.

[Early identification key to tackling type 1 diabetes in children and young people, says National Assembly committee](#)

Early identification is key to preventing complex and life-threatening complications from type 1 diabetes in children and young people, according to a National Assembly for Wales committee.

[Sophia Gibson granted landmark cannabis licence](#)

[Emerging sex disease MG 'could become next superbug'](#)

Food and drink

[Lord Duncan to visit Scottish Borders to discuss food and drink production](#)

On a two day trip spanning from Gordon to Galloway, UK Government Minister Lord Duncan, will meet with farmers, brewers and food and drink producers to talk about agriculture, innovation, and the importance of trade in the UK and beyond.

Agriculture and fisheries

[Farming regulation changes proposed](#)

A major simplification of the way we regulate farming has been proposed in an interim report published today.

[How effective is local government in rural areas?](#)

The Select Committee on the Rural Economy questions organisations representing rural businesses and rural communities on access to essential services in rural areas.

[Has the world reached 'peak fish'?, fish experts ask](#)

This week's meetings of the European Parliament's committee on fisheries (11-12 July) saw fish experts tackling the growing issues of overfishing, small-scale fisheries and fish dependence.

[Commission: Third countries should meet EU antibiotics requirements on animal exports](#)

Non-EU countries that export animals and animal products to the bloc will have to abide by new rules on veterinary medicines when it comes to the use of antibiotics, according to the European Commission.

Forestry

[Forest Expansion Scheme opens](#)

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) today announced the opening of the latest phase of the Forest Expansion Scheme.

[Arundel road scheme 'could harm ancient woodland'](#)

Environment and ecology

[Ministers questioned on the Government's Arctic policy](#)

The Environmental Audit Committee holds an evidence session for its inquiry into the Changing Arctic. This session questions Ministers on the Government's Arctic policy, and whether the UK, as one of the Arctic's nearest neighbours, should be doing more to protect this vulnerable region.

[A boon for bees as Environment Agency trials pollinator project](#)

The project seeks to provide and protect valuable habitat for bees.

[Mining the deep ocean – what is it all about?](#)

When reading the words deep sea mining, what goes through your mind? Maybe it's the first time that you have come across these words and wonder: what is it all about?

Water and air

[Water companies need to do more to protect the environment, report shows](#)

Water companies need to do more to protect the environment, says a new Environment Agency report.

Climate and energy

[Comprehensive study: carbon taxes won't hamper the economy](#)

But global warming will.

[UK politicians 'failing to rise to the challenge of climate change'](#)

Government's top climate adviser warns policymakers will be judged harshly by future generations if they don't act now.

Waste

[Waste incineration set to overtake recycling in England, Greens warn](#)

Amount of rubbish burned by local authorities triples while household recycling rates stall.

[New scheme to fight plastics pollution gains Government grant funding](#)

The UK Government has re-opened the Darwin Plus scheme and given a grant for a plastic reduction project on St Helena to help support UK Overseas Territories.

[Commonwealth countries unite to tackle ocean plastic pollution](#)

Countries across the Commonwealth meet to discuss next steps in tackling plastic entering the marine environment.

[Death-knell for microplastics?](#)

MEPs voted on Tuesday (10 July) to amend European Commission plans to cut plastic pollution and suggested a ban on microplastics in cosmetics and other products by 2020, as the European Parliament starts to review the Plastics Strategy.

Exiting the EU

[Brexit 'could damage UK environment'](#)

[Kirsty Williams announces £3.5m for promoting Welsh universities in a post-Brexit world](#)

The Welsh Government is investing £3.5m in a programme run by Wales' universities to drive international partnerships and promote Wales as a study destination in a post Brexit world, Education Secretary Kirsty Williams has announced.

Research funding and higher education policy

[Quarter of universities not reporting on potential malpractice](#)

The Science and Technology Committee report looks at what is known about problems arising from errors, questionable practices, and fraud in research, and what can be done to ensure that problems are handled appropriately.

[UK universities fall short on reporting misconduct investigations](#)

Parliamentary inquiry recommends creation of research integrity committee.

[Proposed research misconduct watchdog 'only part of the solution'](#)

Academic questions whether new committee should be hosted by UK Research and Innovation.

Open access and publication policy

[Science journals end open-access trial with Gates Foundation](#)

Pilot experiment has seen 26 papers published under open-access terms so far and should yield a report by the end of the year.

Business and industry

[Strengths and weaknesses in the UK innovation system](#)

The 2018 European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) was published last month, and shows the UK in the group of Innovation Leaders for the second year in a row.

Equality and diversity

[Diversity and decision-making – pain and gain](#)

Public engagement

[General public should have more input into scientific advice](#)

The scientific community needs to listen more to people outside academia if it wants to continue to help politicians create good evidence-based policies that will benefit the public, a conference has heard.

International news

['Like losing family': time may be running out for New Zealand's most sacred tree](#)

Tāne Mahuta (Lord of the Forest) is about 2,500 years old. But its days will be numbered if it succumbs to kauri dieback.

[Drug to Treat Smallpox Approved by F.D.A., a Move Against Bioterrorism](#)

The Food and Drug Administration on Friday approved the first drug intended to treat smallpox — a move that could halt a lethal pandemic if the virus were to be released as a terrorist bioweapon or through a laboratory accident.

Opinion

[Is UK science and innovation up for the climate challenge?](#)

The government has shaken up the UK research system. But fossil fuels, not low-carbon technologies, still seem to be in the driving seat.

[It's time to burst the biomedical bubble in UK research](#)

A new study calls for a rebalancing of research and innovation funding to better meet the UK's economic, social and health needs.

[Venkatraman Ramakrishnan: 'Britain's reputation has been hurt'](#)

The Nobel prize-winning biologist and president of the Royal Society on how Brexit might affect the sciences.

Opportunities

[Policy Manager](#)

The Physiological Society are seeking a Policy Manager to manage their policy projects. The Policy Manager will bring diverse groups of stakeholders together in order to increase awareness of The Society and physiology in the health arena, including among funders, NHS, government, and charities.

Deadline for applications, 27 July 2018.

Consultations

[Sustainable places: National Development Framework preferred option consultation launched](#)

The Welsh Government has launched its consultation on its Preferred Option for the National Development Framework (NDF). The final version of the NDF is due to be published in September 2020 and will sit alongside Planning Policy Wales (PPW) to set out the Welsh Government's land use policies.

Closes 23 July 2018.

[Public consultation on the Evaluation of the 7th Environment Action Programme](#)

Closes 26 July 2017.

[New environment law to deliver a Green Brexit](#)

Environmental Principles and Governance Bill announced as consultation launches on new body to hold government to account. The RSB response to this consultation is currently in draft. Please contact consultation@rsb.org.uk for more information and if you would like to contribute.

Closes 2 August 2018.

[Air quality: draft Clean Air Strategy 2018](#)

Closes 14 August 2018.

[Public Consultation on the evaluation of the Ozone Regulation](#)

Closes 24 August 2018.

[Public consultation on the interim evaluation of the direct management under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund \(EMFF\)](#)

Closes 3 September 2018.

[Tackling plastic pollution](#)

Deposit return scheme consultation.

Closes 25 September 2018.

Events

[Lambeth Country Show 2018](#)

21 July 2018, London

Meet our outreach team at Lambeth Country Show.

[Fellows' Lunch - Cardiff](#)

13 September 2018, Cardiff

A small informal lunch to provide Fellows of the Society with the opportunity to discuss current biological issues and the Society's overall direction.

[Tackling Antimicrobial Resistance](#)

17 September 2018, London

A joint event organised by the BTS, the Royal Society of Chemistry Toxicology Group and the British Society of Antimicrobial Chemotherapy.

And finally...

[This Snail Goes Through Metamorphosis. Then It Never Has to Eat Again.](#)

The transformation of a deep sea mollusk is comparable to an average person growing as much as 60 feet tall with a giant sac of bacteria filling its guts.

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Please note that any views or opinions presented in this email are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Royal Society of Biology.

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