

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.



Dr Brian Iddon MP
Chairman,
Editorial Board
Science in Parliament

We welcome your comments on the first edition of SiP published in the new format. We have introduced colour on the inside pages to a limited extent, used a new font style and broken up the text by highlighting key phrases from the interesting articles.

Congratulations to the EPSRC on publication of the first edition of its attractive new quarterly magazine PIONEER. One of the headlines that caught my attention was 'New skin' for self heal planes. Aerospace engineers at Bristol University have developed a 'skin' for aeroplanes that mimics the healing processes found in nature should it suffer fatigue or be struck by an object such as a stone.

On 14 January, the Minister of State at DEFRA, the Rt Hon Jane Kennedy MP, made a Statement (*Official Record*, 486, column 14WS) about creation of the Food and Environment Research Agency, a new DEFRA executive agency, vested on 1 April 2009 by merger of the Central Science Laboratory, the Plant Health Division/Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate and the Plant Variety Rights Office and Seeds Division. We wish it well.

President Barack Obama has appointed one of the world's leading champions of climate change, Harvard physicist Prof John Holdren, to the post of Chief Scientist at the White House Office of Science and Technology. Prof Jane Lubchenco, a respected climatologist, is to head the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Nobel prizewinner Dr Steven Chu has been appointed to the Department of Energy. These appointments send a clear signal that science will no longer be sidelined in America as it was under George Bush.

Members of the IUSS Select Committee have been receiving reports about the difficulty of winning grants from the EPSRC. I have visited a number of universities to meet the scientists who are complaining; some of them have returned from the USA for the reason given above. Complaints about supporting fundamental research were also made at an Institute of Physics roundtable event held on 28 October last year. My concern is that British educated scientists are threatening to return to the USA now President Obama has been inaugurated.

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