
News

Top Story

UK political parties urged to include green pledges in election manifestos

Campaigners including National Trust and Greenpeace ask politicians to demonstrate their commitment to the environment.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/sep/01/election-manifestos-greener-britain-national-trust-greenpeace>

Liberal Democrats seek to ban 'unabated' coal power

Measure will form the centrepiece of party's commitment on the environment in 2015 general election manifesto

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/sep/01/lib-dems-ban-unabated-coal-power>

Health and Biomedicine

Allow use of electronic cigarettes to assess risk

Monitoring the outcomes of incentivized e-cigarette use, not endless research, will be the key to sensible regulation, says Daniel Sarewitz.

<http://www.nature.com/news/allow-use-of-electronic-cigarettes-to-assess-risk-1.15766>

Let's stop trying to cure cancer, says cancer professor

Professor Mel Greaves claims that most cancers cannot be cured and experts should look at ways of preventing and managing the disease instead

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/science-news/11062255/Lets-stop-trying-to-cure-cancer-says-cancer-professor.html>

Obesity: a certain and avoidable cause of cancer

[http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(14\)61172-7/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(14)61172-7/fulltext)

Ebola: a failure of international collective action

[http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(14\)61377-5/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(14)61377-5/fulltext)

Mitochondrial Donation - One-off evidence session

Following public consultations, an ethical review by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, and scientific reviews by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, the Government has decided to proceed with putting regulations before Parliament for the introduction of mitochondrial donation. The Science and Technology Committee will hold a one-off evidence session to consider the science of mitochondrial donation on Wednesday 22 October when they will hear from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health, Jane Ellison, and experts in the field.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/science-and-technology-committee/news/140929-mitochondrial-donation/>

Mitochondrial Donation - Commons Library Standard Note

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/research/briefing-papers/SN06833/mitochondrial-donation>

A new opium pipe

Narcotic drugs could soon be manufactured by yeast

<http://www.economist.com/news/science-and-technology/21614093-narcotic-drugs-could-soon-be-manufactured-yeast-new-opium-pipe>

Food and Drink

New rules to serve up better food for NHS patients and staff

The NHS will have mandatory food standards and hospitals will be ranked on food quality as part of a wide-ranging drive to raise standards of hospital food across the country.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-rules-to-serve-up-better-food-for-nhs-patients-and-staff>

Greenhouse gas fear over increased levels of meat eating

Global consumption of meat needs to fall - to ensure future demand for food can be met and to help protect the environment - a study says.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-29007758>

Can eating meat be eco-friendly?

<http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-28858289>

Agriculture and Fishery

New study charts the global invasion of crop pests

Many of the world's most important crop-producing countries will be fully saturated with pests by the middle of the century if current trends continue, according to a BBSRC-funded study led by the University of Exeter.

<http://bbsrc.ac.uk/news/food-security/2014/140828-pr-study-charts-invasion-of-crop-pests.aspx>

Changes to moorland classification announced

Changes to how certain types of land will be categorised for payment under the next round of Pillar One of the Common Agricultural Policy have been announced by Deputy Minister for Agriculture Rebecca Evans.

<http://wales.gov.uk/newsroom/environmentandcountryside/2014/140827moorland/?lang=en>

Reforming and managing marine fisheries for a prosperous fishing industry and a healthy marine environment

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/reforming-and-managing-marine-fisheries-for-a-prosperous-fishing-industry-and-a-healthy-marine-environment>

Forestry

Brazil considers transgenic trees

Genetically modified eucalyptus could be a global test case.

<http://www.nature.com/news/brazil-considers-transgenic-trees-1.15769>

Environment and Ecology

Ecotourism rise hits whales

Desire to observe whales and dolphins up close is affecting animals' behaviour.

<http://www.nature.com/news/ecotourism-rise-hits-whales-1.15770>

Badger cull legal challenge in Somerset and Gloucestershire fails

A High Court bid to halt this year's badger culling, which will take place without independent monitoring, has failed.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-28982297>

Changes in farming and climate hurting British moths

Britain's moths are feeling the pinch – threatened on one side by climate change and on the other by habitat loss and harmful farming methods.

<http://planetearth.nerc.ac.uk/news/story.aspx?id=1756>

Water voles return to every county in England

Introduction of water voles to Cornwall sees them return to the every county in England for the first time since 1989.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/water-voles-return-to-every-county-in-england>

Climate and Energy

People power

Earth systems: Model human adaptation to climate change

We can no longer ignore feedbacks between global warming and how people respond, say Paul I. Palmer and Matthew J. Smith.

<http://www.nature.com/news/earth-systems-model-human-adaptation-to-climate-change-1.15756> and

<http://www.nature.com/news/people-power-1.15765>

Let's talk about the weather to revive climate debate

Explaining how climate change is affecting today's weather will be tricky, but it might bring home to the public the everyday reality of global warming

<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg22329841.500-lets-talk-about-the-weather-to-revive-climate-debate.html>

Water and Air

Abandoned landfills are polluting UK rivers

Abandoned landfill sites throughout the UK routinely leach polluting chemicals into rivers, say scientists.

<http://planetearth.nerc.ac.uk/news/story.aspx?id=1754>

Government and Parliament

Diplomatic service

Government science advisers are unlikely to be specialists on the subject of a crisis, but they are key to bringing together relevant experts and disseminating the information clearly and accurately.

<http://www.nature.com/news/diplomatic-service-1.15764>

Principles and politics of scientific advice

This week, scientists, policymakers and experts from more than forty-five countries assemble in Auckland, for the largest-ever summit on scientific advice. Sir Peter Gluckman, chief science advisor of New Zealand and convenor of the meeting, previews the topics that will be discussed.

<http://www.theguardian.com/science/political-science/2014/aug/26/principles-politics-scientific-advice>

The EU needs good science policy. But does that mean it needs a Chief Scientific Adviser?

The new head of the EU Commission is being challenged over whether to continue with the post of EU Chief Scientific Adviser. Doug Parr explains why

<http://www.theguardian.com/science/political-science/2014/aug/29/the-eu-needs-science-policy-but-does-that-mean-it-needs-a-chief-scientific-adviser>

A rough guide to science advice

As scientists and policymakers gather in Auckland for a global summit on scientific advice, what lessons can we identify that apply across diverse national systems?

<http://www.theguardian.com/science/political-science/2014/aug/27/a-rough-guide-to-science-advice>

Ambassadors for evidence

The need for scientists and policymakers to work together around the world has never been greater. Sir Mark Walport, the UK government's chief scientific adviser, sets out his agenda for science diplomacy

<http://www.theguardian.com/science/political-science/2014/aug/27/ambassadors-for-evidence-scientific-advice-science-policy>

Valuing the public in science advice

We need a strong scientific voice in policy and decision-making, but there is also a crucial role for the public

<http://www.theguardian.com/science/political-science/2014/aug/28/valuing-public-in-science-advice>

Government science advice: where are the honest brokers?

Scientific and political leaders need to focus more attention on the integrity of advisory processes, rather than taking sides in the political battles of the day

<http://www.theguardian.com/science/political-science/2014/aug/26/government-science-advice-honest-brokers>

University Policy and Research Funding Policy

Liam Byrne: 'we need to put higher education at centre stage of policy'

From new technical universities to a postgraduate loan, Claire Shaw talks to shadow universities minister about Labour's plan for the sector

<http://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2014/aug/28/liam-byrne-higher-education-policy-reforms>

and <http://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2014/aug/28/labour-warns-uk-lose-global-science-lead-research-investment>

Charities more generous than MRC in funding studentships

£100,000 PhD funding from the Macular Society and Fight for Sight outstrip offers via MRC doctoral training partnerships

<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/charities-more-generous-than-mrc-in-funding-studentships/2015401.article>

Dame Ann Dowling makes a case for 'use-inspired' research

First female president of the Royal Academy of Engineers hopes to change UK's 'sniffiness' about applied research

<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/dame-ann-dowling-makes-a-case-for-use-inspired-research/2015350.article>

Business and Industry

A new green wave

A few pioneering businesses are developing "sustainability policies" worthy of the name

<http://www.economist.com/news/business/21614152-few-pioneering-businesses-are-developing-sustainability-policies-worthy-name-new>

Other News

School practical science - Evidence session

The purpose of this evidence session is to explore the alternative approaches to assessing practical science. The evidence session will draw out the conclusions from earlier round table discussions and their relevance to Ofqual's current solution.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/science-and-technology-committee/news/140901-school-practical-science/>

Fishing for a brighter future

As children return to the classroom this week, the Environment Agency is working with the Angling Trust to encourage schools to promote fishing to pupils.

Fishing has proven health, social and educational benefits. It can help pupils improve personal skills such as communication, concentration, discipline, and can even reduce crime and truancy.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fishing-for-a-brighter-future>

People

Special meeting of the European Council

The European Council elected today its new President, Donald Tusk, Prime Minister of Poland, and appointed Federica Mogherini, the Italian foreign minister, as High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

<http://european-council.europa.eu/special-meeting-of-the-european-council-30-8?lang=en>

Open Consultations

see our [website](#)

Air quality: Committee seeks your views on Mayor's submission

The Mayor's office has sent the Committee a written submission in advance of the evidence session with Boris Johnson, on Wednesday 10 September.

Closing date 9 September 2014

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/environmental-audit-committee/news/boris-evidence/>

Events

see our [website](#)

The Future of Regulation and Openness in UK Animal Research

11 September 2014, London

Join this Westminster Briefing event to understand what the Home Office plans for animal research regulation are, including the Section 24 review. In the afternoon you will hear about the sector's Concordat on Openness in Animal Research.

- Norman Baker MP, Home Office Minister (keynote)
- Professor Maggie Dallman, Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences & Professor of Immunology, Imperial College London
- Ailsa Jackson, Associate Director, Toxicology Study Direction, Covance Laboratories
- Judy MacArthur Clark, Head, Animals in Science Regulation Unit, Home Office
- Wendy Jarrett, Chief Executive, Understanding Animal Research
- Fiona Fox, Chief Executive, Science Media Centre
- Sam Wood, Senior Media Relations Manager - Faculty of Medical Sciences, Newcastle University
- Jenny Gimpel, PR Manager - Health, King's College London
- Professor Nic Wells, Chair Animal Science Group, Society of Biology & Professor of Translational Medicine RVC (Chair)

Westminster Briefing is able to offer a 15% discount to Society of Biology members, which is accessible by using a discount code at the time of booking (SocBio1).

<http://www.westminster-briefing.com/forthcoming-events/event-detail17000/newsarticle/the-future-of-regulation-and-openness-in-uk-animal-research/>

Biotech on the Farm: Food for Thought?

30 September 2014, British Library, London

A panel chaired by Catherine de Lange (New Scientist) with Professor Helen Sang (Roslin Institute, Edinburgh), Vicki Hird (Friends of the Earth) and Professor Richard Tiffin (University of Reading) will provide a variety of perspectives on issues concerning the future of meat production and consumption.

The issue of meat production and its environmental impact is currently receiving a lot of attention, not just from academics and politicians, but also from the mainstream media and NGOs. During the debate, we hope to cover the following questions:

- * Do biotechnologies like genetically-modified livestock or "stem cell burgers" have a role to play in feeding our growing appetite for meat?
- * How will we know that these biotechnologies are safe and will we ever be happy to eat food produced in this way?
- * What can we do to reduce the environmental impacts of meat production?
- * Should we just be eating less meat?

<http://www.bl.uk/whatson/events/event165668.html>

Biology: Changing the World events

10 October, Manchester; 17 October, London

<<http://www.societyofbiology.org/bcw>>.

We're hosting a reception for the launch of our mobile app and website at Manchester Museum on Friday 10th October, 6pm - 9pm. The evening will feature talks about the project, the announcement of the commemorative plaques to be installed and a focus on some of the many inspirational scientists local to the area. This will be followed by a wine reception and a chance to explore the museum.

A week later, on Friday 17th October, we're hosting a 'How will biology change the world' debate, 6pm - 9pm at Charles Darwin House. We have speakers from neurotechnology, personalised medicines, biofuels and food security ready to convince you that their area of biology is the one to change the world in which we live. Each speaker will give an introductory talk on their subject, followed by a panel discussion and questions from the floor. A canapé and wine reception will follow with the opportunity to vote for the area you think will make the biggest difference in the future.

https://www.societyofbiology.org/events?event_id=569
and https://societyofbiology.org/events?event_id=570

And Finally....

Plants boost office productivity by 15 per cent

Spartan, uncluttered offices do not make workers more productive, and bosses should invest in plants to boost staff output, a new study has suggested

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/science-news/11066374/Plants-boost-office-productivity-by-15-per-cent.html>

Recommend a member

Are you a Society member with a friend or colleague who would benefit from Society membership? Whether it's a student studying for a bioscience qualification, a graduate starting out on their career, or someone who would qualify for Membership or Fellowship, please email their details and we'll send a personal invitation.

This weekly science policy newsletter and its archive can be found at

<https://www.societyofbiology.org/policy/policy-resources/policy-newsletter>

To **subscribe** to this or other newsletters:

Sign in at <https://mysociety.societyofbiology.org/mysociety> or

register at <https://mysociety.societyofbiology.org/mysociety/register>.

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