

# SCIENCE AND THE NEW PARLIAMENT



Mr Speaker Bercow opened Links Day in June 2009 two days after his own election to the Speakership

## The New Parliament Faces Major New Challenges

The great global issues of our time – climate change, food security, water, energy and health – are all interconnected.

You cannot tackle one in isolation from the other.

Every single Member of the new Parliament – whether newly-elected or newly re-elected – will be involved in one way or another in these issues.

Science, engineering and technology [SET] are at the heart of many of the scientific challenges which this new Parliament now faces – and SET underpins many of the solutions.

### AND WHAT ARE THESE CHALLENGES?

The Royal Society of Chemistry [RSC] has identified seven areas where science – and the chemical sciences in particular – can make a real difference. Science is not just the way forward out of the recession. It is the key to new challenges such as:

- Energy
- Food

- Future Cities
- Human Health
- Lifestyle & Recreation
- Raw Material & Feedstocks
- Water & Air

### WHAT WILL THIS MEAN IN PRACTICE?

#### ENERGY

Creating and securing environmentally sustainable energy supplies, and improving efficiency of power generation, transmission and use.

#### FOOD

Creating and securing a safe, environmentally friendly, diverse and affordable food supply.

#### FUTURE CITIES

Developing and adapting cities to meet the emergent needs of its citizens.

#### HUMAN HEALTH

Improving and maintaining accessible health, including disease prevention.

#### LIFESTYLE & RECREATION

Providing a sustainable route for people to live richer and more varied lives.

#### WATER & AIR

Ensuring the sustainable management of water and air quality, and addressing the societal impact on water resources (quality and availability).

## HOW CAN WE DELIVER CHANGE?

These big global challenges can only be addressed if we provide an excellent, diverse and well maintained science base, a good supply of well trained individuals and an innovative climate from which good ideas can be exploited and flourish.

A diverse, highly skilled and technically innovative workforce is fundamental to developing and applying new technologies.

This begins in schools where young children are first given the opportunity to experience the excitement of science and this should be nurtured through their entire education experience.

Raising students' interest and curiosity in the sciences will hopefully stimulate their interest in pursuing a career in science

or engineering.

As well as education institutions, industry has a vital role to play in the continuing development of the workforce. Investment in one-the-job training and lifelong learning will help to develop the skills required to adapt to technological advances and ensure that the sciences remain competitive.

We cannot afford a skills shortage, which could leave the next generation ill-equipped to tackle major scientific and technological challenges.

## THE ROLE OF THE NEW PARLIAMENT

The composition of the new Parliament is very different from the old. Its way of working may well be different. But

Parliament's central role should be as important as ever.

The role of MPs in this new Parliament is vital – and it is up to them to ensure that they now have access to the best possible scientific advice.

That is why this Parliament will need a strong Select Committee on Science and Technology – in *both* Houses.

And there are now real opportunities for newly-elected MPs to take a leading role in debating science issues of all kinds.

For its part the scientific and engineering community will work together – building links with *all* MPs – to provide Parliament with the best possible scientific advice. The RSC is here to help

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# PARLIAMENTARY LINKS DAY: THE LARGEST SCIENCE EVENT

Each year the scientific and engineering community joins together in the Royal Society of Chemistry's *Parliamentary Links Day*. It is the largest science gathering held in Parliament. It is dedicated to helping all MPs – especially *new* MPs – to understand the issues that we face and how science & engineering can help. This year Parliamentary Links Day is on Tuesday 22 June at 10am (with lunch from 1pm).

Put the date in your diary now. For further details please contact Dr Stephen Benn

That's why the RSC is here to help.

**Science is the solution.**

**Science is the key to the future.**

**Science matters.**

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Chemical Sciences

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