

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

23 June 2022

This newsletter provides links to published news articles from a range of sources. Views or opinions presented are those of the original author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of the Royal Society of Biology.

News

Royal Society of Biology news

Opportunities not to be missed...

[RSB Photography Competition 2022](#)

'Communication' is the theme of this year's Royal Society of Biology Photography Competition. Life on Earth is constantly communicating and this year we invite you to capture these interactions. The competition has two age categories each with a cash prize: 18 and over (£1000) and under 18s (£500).

Closes: 24 June 2022

[Vacancy: Senior Science Policy Officer](#)

Royal Society of Biology (RSB)

Salary: £32,723 - £38,001 (dependent on experience)

Location: London, flexibility considered

Contract: Permanent

The RSB is seeking a senior science policy officer to advise and deliver a portfolio of activities focusing on plant and natural environmental sciences, including organisational sustainability actions for the RSB. The role will be suitable for someone with an excellent knowledge of science and the science community, an understanding of the broad UK policy environment, and particular knowledge, experience, interests and skills relevant to plant and environmental sciences. For further information and to apply, visit: <https://my.rsb.org.uk/services.php?section=jobs&jobid=88> Please direct any queries to Laura Marshall, head of science policy, at laura.marshall@rsb.org.uk

Closes: 26 June 2022

[Vacancy: Science Policy Officer](#)

Royal Society of Biology (RSB)

Salary: £27,445 - £32,723 (dependent on experience)

Location: London, flexibility considered

Contract: Permanent

The RSB is seeking a science policy officer to advise and deliver a portfolio of activities focusing on the research landscape. The role will be suitable for someone with a good general knowledge of science, research and the research community, an understanding of the broad UK policy environment, and particular knowledge, interests and skills relevant to research funding, infrastructure, workforce capability, and communications across the biosciences. For further information and to apply, visit: <https://my.rsb.org.uk/services.php?section=jobs&jobid=89> Please direct any queries to Laura Marshall, head of science policy, at laura.marshall@rsb.org.uk

Closes: 26 June 2022

Health and biomedicine

[Scientists harness light therapy to target and kill cancer cells in world first](#)

Experts believe a new form of photoimmunotherapy may become the fifth major cancer treatment, reports the Guardian.

[Mental health: Genetics service to help patients and families](#)

BBC News covers how people in Wales affected by mental health issues will be able to benefit from a new genetics service.

[Opinion: The inside story of Recovery: how the world's largest COVID-19 trial transformed treatment – and what it could do for other diseases](#)

Writing for the Conversation, Recovery team members highlight how Recovery has underlined the importance of embedding clinical trials in routine medical practice.

Food and drink

[New report reveals next steps for the alternative protein industry](#)

UK Research and Innovation's transforming food production challenge has published its latest forward strategy report, Alternative proteins: identifying UK priorities.

[Climate impact of food miles three times greater than previously believed, study finds](#)

Researchers estimate that carbon emissions from transporting food are about 6% of the global total, with fruit and vegetables as the largest contributor, writes the Guardian.

Agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries

[UK's top scientists join forces to battle bird flu outbreaks](#)

Some of the UK's top scientists are set to join forces in a major new research consortium in the UK's battle against bird flu, reports UK Research and Innovation.

[Government retracts 'unlawful' pollution guidance for England's farms](#)

Advice that allowed farmers to spread manures in a way that risked polluting waters has been changed by Defra, according to the Guardian.

Forestry

[New fund opens to accelerate tree planting](#)

According to this Government press release, almost £8 million has been allocated for local authorities to train and employ new staff - building local capacity to plan and deliver new woodlands.

Environment and ecology

[What is biodiversity and how are we protecting it?](#)

BBC News examines the importance of biodiversity.

[Bee-eaters in Norfolk 'worrying sign of climate change'](#)

BBC News covers how the exotic birds are usually found in southern Europe and northern Africa.

[Prickly leaf beetle is found in the UK for the first time](#)

A beetle more usually at home on the warm Mediterranean coast has been found for the first time living in the UK, reports the Natural History Museum.

Water and air

[Five highly protected marine areas planned for English waters](#)

Five highly protected marine areas could be created by the Government to ban all fishing and rewild the sea, the Guardian has learned.

[Ocean literacy and unlocking a revolution in ocean science solutions](#)

United Nations (UN) News spoke to experts within and outside the UN system to reveal the importance of ocean literacy.

Climate and energy

[Is the UK getting hotter, and what causes heatwaves?](#)

After several days of warm weather, parts of the UK have experienced the hottest day of the year so far, writes BBC News.

[New data reveals extraordinary global heating in the Arctic](#)

Temperatures in the Barents Sea region are 'off the scale' and may affect extreme weather in the US and Europe, reports the Guardian.

Waste

[Waste not, want watts – turning waste into energy](#)

Horizon covers how innovative furnaces based on biofuel systems will generate heat and power from waste materials with near-complete efficiency and very low emissions.

Research funding and higher education policy

[£481m for UK's world-class research and innovation infrastructure](#)

The injection of funding will deliver cutting-edge facilities and equipment, including the UK's most powerful microscope and the UK's 'flying lab', reports UK Research and Innovation.

[Offer rate for A-level students applying to top universities falls to 55%](#)

Universities are looking to stabilise the numbers after the Covid surge, says Ucas, while grappling with the increase in the number of 18-year-olds, writes the Guardian.

[Gaps in student mental health services to be tackled](#)

According to this Government press release, the new scheme will bring together university, NHS and mental health services to create regional partnerships, which could include physical hubs that students can visit in-person.

[2022: AMRC sector's footprint](#)

This infographic outlines key facts and figures about the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) members and the research they fund to highlight the innovative work of medical research charities.

[Research expenditure \(AMRC\)](#)

This briefing provides an in-depth discussion of research expenditure by the AMRC member charities in 2021.

Business and industry

[£30 million Fast Start boost for cutting-edge start-ups](#)

Innovate UK is launching a brand new series of grants worth £30 million to back innovative UK businesses in fast starting innovation and boosting the UK economy.

Diversity and inclusion

[Opinion: Diversity in science prizes: why is progress so slow?](#)

Many prize-givers still don't publish details of nominations - a key step towards ensuring that awards are fair and unbiased, according to this Nature Editorial.

Digital technologies

[Digital technology and the planet: Progress and perspectives on a data-driven net zero transition](#)

Today, UK-based initiatives like the National Data Strategy Forum are taking this vision forward. However, there is work to be done to ensure a data-driven net zero transition works for everyone, says Dr June Brawner, senior policy adviser, Royal Society.

International news

[Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) Situation Dashboard](#)

The World Health Organization summarises the reported number of confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths.

[Climate change is turning more of Central Asia into desert](#)

The rapid expansion will have significant impacts on ecosystems and the people and animals who rely on them, reports Nature News.

[Stretching sands as desertification spreads to Europe](#)

Drought and desertification threatens to degrade land in Europe and around the world. Horizon takes a look at some new studies into how drought spreads and deserts develop.

[Sickle cell screening urged for newborns in Africa](#)

Routine newborn screening for sickle cell disease could have a profound impact in stemming complications and averting loss of life among people diagnosed with the condition, writes SciDev.Net.

Opportunities

[RSB Outreach and Engagement Award 2022](#)

Are you a bioscience researcher involved in science communication? If you work in any sector of UK biosciences, apply for the Royal Society of Biology Outreach and Engagement Award 2022 and win up to £1500.

Closes: 1 July 2022

[The Janet Thornton Postdoctoral Fellowship 2022](#)

The Wellcome Sanger Institute has created a postdoctoral fellowship providing an additional opportunity specifically for those who have been out of scientific research for 12 months or more to return to high-quality postdoctoral training.

Closes: 15 July 2022

[The Nancy Rothwell Award 2022](#)

The Nancy Rothwell Award 2022 specimen drawing competition for 7 – 18 year olds is now open for submissions. Prizes include art materials for students and their school can also win £100. Visit the Royal Society of Biology [website](#) for more information.

Closes: 29 July 2022

Consultations

[Consultation on environmental targets](#)

Defra is seeking views on the first suite of Environment Act 2021 targets.

Closes: 27 June 2022

[Mental health and wellbeing plan](#)

The Department of Health and Social Care is seeking views on what we can do to improve everyone's mental health and wellbeing.

Closes: 7 July 2022

[Legislation for plants produced by certain new genomic techniques](#)

This European Commission consultation seeks to receive citizens' and stakeholders' views (both inside and outside the EU) on the functioning of the current GMO legislation for plants obtained by targeted mutagenesis and cisgenesis and their food and feed products, i.e. under the current GMO legislation, and on potential options for a new framework.

Closes: 22 July 2022

[Consultation on the principles of marine net gain](#)

This consultation seeks views from all interested parties on the proposed principles of marine net gain. Defra are particularly keen to hear from marine industries, recreational marine users, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and conservationists, academics, and coastal communities.

Closes: 30 August 2022

[RSB Policy Resource Library online](#)

The RSB has created a searchable, digital library of more than 800 statements, responses, briefings and other policy resources produced by the RSB and our Member Organisations across the biosciences. This collection is freely and openly accessible to everyone, including members and non-members, through the [mySociety portal](#) (no registration necessary).

Events

[Parliamentary Links Day 2022](#)

28 June 2022

09:00 – 12:30 BST

Houses of Parliament, London

Parliamentary Links Day is the largest science event on the annual Parliamentary events calendar. It is organised by the Royal Society of Biology on behalf of the science and engineering community to strengthen dialogue with Parliament, and to provide MPs with a more rounded understanding of the scientific issues we face. The theme for this year's event is Science and International Collaboration.

[The 6th Black Minority and Ethnic Early Career Researcher Hybrid conference](#)

7 July 2022

08:30 – 18:00 BST

University of West London, Ealing, London

This event is free to attend, and both online and in-person admission is available. By attending the conference, you will have the opportunity to hear how Black and Minority Ethnic academics have navigated their journey, network, get a mentor and empower yourself through the workshops. The Royal Society of Biology is supporting this event.

[Policy Lates: Can One Health prevent pandemics](#)

19 July 2022

18:30 – 20:00 BST

Online via Zoom

The Royal Society of Biology's upcoming Policy Lates panel discussion will explore how a One Health approach can be integrated into research and policy, for prevention of and response to future pandemics. Chaired by Professor Louise Cosby FRSB, Queen's University Belfast, the panel of expert speakers will discuss the challenges and possible solutions facing One Health researchers, alongside those facing policymakers, in integrating One Health evidence and expertise into policymaking processes. Register to attend this free event at www.rsb.org.uk/PLOneHealth and direct queries to Harriet McAra at events@rsb.org.uk or on 020 3925 3445.

And finally...

[Largest freshwater fish ever recorded caught in Cambodia](#)

A giant stingray was snagged by a local fisher in the Mekong River, weighing nearly 300kg, reports the Guardian.

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