



Listed opposite (grouped by subject area) is a selection of Debates on matters of scientific interest which took place in the House of Commons, House of Lords or Westminster Hall between 8th October 2013 and 20th January 2014.

A full digest of debates and PQs on scientific issues during the 2013/14 session of Parliament can be found at <http://www.scienceinparliament.org.uk/publications/uk-digests/>

SELECTED DEBATES

AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT, FOOD & FISHERIES

Badger Cull	11.12.13	HoC 106WH	Chris Williamson et al
Badger Vaccines	16.10.13	HoC 306WH	David Morris
Badgers: Bovine Tuberculosis	9.12.13	HoL GC138	Lord Knight of Weymouth
Farmland Bird Population	15.1.14	HoC 297WH	Sir John Randall
Fishing Industry	12.12.13	HoC 378	Frank Doran et al
Food Contamination	17.10.13	HoC 338WH	Miss McIntosh
Natural Capital (England and Wales)	21.10.13	HoC 96	Graham Stuart

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Global Food Security	9.1.14	HoC 177WH	Sir Malcolm Bruce
Millennium Development Goals	23.10.13	HoL 1061	Baroness Jenkin of Kennington
United Kingdom and China	7.11.13	HoL 328	Lord Dobbs et al

HEALTH

Children: Sport	12.11.13	HoL GC 278	Baroness Massey of Darwen
G8 Summit on Dementia	28.11.13	HoC 497	Tracey Crouch
Mesothelioma: Research Funding	16.1.14	HoL GC240	Lord Alton of Liverpool
New Psychoactive Substances: EUC Report	11.11.13	HoL 574	Lord Hannay of Chiswick
Olympic Legacy (S&T Report)	11.12.13	HoL GC153	Lord Krebs et al
Psychoactive Substances	11.11.13	HoC 756	Norman Baker
Rare Diseases	17.12.13	HoC 177WH	Jim Shannon

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Education: Contribution to Economic Growth	5.12.13	HoL 353	Baroness Morgan of Huyton
Engineering Skills (Perkins Review)	10.12.13	HoC 32WH	Peter Luff

MISCELLANEOUS

Immigration	11.12.13	HoC 73WH	Andrew Turner et al
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The members of the Committee (appointed 16 May 2013) are Lord Dixon-Smith, Baroness Hilton of Eggardon, Lord O'Neill of Clackmannan, Lord Krebs (Chairman), Baroness Manningham-Buller, Lord Patel, Lord Peston, Baroness Perry of Southwark, Lord Rees of Ludlow, the Earl of Selborne, Baroness Sharp of Guildford, Lord Wade of Chorlton, Lord Willis of Knarborough and Lord Winston.

HOUSE OF LORDS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY SELECT COMMITTEE

Waste and the bioeconomy

The Committee launched an inquiry into waste and the bioeconomy in July 2013. The Call for Evidence closed on 27 September. The inquiry is collecting evidence on the technology used to exploit bio-waste and waste gases to generate high-value products. It aims to assess the potential for this technology to enable bio-waste and waste gas to replace current feedstocks, and the potential contribution this could make to a bioeconomy. Oral evidence sessions were held in autumn 2013 and will conclude early in 2014. The Committee will report shortly thereafter.

Scientific infrastructure

The Committee launched an inquiry into scientific infrastructure in May 2013. The call for evidence closed on 22 June. Oral evidence was taken across June and July on the large and medium-sized scientific infrastructure currently

available in the UK with a particular focus on: future needs and strategic planning, funding and governance arrangements, international partnerships and partnerships with industry. The Committee published its report on 21 November 2013. A Government response is expected in January 2014.

Regenerative medicine

The Committee launched an inquiry into regenerative medicine in 2012. A group from the Committee visited the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine. Oral evidence was taken from October to March 2013. The Committee reported on 1 July 2013 and a Government response was received on 1 October.

Nuclear follow-up

In July 2013, the Committee undertook an evidence session with Professor David Mackay, Chief Scientific Advisor at the Department of

Energy & Climate Change, to follow up on its November 2011 report, *Nuclear research and development capabilities*. A further session was held with the Minister for Energy, Rt Hon Michael Fallon MP, on 10 December 2013.

Science spend

In May 2013, ahead of the Comprehensive Spending Review, the Committee held a one-off evidence session on the topic of science spend. This resulted in a letter being sent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 4 June 2013 calling for an increase in the science budget. In a separate but related development, on 4 December 2013, the Committee wrote to the Rt Hon David Willetts MP, Minister for Universities and Science, to seek clarity on claims that had surfaced in the media suggesting that the ring-fenced science budget may be used to shore up the Department's budget in other areas.

Open access

The Committee undertook a short inquiry into the implementation of the Government's open access policy. It issued a call for evidence to key stakeholders. The Committee took oral evidence in January 2013 and published its report in February. The report was debated on 28 February. It followed this with a letter to RCUK

expressing concern about its revised open access policy in March. A Government response to the report was published in May 2013.

Sports and exercise science and medicine

In May 2012, the Committee launched a short inquiry into sports, exercise science and medicine to consider how the legacy of London 2012 could be used to improve understanding of the benefits exercise can provide for the wider public, and in treating chronic conditions. The Committee explored how robust this science is, and how lessons learnt from the study of athletes can be applied to improve the health of the population generally. The Committee published its report on 17 July 2012. The Government response was received in October 2012 and a debate held on 11 December 2013.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The reports, Government responses, written and oral evidence to the Committee's inquiries mentioned above, as well as the Calls for Evidence and other documents can be found on the Committee's website. Further information about the work of the Committee can be obtained from Chris Clarke, Committee Clerk, clarkechr@parliament.uk or 020 7219 4963. The Committee Office email address is hlscience@parliament.uk.



HOUSE OF COMMONS SELECT COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The Science and Technology Committee is established under Standing Order No 152, and charged with the scrutiny of the expenditure, administration and policy of the Government Office for Science, a semi-autonomous organisation based within the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

The current members of the Science and Technology Committee are:

Jim Dowd (Labour, Lewisham West and Penge), David Heath (Liberal Democrat, Somerton and Frome), Stephen Metcalfe (Conservative, South Basildon and East Thurrock), Andrew Miller (Labour, Ellesmere Port and Neston), David Morris (Conservative, Morecambe and Lunesdale), Stephen Mosley (Conservative, City of Chester), Pamela Nash (Labour, Airdrie and Shotts), Sarah Newton (Conservative, Truro and Falmouth), Graham Stringer (Labour, Blackley and Broughton), David Tredinnick (Bosworth) and Hywel Williams (Plaid Cymru, Arfon).

Andrew Miller was elected by the House of Commons to be the Chair of the Committee on 9 June 2010.

CURRENT INQUIRIES

Clinical Trials

On 13 December 2012, the Committee announced an inquiry: Clinical Trials. The Committee invited written submissions by 22 February 2013.

The written and oral evidence received in this inquiry is on the Committee's website. A report was agreed and was published on 17 September. The Government response was published as a special report on 29 October 2013.

The European and UK Space Agencies

On 15 February 2013, the Committee announced an inquiry: The European and UK Space Agencies. The Committee invited written submissions by 12 April 2013.

The written and oral evidence received in this inquiry is on the Committee's website. A report was agreed and was published on 28 October. The Government response is expected early in 2014.

Climate: public understanding and its policy implications

On 28 February 2013 the Committee announced an inquiry: Climate: public understanding and its policy implications. The Committee invited written submissions by 22 April 2013.

On Wednesday 9 October the Committee took evidence from Rt Hon the Lord Deben, Chairman, and David Kennedy, Chief Executive, Committee on Climate Change; Rt Hon David Willetts MP, Minister of State for Universities and Science, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills; Rt Hon Gregory Barker MP, Minister of State for Climate Change, Department of Energy and Climate Change, Professor David MacKay, Chief Scientific Advisor, and David Warrilow, Head of Science, Department of Energy and Climate Change

On Wednesday 6 November the Committee took evidence from Professor Sir Mark Walport, Chief Scientific Adviser to HM Government and Head of the Government Office for Science.

Pre-appointment hearing for Chair of Natural Environment Research Council

On Monday 21 October the Committee took evidence from Sir Anthony Cleaver, Chair-elect of the Natural Environment Research Council.

The written and oral evidence received in this inquiry is on the Committee's website. A report was agreed and was published on 23 October.

Government Horizon Scanning

On Wednesday 23 October the Committee took evidence from Alun Huw Williams, Principal, SAMI Consulting, Doug McKay, Vice President, International Organisations, Shell International, and Natalie Day, Head of Policy, Oxford Martin School, University of Oxford; Dr Martyn Thomas, Royal Academy of Engineering, Jonathan Cowie, former Head, Science Policy, Institute of Biology, and Professor Ann Buchanan, Academy of Social Sciences.

On Wednesday 27 November the Committee took evidence from Fiona Lickorish, Head, Institute for Environment, Health, Risks and Futures, Cranfield University, Jessica Bland, Technology Futures Analyst, Nesta, and Marcus Morrell, Senior Futures Analyst, Arup; Professor Burkhard Schafer, Professor of Computational Legal Theory, Edinburgh School of Law, Professor Paul Newman, Mobile Robotics Group, University of Oxford, Nick Reed, Intelligent Transport Systems UK, and Dr Graeme Smith, Business Manager, Connected Services, Control and Electronics, Ricardo UK Ltd

On Wednesday 4 December the Committee took evidence from Sir Mark Walport, Government Chief Scientific Adviser, and Jon Day, Chair, Horizon Scanning Oversight Group, Cabinet Office

The written and oral evidence received in this inquiry is on the Committee's website. A Report is being prepared.

Women in STEM careers

On Wednesday 16 October the Committee took evidence from Dr Bryn Jones, Visiting Fellow, School of Physics, University of Bristol, Jenny Marsden, Principal Physicist, Hull and East Yorkshire NHS Trust, and Dr Nicola Patron, Head, Synthetic Biology, Sainsbury Laboratory.

On Wednesday 30 October the Committee took evidence from Dr June McCombie, former Chair of IOP Project, Juno Panel, Institute of Physics, Sarah Dickinson, Manager, Athena SWAN Charter, Equality Challenge Unit, Professor Dame Julia Higgins, Chair of Diversity Programme, Royal Society, and Dr Pia Ostergaard, Senior Fellowship Advisor, Daphne Jackson Trust; Professor Uta Frith, Emeritus Professor of Cognitive Development, University College London, representing Russell Group, Professor Jane Powell, Deputy Warden, Goldsmith's, University of London, representing 1994 Group, and Clem Herman, Senior Lecturer, Computing and Communications, Open University.

On Monday 4 November the Committee took evidence from Dr Lesley Thompson, Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (representing the Research Councils UK), and David Sweeney, Director, Research, Innovation and Skills, Higher Education Funding Council for England.

On Monday 18 November the Committee took evidence from Rt Hon David Willetts MP, Minister of State for Universities and Science, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

The written and oral evidence received in this inquiry is on the Committee's website. A report is being prepared.

GO Science Annual Review 2012-13

The oral evidence received in this inquiry is on the Committee's website.

Antimicrobial resistance

On Wednesday 18 December the Committee took evidence from Dr Pat Goodwin, Society of Biology, Professor Laura Piddock, British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy, Professor John Threlfall, Society for Applied Microbiology, and Professor Sharon Peacock, Cambridge Infectious Diseases Initiative, University of Cambridge.

The written and oral evidence received in this inquiry is on the Committee's website.

REPORTS

Clinical trials

On 17 September 2013, the Committee published its Third Report of Session 2013-14, *Clinical trials*, HC 104.

Pre-appointment hearing with the Government's preferred candidate for Chair of the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)

On 23 October 2013, the Committee published its Fifth Report of Session 2013-14, *Pre-appointment hearing with the Government's preferred candidate for Chair of the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)*, HC 702.

Work of the European and UK Space Agencies

On 28 October 2013, the Committee published its Fourth Report of Session 2013-14, *Work of the European and UK Space Agencies*, HC 253.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

Government Response to the Committee's report 'Water quality: priority substances', the Committee's First Report of Session 2013-14

On 12 September 2013 the Committee published the Government Response to the Committee's report on Water quality: priority substances.

Health Research Authority Response to the Committee's report 'Clinical trials', the Committee's Third Report of Session 2013-14

On 29 October 2013 the Committee published the Health Research Authority Response to the Committee's report on Clinical trials.

Research Councils UK Response to the Committee's report 'Forensic science', the Committee's Second Report of Session 2013-14

On 26 November 2013 the Committee published the Research Councils UK Response to the Committee's report on Forensic science.

Medical Research Council Response to the Committee's report 'Clinical trials', the Committee's Third Report of Session 2013-14

On 5 December 2013 the Committee published the Medical Research Council Response to the Committee's report on Clinical trials.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information about the work of the Science and Technology Committee or its current inquiries can be obtained from the Clerk of the Committee, Stephen McGinness, or from the Senior Committee Assistant, Darren Hackett, on 020 7219 2792/2793

respectively; or to: The Clerk of the Committee, Science and Technology Committee, House of Commons, 7 Millbank, London SW1P 3JA. Enquiries can be e-mailed to scitechcom@parliament.uk. Anyone wishing to be included on the Committee's mailing list should contact the staff of the Committee. Anyone wishing to submit evidence to the Committee is strongly recommended to obtain a copy of the guidance note first at www.parliament.uk/commons/selcom/witguide.htm. The Committee has a website, www.parliament.uk/science, where all recent publications, terms of reference for all inquiries and press notices are available.



HOUSE OF COMMONS LIBRARY SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT SECTION

Scientists and other staff in the Science and Environment Section provide confidential, bespoke briefing to Members and their offices daily. They also provide support to Commons Select Committees, and produce longer notes and research papers which can be accessed on line at <http://www.parliament.uk/topics/topical-issues.htm>

Opposite are summaries of some recent briefings.

For further information contact:
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RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Water Bill (2nd Reading Briefing)

RP 13/67

Water resources are under significant pressure in parts of the UK and water supply constraints are predicted to spread in future. Future investment in the sector may place considerable upward pressure on water bills.

The Water Bill aims to deliver more resilient water supplies and lead to cheaper and more efficient management of water resources in the longer term. The provisions include:

- extending competition by enabling all non-household customers to choose their water and sewerage supplier and enabling more companies to provide water and sewerage services;
- a new flood insurance scheme for domestic properties; and
- a new duty for the regulator to focus on the long-term resilience of water supplies.

Water Bill: Committee Stage Report

RP 14/1

During Committee Stage a significant number of Government amendments were made to the Bill. Important amendments include clauses to introduce a flood insurance scheme for domestic properties and the creation of an independent consumer dispute resolution scheme.

CAP reform 2014-2020: EU Agreement and Implementation in the UK and in Ireland

RP 13/64

The Common Agricultural Policy reform for 2014-20 is in its final stages of EU negotiation and

overall agreement was reached on the main elements in June 2013. The main provisions will be implemented in January 2015. 2014 will be a transition year.

This paper sets out the reactions to the new reform package and emerging implementation decisions of the British Isles. It indicates where the key differences and common approaches are emerging and also considers the possible trajectory of future CAP reform.

The agreement allows Member States and their regions an unprecedented, and welcome, amount of flexibility in terms of how they implement the CAP provisions to allow them to tailor the policy to their particular agricultural needs. This means that the implementation of decisions taken within the UK and in Ireland have the potential to differ considerably, despite the intra-UK and international (UK/Irish) shared borders. The increasingly multi-national nature of food production, processing and retailing means that the differing approaches have the potential to impact upon the farming and wider agri-food industries, particularly within neighbouring jurisdictions. It is now commonplace for food to be produced in one region/EU Member State, be processed in another and then marketed or sold in many others.

Food Banks and Food Poverty

SN/SC/6657

Food banks ("foodbanks") provide food to people in acute need, often following referral by a health or social care professional, or other agency. In the UK, food banks are run by volunteer-based organisations, redistributing food donated by

consumers, retailers and the food industry. The largest network is co-ordinated by The Trussell Trust which has 400 food bank banks UK-wide. A Church Action on Poverty report (May 2013) estimated that over 500,000 people in the UK were reliant on food aid.

Food bank use has been increasing steadily since 2005. In the period April-September 2013, over 350,000 people received food from Trussell Trust food banks – triple the number helped in the same period in 2012. These figures have led the Trussell Trust to call for an inquiry into the causes of food poverty and the surge in food bank usage. A range of experts has also warned in the *British Medical Journal* (December 2013) that UK food poverty “has all the signs of a public health emergency that could go unrecognised until it is too late to take preventive action.” A new All Party Parliamentary Group on Hunger and Food Poverty (co-chaired by Rt Hon Frank Field MP and Laura Sandys MP) will now investigate “the root causes of hunger and food poverty” and the increase in British demand for food banks.

Marine Conservation Zones in England

SN/SC/6129

There are significant pressures on the marine environment around the UK. Networks of marine protected areas have been shown to be effective at protecting the marine environment and in some cases may deliver significant economic benefits.

Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ) are being introduced under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 to protect nationally important marine wildlife, habitats, geology and geomorphology. They will sit alongside other marine protected areas such as those designated under European law.

Controls on damaging activities may be required in some MCZ. As a result their designation may be controversial in some cases.

Carbon capture and storage

SN/SC/5086

Carbon capture and storage (CCS) is a potential way of ‘decarbonising’ electricity generation. As a form of ‘low-carbon’ generation under the current Energy Bill, CCS would allow the continued burning of fossil fuels. However, the ‘emissions performance standard’ introduced by the Bill also allows unabated gas to 2045; some feel this is not set low enough to incentivise CCS.

CCS generation is not yet proven on a large scale, and nor is storage long-term, despite a series of UK Government and EU incentives. In March 2013 Peterhead (Aberdeenshire) and the White Rose Project (Yorkshire) were named as the preferred bidders in the latest UK CCS Commercialisation Programme Competition.

Water bills in the south-west

SN/SC/5894

This provides information on water bills in the south-west, which are significantly higher than in other parts of England. It describes the Government’s solution to the problem: a payment allowing a £50 reduction of South West Water customer bills from April 2013.

Planning for onshore wind farms

SN/SC4370

This sets out issues to do with the planning process for onshore

wind development and proposals for reform. It applies only to England.

The planning process used to determine onshore wind development will depend on the size of the proposed development. Wind farms which have an output of over 50MW will go through the development consent process as set out in the Planning Act 2008 and will be determined by the Secretary of State. Wind farms under 50MW will be determined by the relevant local planning authority, under procedures set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. There are also some permitted development rights for small domestic wind turbines, where planning permission would not be required at all.

Planning policy for onshore wind is contained in a number of documents, principally the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework, the National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure and Planning practice guidance for renewable and low carbon energy. Local authorities will have policies on onshore wind development in any up-to-date local plan for a particular area.

ACTIVITIES

There has been a number of staff changes in SES. Patsy Richards has left to become Head of Customer Services in the Members’ Library, Sarah Hartwell-Naguib has replaced Patsy as the new Head of Section. Oliver Bennett is leaving as he is going to Myanmar (Burma) to help set up the Myanmar Parliament Library and Research Department. Sandy Gill and Chris Watson have also left. We wish them all the best and thank them all for their hard work.

Our Food and Agriculture specialist went on a study trip to Brussels in October with staff from the EFRA Committee to discuss CAP reform, food labelling and animal health legislation with European Commission and Parliament officials (including the Library) and the Secretariat of the European Agriculture and Rural Development Committee (COM AGRI).

Our Food and Agriculture specialist spoke at the Parliament Talks Food outreach event in Bradford in October 2013 explaining how the Library works and what kind of work Parliament is doing on food issues and the enquiries we are getting in the Library. This was attended by members of the public as well as those from the food retail sector.

The sections twitter account (@commonsSES) has now been running for 3 months and has 245 followers. The aim is to engage with Members and the science community. We tweet on parliamentary business and interesting news updates relating to our subject areas.

Second Joint Research Paper

On 20 November 2013 we published a standard note, CAP 2014-2020: EU Agreement and Implementation across the UK and in Ireland, prepared jointly with the parliamentary/assembly research services in the devolved administrations and in Ireland (the Oireachtas Library and Research Service). This note was the second research briefing to be published on the Internet by our Irish equivalents, largely prompted by the fact that it is usual practice for the other administrations to publish such work.



PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (POST)

RECENT POST PUBLICATIONS

Antibiotic Resistance in the Environment

October 2013

POSTnote 446

Disease causing bacteria are becoming increasingly resistant to antibiotic drug treatment. Diseases once controlled by antibiotics are re-emerging as serious risks to human health. This outlines the hazards posed by resistant bacteria, the sources of resistance in the environment and measures that may reduce these risks globally.

Negative Emissions Technologies

October 2013

POSTnote 447

If emissions of greenhouse gases are not sufficiently mitigated, it may become necessary artificially to accelerate the rate at which they are removed from the atmosphere in order to restrict global warming. This provides an overview of technologies that could remove atmospheric CO₂ and summarises the environmental, social and economic issues they raise.

Urban Green Infrastructure

November 2013

POSTnote 448

Urban green infrastructure is a network of green spaces, water and other natural features within urban areas. A green infrastructure uses natural processes to deliver multiple functions, such as reducing the risk of flooding and cooling high urban temperatures. This summarises research evidence of the effectiveness of green infrastructure, and challenges to its implementation.

Minimising the Harms of Khat

November 2013

POSTnote 449

The Government has decided to control the herbal stimulant khat as a Class C drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. Earlier this year, the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) found insufficient evidence to justify a ban. This summarises the evidence on the impact of khat on health and possible social harms in the UK and comparable international experiences of legislation and control.

Special Educational Needs

December 2013

POSTnote 450

In 2013, one in five pupils in England were identified as having special educational needs (SEN). The Children and Families Bill will reform the provision available for these. This summarises the nature and diversity of SEN and discusses the support and outcomes for affected children and their families.

Epigenetics and Health

December 2013

POSTnote 451

Epigenetics refers to factors that regulate the activity of genes. These can contribute to a host of human diseases from cancer to mental illness and knowledge of epigenetics may help to reduce disease risk in ageing populations. This examines how recent advances in this field can be used to develop new treatments, inform public health policy, and contribute to the UK economy.

CURRENT WORK

Biological Sciences – HIV Prevention in the UK, Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility, Greenhouse Gas Emissions from livestock, Telehealth and Telecare, Transparency of Clinical Data, Surveillance of Infectious Disease, Electronic Cigarettes and Stroke.

Environment and Energy – Intermittent Electricity Generation, Demand-Side response, New Nuclear Power Technologies – update, Short lived Climate Pollutants and Climate Change Feedbacks.

Physical sciences and IT – Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and Big Data.

Social Sciences – Social media and big data.

CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

Energy Storage Breakfast

On 8 October POST hosted a breakfast briefing on Energy Storage, supported by the Research Council-funded Energy Storage Research Network. This was POST's first trial of a breakfast briefing and was attended by 4 MPs and 6 peers. The experts introduced three areas for open discussion and questions. The event was chaired by Alan Whitehead MP, with speeches from Keith Maclean, Policy and Research Director, SSE; Professor Richard Williams, University of Birmingham; Gareth Evans, Head of Engineering, Ofgem; Toby Peters, COO, Highview Power Storage; Jonathon Radcliffe, Centre for Low Carbon Futures; Craig Lucas, Head of Engineering, DECC.

Climate Science: The Fifth IPCC Assessment Report

On 15 October, POST hosted a seminar in conjunction with the Royal Society and the All Party Parliamentary Group on Climate Change on the first of new IPCC reports on the scientific evidence for climate change. This provided MPs, Peers and parliamentary staff the opportunity to debate the report with experts. It was chaired by Lord Oxburgh and presentations were made by: Professor John Pethica FRS, vice-president of the Royal Society, Professor John Mitchell FRS, University of Reading, Professor Keith Shine FRS, University of Reading, Professor Corinne Le Quéré,

Director of the Tyndall Centre, Professor Sir Brian Hoskins FRS, Director of the Grantham Institute, Professor Tim Palmer FRS, University of Oxford and Professor Stephen Belcher, Head of the Met Office Hadley Centre.

Allergy

On 16 October, POST hosted a seminar in conjunction with the All Party Parliamentary Group for Allergy on trends in the prevalence of allergic disease and the underlying causes, provision of clinical allergy services and commented on progress made since the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee's report on the topic in 2007. This provided MPs, Peers and parliamentary staff the opportunity to debate the issues with experts. It was chaired by Baroness Finlay of Llandaff, Member of the House of Lords and Vice-Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Allergy, Chair, Lords Science & Technology Sub-Committee on Allergy (2006-07). Presentations were made by: Dr Adam Fox, Consultant Paediatric Allergist, Guys' & St Thomas' Hospitals, Dr Matthew Doyle, General Practitioner, Cambridge, and Ruth Holroyd.

Celebrating the CERN Collider

On 11 November, POST hosted a reception in collaboration with the Science Museum, celebrating the launch of Collider, a major touring exhibition on the Large Hadron Collider at CERN. This provided MPs, Peers and parliamentary staff the opportunity to meet leading figures including Nobel Prize winner Professor Peter Higgs and Dr Steve Myers, CERN's Director of Accelerators and Technology. Guests also had an opportunity to see a preview of the Science Museum's exhibition and hear from the curators about the challenges of recreating the world's greatest experiment for visitors. They were invited to explore and interact with exhibits provided by some of the UK's leading particle physics groups whilst hearing from them about their latest research. Presentations were made by: Adam Afriyie MP, Chair of the POST Board, Ian Blatchford, Director of the Science Museum Group, Dr Steve Myers OBE, CERN's Director of Accelerators and Technology, Alison Boyle and Harry Cliff, exhibition curators and Dr Andrew Taylor, Executive Director of the Science and Technology Facilities Council National Laboratories.

Future of the Census

On 25 November, POST hosted a meeting in conjunction with the House of Commons Library, the Royal Statistical Society, the All Party Parliamentary Group on Statistics and the Office for National Statistics on proposed changes to the census. This provided an overview of the options presented in the consultation and an opportunity to discuss the issues with experts. The meeting was chaired by Andrew Miller MP, Chair of the HoC Science and Technology Committee. Presentations were made by Pete Benton, Office for National Statistics, Professor David Martin Professor of Geography at Southampton University, Deputy Director of the Economic and Social Research Council UK Data Service, Professor Chris Skinner Professor of Statistics and Head of Statistics Department, London School of Economics and Piers Elias Demography and Modelling Officer, Tees Valley Unlimited and co-Chair of the Local Authority Population Statistics Liaison Group.

STAFF, FELLOWS AND INTERNS AT POST

Fellows

Danny Heptinstall, University of Aberdeen, British Ecological Society
Jodie Symington, University of Newcastle, Institution of Chemical Engineers

Ben Taylor, Kings College London, Arts and Humanities Research Council

James Livingstone, University of Edinburgh, Arts and Humanities Research Council

Gabrielle Samuel, Brunel University, Wellcome Trust Ethics and Society Programme

David Ross, University of Edinburgh, Institute of Physics

Harry Holkham, University of Leicester, Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council

Faye Smith, University of York, British Psychological Society

Yvonne Collins, University of Cambridge, Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council

Staff

Dr Caroline Kenny, POST Social Science adviser, will join POST on 26 February 2014 from the Institute of Education at the University of London.

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

On 20-22 November, Lydia Harriss attended a Technology Assessment Practitioners Training Workshop in Lithuania. Organised by the EU-funded PACITA project (Parliaments and Civil Society in Technology Assessment), the workshop brought together science policy advisers from parliaments and other institutions across Europe to share best practice.

On 18 and 19 November, POST hosted a two day workshop on agricultural biotechnology for a delegation of MPs from the Ugandan Parliament Science and Technology Committee. The delegation had discussions with academics, representatives of Defra and DfID and Select Committee staff to inform scrutiny of the implementation of Uganda's National Biotechnology and Biosafety Bill. The delegation attended a lunch with MPs and Peers, hosted by the CPA and a meeting of the APPG on Agriculture and Food for Development.

On 9-11 December, Aaron Goater attended a planning meeting in Nairobi, Kenya for a capacity building programme. The three year 'SECURE Health' programme, awarded funding from the Department for International Development in November 2013, will strengthen capacity to use evidence in health policy making in Kenya and Malawi. It involves academic and non-governmental organisations: African Institute for Development Policy; East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community; FHI 360; Kenyan Consortium for National Health Research (CNHR); Malawian RSC College of Medicine. POST will collaborate with these organisations and host and train 1-2 fellows per year from the Kenyan and Malawian parliaments.