

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

19 April 2018

### News

#### Royal Society of Biology news

##### [Four students chosen to represent UK at the International Biology Olympiad](#)

A team of four students have qualified to represent the UK at the International Biology Olympiad 2018.

##### [RSB and University of Gloucestershire spider citizen science project leads to publication](#)

New research, fuelled by thousands of sightings recorded by the public, has shed new light on UK house spider behaviour.

#### Health and biomedicine

##### [Non-profit's \\$300 hepatitis C cure as effective as \\$84,000 alternative](#)

Exclusive: 71 million people stand to benefit from reduced price treatment for virus which can lead to liver cirrhosis, cancer and death.

##### [Search for new MND treatments](#)

Funding for research posts.

##### [CaSE joins cross-sector call for government to align with EU clinical trials regulation](#)

#### Food and drink

##### [Extra glass of wine a day 'will shorten your life by 30 minutes'](#)

Drinking is as harmful as smoking, and more than five drinks a week lowers life expectancy, say researchers.

## Agriculture and fishery

### [Farmers hail new transparency rules in food safety, still want science-based decisions](#)

EU farmers have welcomed the European Commission's new rules on transparency in food safety assessments. However, it is still uncertain to which extent this will ensure that future decisions will actually be based on science.

## Environment and ecology

### [Make half of world more nature-friendly by 2050, urges UN biodiversity chief](#)

Call by Cristiana Paşca Palmer comes ahead of a major biodiversity conference in Beijing in 2020.

### [Asian hornet identified in Lancashire](#)

An Asian hornet has been found in Lancashire and surveillance activity is underway.

### [Commission efforts to build trust in food safety receives mixed reviews](#)

The European Commission presented on Wednesday (11 April) a proposal aimed at restoring public trust in scientific studies on food safety, suggesting more transparency in decision-making and greater involvement of member states' experts.

### [Hen harrier 'brood management' plan faces crowdfunded legal challenge](#)

Campaign against plan to remove chicks from their nests and rear them in captivity raises £25,000 in four days.

## Water and air

### [Spikes in air pollution can heighten risk of chest infections, research suggests](#)

Study of PM2.5 levels in Utah suggests increase in diagnoses of viral infections such as bronchitis follows even brief upticks in pollution.

## Climate and energy

### [Carbon dioxide from ships at sea to be regulated for first time](#)

Shipping firms to halve greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 as part of historic agreement.

### [UK to review climate target raising hopes of a zero emissions pledge](#)

The government pledged in 2016 to enshrine a zero target in law to meet its Paris commitments, but has yet to pass any legislation.

### [New UK initiatives to help Commonwealth countries tackle world's greatest environmental challenges](#)

Business ministers announce more than £8 million for innovation technology to tackle global climate change and prepare for natural disasters.

## Waste

### [Government sets aside £60m to fight scourge of plastic waste](#)

Fund to be split into three pots to tackle ocean pollution, research and waste management.

## [Commonwealth unites to end scourge of plastic](#)

Countries from across the Commonwealth have today pledged to eliminate avoidable single use plastic in an ambitious bid to clean up the world's oceans.

## [Recycling hope for plastic-hungry enzyme](#)

## Animal Research

### [Why science is being more open about animals in research](#)

We need to show the public the high welfare standards and care all research animals receive to help build trust in scientists.

### [Animal Experiment Statistics](#)

In 2014 3.8 million procedures were completed on regulated living animals representing a decrease of 6% compared to 2013. This note summarises and analyses trends in data, including the growth of universities as the dominant seat of research on animals, the decline of research for toxicological purposes, and the growth in animal procedures for cancer research.

## Research funding and higher education policy

### [Technology networks awarded £3m to solve life science challenges](#)

### [Universities are a key resource for the NHS. Why are they so underused?](#)

The UK's research ecosystem is fragmented. We need more collaboration to pool expertise and improve public health.

### [Research England announces pilot real-time REF review](#)

The university funder Research England is considering carrying out a real-time evaluation of the next Research Excellence Framework to assess the effects of the changes introduced after the Stern review.

### [University research budgets held flat](#)

Comment from Sarah Main on Research England Quality Related research funding announcement.

### [Challenge related funding?](#)

Naomi Weir takes a look at the QR funding announcement from Research England.

## Equality and diversity

### [Science's vast gender pay gap revealed in UK wage data](#)

Pay disparities at science employers outpace national average for all firms.

## International news

### [Spain's biggest-ever science petition decries 'abandonment' of research](#)

Researchers deliver 280,000-signature campaign to parliament protesting decade of drastic cuts — but a budget hike might be in their sights.

### [Rare human outbreak of monkey malaria detected in Malaysia](#)

Handful of people diagnosed with parasite found in macaques has scientists worried about increasing contact between monkeys and humans.

## People

### [Dr Ian Campbell appointed Innovate UK interim Executive Chair](#)

Dr Ian Campbell has been appointed as interim Executive Chair of Innovate UK. He will take up the role from 4 May 2018.

## Committee vacancies

### [Membership and Professional Affairs Committee members](#)

Following a recent internal restructure and governance review the Trustees agreed to the formation of a new RSB committee, namely Membership and Professional Affairs, and is now seeking individuals to join this important advisory committee. Members of the RSB and our Member Organisations are invited to apply for several committee positions. This is a new committee and as such there are up to 12 vacancies available, we are looking for a range of expertise including: member retention strategies, member engagement strategies, professional development expertise including technical pathways, online training and blended learning models, regional activity and business development expertise.

Deadline to apply: 27 April 2018.

## Opportunities

### [Plant Health Undergraduate Studentships](#)

Nine summer studentship projects on plant health are available for bioscience undergraduates. The selected students will work with leading plant health researchers, gaining great experience as well as receiving a bursary. The projects will run for 10 weeks over summer 2018. The studentships are arranged by the UK Plant Sciences Federation (UKPSF) with funding from Defra, BSPP and N8 AgriFood.

Deadline for applications: 9 May 2018

### [Innovation to commercialisation of university research \(ICURe\)](#)

ICURe is a programme of commercialisation support for teams of academic researchers wishing to explore the commercial potential of their research. It aims to improve commercial awareness amongst academic personnel, to develop and enhance the entrepreneurial skills of early career researchers, and to strengthen links between academic and industrial communities. The programme accepts applications from teams based at all UK universities and from all disciplines.

### [Call for Nominations: 2018 \(34th\) International Prize for Biology](#)

The International Prize for Biology is hosted by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. Based on nominations gathered from around the world, the Prize is awarded annually to a researcher who has made an outstanding contribution to advance the biological sciences. The research field of this year's Prize is "Palaeontology."

Deadline for nominations: 20 April 2018.

### [Launch of UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships scheme](#)

The UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship scheme (FLF) aims to develop, retain, attract and sustain research and innovation talent in the UK. Providing up to seven years of funding, for at least 550 early-career researchers and innovators, the scheme will tackle difficult and novel challenges.

Deadline 3 July 2018.

### [The Nancy Rothwell Award 2018](#)

The Nancy Rothwell Award 2018 specimen drawing competition for 7 – 18 year olds is now open for submissions. Prizes include an experience day at the Royal Veterinary College for students, and their school can also win £100. Closes 10 September 2018.

## Consultations

### [Review of Post-18 Education and Funding: call for evidence](#)

Closes 2 May 2018.

### [The future for food, farming and the environment](#)

The RSB response to this consultation is currently in draft, please contact [consultation@rsb.org.uk](mailto:consultation@rsb.org.uk) for more information and if you would like to contribute. Closes 8 May 2018.

### [Tackling the plastic problem](#)

Closes 18 May 2018.

### [Cost effectiveness methodology for vaccination programmes](#)

Closes 21 May 2018.

### [A call for evidence on controlling live exports for slaughter and to improve animal welfare during transport after the UK leaves the EU](#)

Closes 22 May 2018.

### [Consultation on the UK Nutrient Profiling Model 2018 review](#)

Closes 15 June 2018.

## Events

### [Accreditation Conference: Striving for Excellence](#)

**25 April 2018, London**

The inaugural Accreditation Conference will bring together university representatives and industry employers from around the country to discuss best practice in higher education.

### [Policy Lunchbox: School Biology – a Future Curriculum](#)

**26 April 2018, London**

Join us at the next Policy Lunchbox where we will be joined by Professor Michael Reiss to discuss the future of the school science curriculum. Tickets are free but limited so reserve your place.

### [Presidents' Dinner](#)

**2 May 2018, London**

Celebrate the Royal Society of Biology's incoming and outgoing Presidents at a special drinks reception and seated dinner. This event is an excellent opportunity for members and their guests to meet and socialise with fellow members and RSB Trustees. Sponsored by Porton Biopharma, proceeds from this event will help to raise funds to support our work with schools, public engagement and early-career bioscientists. Tickets range from £15-£85. For further information contact Karen Patel at [events@rsb.org.uk](mailto:events@rsb.org.uk) or on 020 7685 2569.

And finally...

**[Threatened: A Green-Haired Turtle That Can Breathe Through Its Genitals](#)**

**Royal Society of Biology**  
Science Policy Team  
Charles Darwin House  
12 Roger Street  
London  
WC1N 2JU  
[policy@rsb.org.uk](mailto:policy@rsb.org.uk)

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Charles Darwin House, 12 Roger Street, London WC1N 2JU