

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

20 September 2019

News

Top stories

[Climate strike: Thousands protest across UK](#)

[Chris Skidmore returns as universities minister in UK government](#)

MP moved back to old brief after less than seven weeks away, replacing Jo Johnson

Royal Society of Biology news

[Royal Society of Biology Outreach and Engagement Award 2019 winners announced](#)

Two outstanding science communicators have been recognised with this year's Outreach and Engagement awards.

Opportunities not to be missed..

[Insect declines in the headlights](#)

7 October 2019

Royal College of Physicians, London

A free Policy Lates on insect decline. This event will explore the evidence behind the headlines. We will consider what we know about insect declines and what we don't know, to better understand the causes and consequences of insect population changes. Our expert panel will discuss how we monitor and conserve this vital and diverse group of organisms, while addressing challenges such as crop protection and control of pest species.

Health and biomedicine

[It's wrong to assume that the choice not to vaccinate is always down to ignorance](#)

[Why are we seeing spikes in measles compared to other infectious diseases?](#)

[UKRI-funded pioneering data research centres to enable cutting-edge research and innovation to benefit UK patients](#)

[Common cold stopped by experimental approach](#)

Food and drink

[Pure fruit juice: healthy, or not?](#)

[Healthy low-fat insect and plant protein launched in Wales](#)

SBRI-supported Bug Farm Foods has developed VEXo, a protein that can be used like minced meat, at its new R&D facility in St David's.

Agriculture and fisheries

[\\$1m a minute: the farming subsidies destroying the world - report](#)

'Perverse' payments must be redirected to measures such as capturing carbon, report says

[Abattoir waste fertilisers could become the norm](#)

Sustainable phosphorus study echoes the founding of Rothamsted - but the ingredients list might not be to everyone's taste

Environment and ecology

[Lynx and wolf may soon be roaming Britain's wild places again. Is it a good idea?](#)

Creatures long ago hunted to extinction in Britain may soon be re-introduced to help fill the the predator vacuum they left. But has the landscape – and its occupants – changed too much to support them?

[Badger cull in England extended to 'unimaginable scale'](#)

Ministers approve culling in 11 new areas, with 64,000 animals likely to be killed this autumn

Water and air

[UK's first marine park in Plymouth 'to lead way in ocean innovation'](#)

Plymouth Sound is home to hundreds of species of fish and marine life, and campaigners want to protect the vast stretch of water.

[2050 is too late – we must drastically cut emissions much sooner](#)

Climate and energy

[UN summits to urge 'ambition and action' on climate change, sustainable development: Guterres](#)

[New UN report launched to help ratchet up action to combat climate crisis](#)

[Five climate change science misconceptions – debunked](#)

[Five things you need to know about: decarbonising Europe](#)

[Faster pace of climate change is 'scary', former chief scientist says](#)

Waste

[Review to continue improvements in bio-waste sector](#)

The Environment Agency is set to launch a review of permitted waste sites within the bio-waste sector, which includes composting, anaerobic digestion and mechanical biological treatment.

Exiting the EU

['Clean break' Brexit plan triggers fears for EU research deal](#)

Shift in alignment towards US sparks doubts over Horizon Europe association

Research funding and higher education policy

[Share research funding more evenly across UK, urge MPs](#)

Commons Science and Technology Committee also calls for rebalancing of funding between disciplines and greater support for small, specialist institutions

[Does the new researcher concordat have teeth?](#)

Vitae has a “refreshed” concordat for researchers following a sector consultation. How refreshing is it? The Wellcome Trust, UK Research and Innovation, Cancer Research UK and the UK Research Staff Association are already signed up, but UCU is a bit disappointed.

Open access and publication policy

[Elsevier investigates hundreds of peer reviewers for manipulating citations](#)

The publisher is scrutinizing researchers who might be inappropriately using the review process to promote their own work.

[Open access to teaching material – how far have we come?](#)

Diversity and inclusion

[Research intelligence: women rewrite the publication 'rules'](#)

Oxford professor's response to male scholar's guide to publication considers gendered nature of research career advice

[How can we improve equity in science education?](#)

['Look at how white the academy is': why BAME students aren't doing PhDs](#)

Black, Asian and minority ethnic students are shunning PhDs because they don't feel like they belong in academia

Digital technologies

[AI can help us fight climate change. But it has an energy problem, too](#)

Measuring impact

[Open Syllabus Explorer: evidencing research-based teaching?](#)

International news

[Scientists concerned over US environment agency's plan to limit animal research](#)

Critics say the shift away from using animals in safety tests will hamper chemical research and regulations.

[African nations push UN to improve drought research](#)

Early-warning systems to identify areas at risk top countries' wishlist.

[For Children With Peanut Allergies, F.D.A. Experts Recommend a New Treatment](#)

About 1.2 million American children have peanut allergies. A new drug, Palforzia, does not cure the condition, but it can blunt life-threatening reactions.

[Over 3,000 killed by deadly virus in Democratic Republic of the Congo this year – and it's not Ebola](#)

[Plan to wipe out malaria comes with hefty price tag](#)

Opinion

[International graduates need more than post-study work visas](#)

Even in Kuala Lumpur, where I am based, I find myself having conversations about the sorry state of British politics and the inability of the government to take any policy decisions while in Brexit limbo.

People

[European Commission expands role of research chief](#)

Bulgaria's Mariya Gabriel picked to lead newly named policy department that combines research with education and youth affairs.

[Toni Slabas obituary](#)

[David Attenborough to front UK study on biodiversity loss](#)

Broadcaster will act as ambassador for government review into global costs and risks of habitat loss

Opportunities

[RSB Website survey](#)

The RSB website survey is now open for anyone to report back on their user experiences of the current website and what features they would like the new website to have.

Closes: 30 September 2019

Royal Society of Biology, Outreach and Engagement Volunteering Opportunities

RSB are looking for local volunteers to help run our hands-on science activities at [Abergavenny Food Festival 2019](#) at Abergavenny, Wales, on **21st – 22nd September 2019**; [Big Biology Day Cambridge](#) at Cambridge CB2 8PE, on **5th October 2019**; and at [Conwy Feast](#), at Conwy, Wales, on **26th – 27th October 2019**. If you live nearby and are interested in volunteering to help the RSB outreach team deliver our hands-on science activities please email Dr Amanda Hardy via outreach@rsb.org.uk

[BioArtAttack Competition](#)

What is a BioArtAttack? Your entry can be anything from drawings and sculptures to models and collages of any scale. The piece of art created can be entered by an individual or as a group, including classes, lab groups or any group of biology enthusiasts.

Closes: 13 October 2019

[Diversity in Science Grants](#)

The Biochemical Society's Diversity in Science Grants scheme provides grants of up to £500 to individuals, groups, charities or not-for profit organisations to support and address issues relating to diversity in science.

Closes: 18 October 2019

[MRC / AMS Policy Internship Scheme](#)

The Medical Research Council and the Academy of Medical Sciences' are pleased to open applications to their [policy internship scheme](#). Students will receive first-hand experience of medical science policy and have the opportunity to build valuable relationships with key stakeholders across the sector. The scheme is open to all MRC-funded PhD students in their third or fourth year of study, and successful interns will undertake a 12-week placement at the Academy's offices in London.

Closes: 21 October 2019

RSB Big Biology Day Grant 2019

Are you interested in hosting a one-day science outreach festival to share your passion for biology and the natural world? Apply for the Royal Society of Biology's [Big Biology Day Grant 2019](#) and get up to £500 to host your own Big Biology Day.

Closes: 1 November 2019

RSB Outreach and Engagement grant scheme 2020

If you have an idea for an outreach and engagement event or activity and are looking for funding to make it happen in 2020. Apply now to the Royal Society of Biology's [Outreach and Engagement grant scheme online](#) and submit your application for a grant of up to £500.

Closes: 1 November 2019

Athena SWAN review

Advance HE commissioned a Steering Group to undertake an independent review of the Athena SWAN charter. The Steering Group has completed the first part of its review and this has informed the current [survey](#), which is open for completion.

Authors wanted for OUP-RSB biology primers

The RSB and Oxford University Press are looking for academic authors to contribute to the ongoing Oxford Biology Primers series of textbooks. Experts in fields including microbiology, stem cells, ageing, and the microbiome are encouraged to contact tom.ireland@rsb.org.uk for more details. The third book in the series, Hormones, is out now, with further titles available to pre-order [here](#).

Consultations

Improving higher technical education

Closes: 29 September 2019

Standards for biodegradable, compostable and bio-based plastics: call for evidence

Closes: 14 October 2019

Developing a national food strategy

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: 25 October 2019

Dasgupta Review on the Economics of Biodiversity

HM Treasury launches a call for evidence for an independent global review, led by Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta, to assess the economic value of biodiversity and identify actions that will simultaneously enhance biodiversity and deliver economic prosperity. 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: 6 November 2019

Events

Women in Biotech - Cambridge Edition

26 September 2019

Babraham Research Campus, Cambridge

The Physiological Society's parliamentary launch of healthy ageing report

15 October 2019

Houses of Parliament, London

'Growing Older, Better' is a culmination of a 12 month project looking at the role of R&D, funding and public health messaging into delivering the Government's 'Ageing Society' Grand Challenge. If you would like to attend, please contact [Andrew Mackenzie](#).

Bioscience Careers Day 2019

26 October 2019

Middlesex University, London

The Bioscience Careers Day (BCD) is the perfect opportunity to get your career on track - whether you are interested in working in research, science communication or even if you just want to know what options are available to you once you finish your bioscience degree. Our top programme will enhance your prospects. Find out what happened last year in our [YouTube video](#). Visit [here](#) for full details and to buy your £10 ticket. Direct queries to Harriet McAra at events@rsb.org.uk

Organ-on-a-chip: Current Gaps and Future Directions

2 December 2019

GSK Medicines Research Centre, Stevenage

Quantitative Methods in Gene Regulation V

9 - 10 December 2019

Institute of Physics, London

And finally...

Wasps: If you can't love them, at least admire them

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