

The Science and Technology (S&T) Select Committee, whose activities are widely advertised and are open to the general public, is perhaps one of the most important, and generally interesting activities that takes place on the Parliamentary Estate, on a regular weekly basis, with a potentially very high "impact" factor right across the nation.

The opportunity, thereby provided, to hold the Government to account, not just on the activities of a single Department, but right across the whole spectrum of STEM-related activities in Government, including the Treasury, is unique in the House of Commons.

Since I am the first Chair to be elected to this post by Parliament and not appointed, the independence of the views expressed in the ensuing discussions is thereby guaranteed and untainted by political prejudice or pressure from any external source whatsoever.

Following the General Election we have systematically tackled a broad but relevant range of STEM-related topics that are very high, not only on the Government's agenda, but which are also of concern and import to the wider science and engineering community in the UK and the public generally, who will hopefully also benefit from our activities on their behalf. Indeed, as Parliamentarians, we have a unique opportunity here, where science and politics meet, to help deliver the best possible solutions for all concerned.

A current summary of topics reviewed by the Committee is very broad ranging.

Our work commenced with an investigation and evaluation of criticisms made of the professional integrity of scientists at the University of East Anglia affected by the hacking of emails related to climate change. This was followed by an assessment of the UK's need for Technology Innovation Centres (TICs) as an essential facility promoting industrial and economic regeneration. A review of science advice available to Government in emergencies considered swine flu, cybercrime, solar storms and volcanic eruptions. This was followed by particle physics and astronomy. Strategic Metals went from nowhere to the top of the agenda very rapidly. The reasons for and likely impact of a move by the MRC (Mill Hill) to a UCL site at St Pancras in order to create the UKCMRI, was examined. The Forensic Science Service, Peer Review of Scientific Publications and the perceived need for much more Practical Hands-On Science and Fieldwork in Schools generally completes the current picture.



Andrew Miller MP
Chairman, Parliamentary
and Scientific
Committee

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.

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