

SCIENCE IN PARLIAMENT sip

The Journal of the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee.

The Committee is an Associate Parliamentary Group of members of both Houses of Parliament and British members of the European Parliament, representatives of scientific and technical institutions, industrial organisations and universities.



Science in Parliament has two main objectives:

1. to inform the scientific and industrial communities of activities within Parliament of a scientific nature and of the progress of relevant legislation;
2. to keep Members of Parliament abreast of scientific affairs.



Dr Brian Iddon
Chairman,
Editorial Board
Science in Parliament

As the outgoing Chairman of the Management Board of SiP I would like to welcome you all as the new session of Parliament begins. Many elected MPs who were active in the STEM policy area in the last Parliament have retired, and I urge all newly elected MPs to consider taking an interest in the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee, the House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee, the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology and all the All-Party Parliamentary Groups that promote STEM.

This is an exciting time to be involved in science and engineering policy. Since 1997 the science budget has doubled, but we are still a long way off the target expenditure on STEM of 2.5% of GDP. It is important that Parliament sustains expenditure on STEM in order to maintain Britain's position in world science, second only to the USA currently. In March, the Government announced a £40 million investment in the new International Space and Innovation Centre and a further £100 million investment in the Diamond Light Source's Phase III development, both at Harwell. Also in March, CERN announced that beams have collided at 7 TeV in the Large Hadron Collider.

Reports by the HoC Science and Technology Select Committee and Lord Oxburgh's Committee have supported the small Climatic Research Unit at the University of East Anglia against the attacks on them by global warming sceptics. Both reports contained criticisms of the CRU and the UEA. Chemists have been turning their attention recently to using carbon dioxide as a chemical feedstock. Its conversion into methanol as a transport fuel is attracting attention as is its conversion into polyols that can be converted into polymers for use in coatings, adhesives, and graphic art materials (see *Chemistry and Industry*, 22 February 2010, p 7).

Significantly, after a 12-year struggle, the European Commission has authorised cultivation of BASF's genetically modified and blight resistant potato Amflora for industrial use. Finally, congratulations to Simon Singh who has successfully stood up to the libel action taken against him by the British Chiropractic Association.

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