



Science Council Policy Forum Meeting Notes

Date; 22 July 2020

Location: Zoom

Host: Jane Banks, External Relationship Manager, Science Council

Present: Laura Marshall (RSB), Liz Bentley(RMetS), Joseph Lewis (IES), Arthur Nicholas (IST), Flo Bullough (GeolSoc), Robert Massey (RAS), Samantha McCormack (ASPIh), Sean Edmunds (IPEM), Megan O'Donnell (GeolSoc), Brian Wagenbach, (SC), Bev MacKenzie (IMarEST), Sarah Garry (BSSS), Rachel Stonehouse (IOM3)

Apologies; Kym Bryan (CPod), Kathryn Scott, (BPS), Frances Evans (ASE), Tracy Cochrane (SDC), Lynn Cooper, (IOW), Sarah Beacock (NI), Tanya Sheridan (RSC)

Welcome and Introductions

Those present introduced themselves and shared some of the policy areas their respective organisations are currently engaged in. Prior to the meeting Jane reached out to invite participants to send an email with the 3 main policy priority areas for participating organisations. **Action:** (If you have not done this please send priorities through to me so that these may be collated and circulated.)

1. British Society of Soil Science (BSSS)

Climate Change, Biodiversity relating to growing food, education.

2. Royal Society of Biology (RSB)

2020 and 2021 Policy has been created looking specifically at Environmental Policy, Bioscience Professionals at UKRI, Research Culture and Research Funding, ED & I, Bio Security.

RSB science policy priorities can be found [here](#), and education priorities [here](#)

3. Institute of Marine Engineering Science and Technology (IMarEST)

Climate, UN Ocean Decade launching 2021, Shipping, Deep Sea mining, 200,000 seafarers stuck at sea (mental health and wellbeing)

An interesting debate for Imarest and this group will be in relation to the desire to go "Big and Bold" in relation to a specific piece of policy and or take a position that is more "sitting on the fence". The meeting agreed that this would be a good topic for a future meeting.

Action: point to be tabled at a future meeting

4. Royal Meteorological Society (RMS)

Various committees support the work of the RMS.

Policy areas include, Climate Change and Climate Science, there is an appetite to work collaboratively, citing an example of the coming together of a group of multidisciplinary orgs, Arts, Science, Engineering ahead of the Paris summit. Could something similar be achieved for COP 26?

Equally something similar but different achieved at an international level with a number of met orgs from across the globe issuing a statement that filled the side of an A4. This statement is still being pulled out and referenced 5 years later.

5G Network and the impact of weather forecasting

EDI Joint Statement

5. The Geological Society (GEOLSOC)

Tend to be reactive, RAD Waste, Shale Gas, decarbonisation, use of minerals, immigration, skills, infrastructure..

What was useful formerly at the Science Council was to have a sector wide response.

Seabed mining for example is of interest to IMAREST and GeoSoc. At this stage Geo Soc have had high level internal meetings, however, have yet to create a policy statement around this issue.

6. Institute of Science and Technology (IST)

Organisational priorities include, Technicians across disciplines, career pathways and lifelong learning.

7. Institute of Environmental Sciences (IES)

Environmental Policy is represented in many disciplines of science. – this reflects the membership. COVID Response and Recovery, creating sustainable fair communities going forward. Env, Agri, Fisheries Bill – the need for some science to inform the targets in this regard. Communicating science in such a way as to offer advice and support to policy formation. Proactively trying to change policy.

7. Royal Astronomical Society (RAS)

RAS have a policy group with 50 of their members

Interests include Geophysics, Open Access (OUP are RAS publishers) EDI, satellite megaconstellations (questions tabled last week in parliament for example), workforce

8. Association for Simulated Practice in Healthcare (ASpiH)

ASpiH are a small organisation run with volunteer support. Focus has been on PPE, COVID, & NHS Nightingale

9. Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining. (IOM3)

Supporting the positive role of professionals in materials, minerals and mining in the transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient society.

For info, IOM3 has signed the [Pledge to Net Zero](#). It's important to 'walk the talk'. They have begun to put measures in place to reduce emissions, with further plans that will include upgrading air conditioning units to a more energy efficient system, reducing food waste and implementing a sustainable events management

approach. <https://www.iom3.org/news/2020/jun/05/iom3-commits-sciencebased-targets-achieve-net-zero>

10. Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine (IPEM)

-workforce shortages, investment in equipment and investment in people

11. Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) – RSC were not able to attend but sent through these links for your reference

We've got quite a few policy topics of interest at the RSC, with sustainability, discovery and talent our headlines. This document https://www.rsc.org/globalassets/policypriorities_summary.pdf summarises our 2020 policy priorities and a member survey that informed them. We have had to think about some other things as a result of COVID eg. Impact of lengthy school closures this academic year on curriculum and assessments for 2020-21.

12. Nuclear Institute (NI)

NI were not able to attend but sent through their priorities, see below;

- 1 Nuclear for Net Zero – a range of articles/activities that will lead up to COP 26 (now postponed by a year of course)
- 2 Nuclear Sector Deal – providing events that help companies with meeting the targets for cost reduction, innovation and diversity
- 3 Skills for nuclear – providing services to assist in raising skills levels and ensuring transfer of knowledge between generations

Organisational Response to COVID-19

Notable wins/positives as a result of COVID include;-

online conferences, AGM's, supporting members with regard to health and wellbeing, survey's delivered to understand how members are doing and trying to understand their needs; Dedicated email set up for the use for those enquiring about professional registration; attendance at conferences in Europe and beyond as these are now accessible on line; Online working has been an equaliser; Education and outreach has moved online; Involvement with green recovery plans; working out how to support the new normal; openness and opportunities for collaboration; members actively engaging.

RSB have a monthly bulletin that goes out to 27,000 readers. Please email Laura if you would like to contribute content for this bulletin.

Notable down sides/negatives; Female members impacted more than men; Childcare constraints often marginalise women more than men; There has been a notable absence of women contribution to academic journals over the preceding months since lockdown; cancellation of field trips both indoor and outdoor; funding for lab based research in hiatus and unknown if this will be backfilled or lost completely; uncertainty; an expectation that there will naturally be an impact of research output; an expected impact on Higher Education Institutes and therefore research output more broadly.

Brian shared an RSC publication in the chat, RSC Action in Scientific Publishing which can be found **here**; <https://www.rsc.org/new-perspectives/talent/framework-for-action/> It's the Framework for Action in Scientific Publishing, Improving inclusion and diversity in the chemical sciences, which can be used by other publishers to be more inclusive.

Sustainability in Practise and Policy

Laura Marshall – RSB - informed the meeting that RSB are considering their environmental footprint and ways that they as an organisation may conduct themselves so as to be more sustainable in the future.

Joseph Lewis - IES has mapped the carbon footprint as an organisation. Joseph thought that Dan Ward at IES may be willing to present to this group a model that can be used for such purpose. The group was supportive of this idea. **Action: Jane to follow up with Joseph and Dan in this regard.**

Collaboration across the Science Council Membership

Members are delivering policy activity in silos currently and the meeting agreed that coming together to grow the communication among the community such that the weight of the policy communication from the collective voice in science grows and the therefore growth in influence is achieved. Suggestions were for joint activity, joint statements, joint consultation responses where appropriate. Those who have specific expertise and or understanding being willing to lead on an area was welcomed by the group.

Existing Policy Forums

RAeng Policy forum – discussing ethics and autonomy, Alan Turning DataSkills Network, ENEI, EDIS, UKRI COVID19 Forum, Immigration Policy Advisory Forum - were just some of the named forums and networks that this community subscribe and or attend. It would be useful to establish going forward how we are able to maximise representation on these forums and how to usefully feed this in to the collective.

R & D Spending Review – consultation closes 24th Sept – the community would like to put forward a collective response. Jane to email everyone outside of this meeting to establish the way forward for this activity

Topics of collective interest;

It was agreed that the first discussion going forward would be to establish which subject areas have common ground across the membership and too which more niche areas might there be appetite for sub groups to come together with subject expert leads facilitating this process in order to achieve a collective response. Some Initial areas identified included, Blue Climate Change, COP 26, Spending Review, investing in the science workforce, immigration, Net Zero.

Shared Contact details; Those present at the meeting indicated their agreement in the chat box to share their contact details with the Policy Forum members.

Date for the next meeting; Jane will doodle poll for a date in mid- September – 14, 15th or 16th Sept.

Jane Banks
27 July 2020