

THE PARLIAMENTARY AND SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

AN ASSOCIATE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

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PRESS RELEASE: 14 July 2005

A meeting of the Committee was held on Monday, 13 July 2005 at 5.30pm in the Boothroyd Room, Portcullis House

“Plastic Waste – Toxic Rubbish or Strategic Resource?”

The invited speakers were as follows:-

Peter Davis, Director General, British Plastics Federation

“Plastic Waste – Toxic Rubbish or Strategic Resource”

Dr Roger Morton, Director, Axion Recycling

“Used Plastic – Resource for the Future”

Graham L Hearn, Wolfson Electrostatics, University of Southampton

“Techniques to Identify, Sort and Recycle Mixed Plastics Waste”

Lee Clayton, JFC Delleve Plastics Ltd

JFC Delleve Plastics Ltd

Plastic waste can be recycled and reused almost indefinitely or could be incinerated to provide up to 17% of our requirements for electrical power, thereby reducing damage to the environment and the need for landfill, which is much more stringently regulated and is filling up very rapidly. There is no currently no alternative on the planners horizon to a very greatly increased reliance on waste recycling, if we are not all going to be buried in rubbish. Peter Davis provided an overview of the range and importance of plastic waste as a strategic resource involved in many aspects of modern life and also as a source of electrical energy when mixed plastic and other combustible wastes are incinerated together. Roger Morton showed how the latest technologies for recovering plastics by recycling are commercially viable and deliver a much lower environmental impact and create much more economic value than disposing in landfill. He explained how the mis-application of regulatory and financial incentives can frustrate this objective and inhibit much-needed new private investment in this industry, which has the potential to compete effectively with that in China, if properly encouraged to do so. Graham Hearn described the results of recent research that underpins modern automated technologies for identifying the types of plastic found in waste and separating them into different waste streams prior to reprocessing. This enables high throughput automated recycling to be developed. Lee Clayton presented a personal view from his experience as manager of the UK's largest recycler of post-consumer waste plastic.

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A full report of the meeting will be published in Science in Parliament – Autumn Issue 2005