

with individual speakers after the meeting has ended.

The workshops highlight channels through which scientists and engineers may engage with policy formulation processes by providing their views, expert opinions and evidence when scientific issues are raised, or matters affecting the way science is conducted are involved;

- By responding to Government Consultations, Green Papers and Inquiries;
- By providing evidence to relevant Select Committee Inquiries;
- By supporting Policy Groups within their Learned Societies and becoming involved with the production of 'position papers'; and
- By acting as mentors to constituency MPs helping them understand the scientific method, the processes

involved in research and the interpretation of scientific data.

Participant feedback provides us with information about the impact the workshops have on their understanding of policy formulation and implementation processes. Participants are asked to place their understanding of science policy and the processes into one of four levels before and after the event:

1. No understanding
2. Some understanding
3. Good understanding
4. In-depth understanding

The majority of participants (over 90%) came to the workshops claiming no, or only some, knowledge of science policy and the policy processes. At the end of the event the majority felt that their understanding had increased by at least one level (72%) and in some cases (17%) by two levels – or even three levels! A

more detailed report on the workshops may be found on our website (www.newtonsofapple.org.uk)

We have discovered that there is a real and growing interest amongst the younger generation of scientists in policy matters and a thirst for knowledge about the processes, and how they may become involved. All of our events have been greatly oversubscribed within a few days of being advertised. It is of particular interest that we have found an increasing number of questions at these events which centre around careers in the policy arena. A small number of participants have even gone on to take up temporary jobs as interns, fellows, etc in organisations that provide them with some hands-on experience. The workshops are therefore meeting a real need in the scientific community and are laying down some foundations

in the building of the bridge between scientists and policy makers. We are therefore greatly encouraged as we move forward with our third programme of workshops in 2010/11 and as we start to develop further programmes to provide some more in-depth experience for young scientists and encourage a deeper engagement in the field of science policy. We are always open to ideas as to how this may be done as Newton's Apple is committed to consolidating the progress we have made and to forming yet stronger foundations.

Dr Michael Elves was a Former Director of Scientific and Educational Affairs, Glaxo Wellcome and a specialist adviser to the House of Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology 1997-2005

Business Secretary announces joint UK/China Investment in Solar Energy and Fuel Cells

Business Secretary Vince Cable announced a joint investment project between the UK and China on solar energy and fuel cells.

The Research Councils UK Energy Programme will invest £2.45 million and will work together with the Chinese Academy of Sciences to provide equivalent resources to fund the research.

Vince Cable's speech outlined the UK's ambitions for building on its science and innovation relationship with China and his ambition for an open international framework to promote innovation.

Extracts from the speech include the following:

"The UK envisages an ambitious programme of research engagement with China over the next five years. This recognises the

priorities and strengths of the two countries, the capacity to deliver excellent research and the potential for co-investment from China (and from other UK sources) to support the delivery. As in science, we think that excellence and openness are vital for success in international innovation."

Dr Cable also announced that British company MRCT has signed agreements with Chinese companies to connect innovative research in the UK with development capabilities in China. This includes jointly developing a new drug for cancer.

Dr Cable highlighted the UK plans to promote technology-based innovation as a key driver of growth, as set out in the UK's Blueprint for Technology, launched by the Prime Minister on 4 November.

1. The UK Blueprint for Technology was published on 4 November. See <http://www.bis.gov.uk/news/topstories/2010/Nov/blueprint-for-technology>

2. The new collaboration in Solar Energy and Fuel Cells has been agreed between Research Councils UK Energy Programme and the Chinese Academy of Sciences. The UK will provide £2.45m, with matched resources from the Chinese Academy of Sciences. This new research initiative will fund five research projects which will address challenges in solar energy and fuel cells and contribute to tackling energy security and climate change. The successful UK recipients are Ifor Samuel, University of St Andrews, Wen-Feng Lin, Queen's University Belfast, Bryce Richards, Heriot-Watt University, Anthony Kucernak, Imperial College and Richard Catlow University College London. The Research Councils UK Energy Programme's total portfolio of collaborative energy research with China now stands at approximately £20m.

