

## Science Policy Newsletter – a weekly round-up of policy headlines and stories

23 April 2019

### News

#### Royal Society of Biology news

##### [RSB Fellows elected as Fellows of the Royal Society](#)

Three Royal Society of Biology Fellows have been elected as Fellows of the Royal Society.

#### Health and biomedicine

##### [Even moderate intake of red meat raises cancer risk, study finds](#)

People more or less keeping to NHS guidelines at higher risk than those who eat little

##### [Parkinson's results beyond researchers' wildest dreams](#)

##### [Low-protein diet could prevent breast cancer cells resisting treatment, study suggests](#)

Animal proteins have higher amount of leucine compared with plant proteins and switch could maintain usefulness of key hormone therapy drug

##### [Reservoirs of Antimicrobial Resistance](#)

##### [Discovery of genetic variants that protect against obesity and type 2 diabetes could lead to new weight loss medicines](#)

#### Food and drink

##### [The quest to save the banana from extinction](#)

## Agriculture and fisheries

### [Understanding how crop diseases and climate change interact is vital](#)

But such understanding is poor

## Environment and ecology

### ['Global deal for nature' fleshed out with specific conservation goals](#)

To maintain a liveable planet, governments need to protect 30% of Earth's land and sea and sustainably manage another 20%, say researchers.

### [Battle to save frogs from global killer disease](#)

Amphibians are under attack from multiple pathogens, say experts

### [UK government supports global action to fight illegal wildlife trade](#)

There has been progress in key areas in the six months since the UK government staged the largest-ever Illegal Wildlife Trade conference in October 2018 including the launch of education packs.

## Water and air

### [Environment Agency announces new green legacy for £2.6bn flood and coastal risk management programme.](#)

The Environment Agency has announced a set of new supplier arrangements and partnerships which will increase efficiency, value for money and the green legacy of its £2.6 billion capital investment programme.

### [The joys of muck diving](#)

The latest diving craze eschews the gaudy for the cryptic

## Climate and energy

### [Slow burn? The long road to a zero-emissions UK](#)

Extinction Rebellion protesters want a carbon-free UK by 2025. But can the financial and political hurdles be overcome?

### [EU set to cut carbon dioxide emission levels for new trucks by 30%](#)

European parliament expected to pass laws forcing industry to cut CO2 pollution by 2030

### [Britain breaks coal-free power record over Easter weekend](#)

### [Warming climate has grown UK economy 10% in past 50 years, but shrunk the poorest by a third, study says](#)

Big emitters like UK, Norway and Canada have seen economic benefits of warming temperatures since 1960, while nations like Sudan and India have suffered

### [New CO2 capture technology is not the magic bullet against climate change](#)

## Waste

### [Planet's ocean-plastics problem detailed in 60-year data set](#)

Researchers find evidence of rising plastic pollution in an accidental source: log books for plankton-monitoring instruments.

## Animal Research

### [Pig brains kept alive outside body for hours after death](#)

Revival of disembodied organs raises slew of ethical and legal questions about the nature of death and consciousness.

## Government and Parliament

### [Horizon Europe 'will aim to put citizens first'](#)

## Exiting the EU

### [Committee examines impact of Brexit on agricultural workforce in Scotland](#)

## Research funding and higher education policy

### ['Friendly' reviewers rate grant applications more highly](#)

Swiss funding agency banned applicant-nominated referees after a 2016 study found evidence of bias. Those results are now being made public.

## Schools education policy

### [Recommendations for Standardised Assessments](#)

Report by P1 teachers highlights areas for improvement.

## Open access and publication policy

### [Open access: 'no evidence' that zero embargo periods harm publishers](#)

Debate around embargo periods heightens as Plan S deadline draws near

### [Self-organising peer review for preprints – A future paradigm for scholarly publishing](#)

## Diversity and inclusion

### [Boys will be boys? How schools can be guilty of gender bias](#)

Too many teachers think boys can't do as well as girls, says the teacher on a mission to change attitudes

### [PhD student's book examines 'why black hair matters'](#)

Emma Dabiri's research uncovers the ways that our immediate reactions to people are still underpinned by the ideologies of 'scientific racism'

## Digital technologies

### [EU plans to invest €9.2 billion in key digital technologies](#)

The EU is set to invest billions in high-performance computing, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and digital skills after MEPs approved funding for these projects for 2021-27.

## Measuring impact

### [Universities are about social mobility. This needs to be recognised](#)

We are obsessed with academic performance, but universities should be recognised for their impact on people's life chances

## International news

### [Australian gene-editing rules adopt 'middle ground'](#)

Updated regulations allow scientists to use some genome-editing techniques in plants and animals without government approval.

### [Experimental gene therapy frees 'bubble-boy' babies from a life of isolation](#)

Treatment restores immune-system function in young children with severe disorder.

### [Plans to expand Iceland's fish farms risk decimating wild salmon populations](#)

Scientists are warning against new legislation to grow Iceland's fish farming industry, but industry is pressuring for a go-ahead

### [Innovative child malaria vaccine to be tested in Malawi](#)

### [Memories of disaster fade fast](#)

When will they ever learn?

### [New York's measles outbreak puts vaccination rules on the spot](#)

Many states have a "misinformed-parent exemption"

## People

### [Greta Thunberg backs climate general strike to force leaders to act](#)

Swedish activist says world faces 'existential crisis' and must achieve goals of Paris deal

## Committee vacancies

### [Members sought for the RSB Education and Science Policy Committee](#)

**Closing date: 26 April 2019**

Are you a Member or Fellow of the Royal Society of Biology? Would you like to inform our policy work? Could you commit time to helping to deliver our strategy in these areas?

We are currently seeking 6 new members for our [Education and Science Policy \(ESP\) Committee](#), if your answer was yes to the above questions we would like to hear from you! We take a broad view of biology and welcome applications from those with

experience of studying and working in all areas of the science of life, from molecules, through whole organisms, to ecosystems.

[Apply online](#). Please direct any queries to Dr Laura Marshall, Head of Science Policy, at [laura.marshall@rsb.org.uk](mailto:laura.marshall@rsb.org.uk) or 020 7685 2567.

## Opportunities

### [Innovate UK Smart funding launches with £20 million grant competition](#)

**Closes: 24 April 2019**

### [The RSB's Biology Week Outreach and Engagement grants information and application process is now open online.](#)

RSB members can apply for funding to run outreach and engagement activities and events during Biology Week (5th-13th October) 2019.

**Closes: 29 April 2019**

### [British Ecological Society Post fellowship application](#)

**Closes: 29 April 2019**

### [Announcement of Opportunity: Climate, environment and health](#)

Applications are invited for multilateral, inter- and transdisciplinary research projects which seek to improve understanding of the pathways between climate, environment and health as outlined in the call document.

**Closes: 6 May 2019**

### [Plant Health Undergraduate Studentships 2019](#)

Nine summer studentship projects on plant health are available for bioscience undergraduates. The selected students will work with leading plant health researchers, gaining great experience as well as receiving a bursary. The projects will run for 10 weeks over summer 2019. The studentships are arranged by the UK Plant Sciences Federation (UKPSF) with funding from Defra, BSPP, N8 AgriFood and the David Colegrave Foundation.

**Closes: 8 May 2019**

### [New cut-off for highlight topic ideas](#)

NERC invites the environmental science community to submit new ideas for highlight topics.

**Closes: 15 May 2019**

### [Microbiology Society call for evidence](#)

The Microbiology Society have launched a call for evidence to inform their "[A Sustainable Future](#)" [policy project](#) on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They are seeking views and evidence on challenges to achieving the SDGs, and the ways that microbiology can and does contribute to achieving the SDGs, including knowledge, skills, research, innovation and technology. If you are an individual or organisation with expertise in this area, please complete their [short questionnaire](#).

**Closes: 17 May 2019**

### [Future Leaders Fellowships](#)

The UK Research and Innovation Future Leaders Fellowships (FLF) will grow the strong supply of talented individuals needed to ensure that UK research and

innovation continues to be world class.

**Closes: 30 May 2019**

### **[Next Generation Networks for Neuroscience \(NeuroNex\)](#)**

The MRC in collaboration with the National Science Foundation of the United States, Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) of Canada, Fonds de Recherche du Quebec (FRQ) of Quebec, and Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) of Germany are pleased to invite proposals for the NeuroNex Phase 2 call 2019. This initiative will provide funding for high-quality UK-based research projects focused on addressing grand challenges in neuroscience as part of larger networks with international groups.

**Closes: 14 June 2019**

### **[RSB Outreach and Engagement Award 2019](#)**

Are you a bioscience researcher involved in science communication? If you work in any sector of UK biosciences, apply for the Royal Society of Biology Outreach and Engagement Award 2019 and win up to £1500.

**Closes: 28 June 2019**

### **[The Nancy Rothwell Award 2019](#)**

The Nancy Rothwell Award 2019 specimen drawing competition for 7 – 18 year olds is now open for submissions. Prizes include an experience day at the [Royal Veterinary College](#) for students, and their school can also win £100. Visit the Royal Society of Biology [website](#) for more information.

**Closes: 30 July 2019**

### **[Royal Society of Biology, Outreach and Engagement Volunteering Opportunities in 2019](#)**

RSB are looking for local volunteers to help run our hands-on science plant growing activities at [Field to Fork](#) at Harper Adams University, on **4th May 2019**; [Hullabaloo 2019](#) at Sandown, Isle of Wight on **11th - 12th May 2019** and [Lambeth Country Show](#) at Brockwell Park, London on: **20th – 21st July 2019**.

### **[Invitation to Peer Review Understanding Animal Research](#)**

Understanding Animal Research is looking for volunteers experienced in leading public engagement activities to evaluate applications for the first annual **Leadership In Openness Awards**. While the annual [Concordat on Openness in Animal Research](#) Awards recognise innovation and courage shown by organisations working to further Openness around the use of animals in research, **Leaders in Openness** will be those organisations who commit considerable resources and energy to following best practice, embedding openness within their organisations, and making the aims of the Concordat a reality. If you would like to volunteer yourself for the peer review process please fill in [this form](#). For more information on the Concordat, please get in touch with Hannah Hobson, Communications Manager, [hhobson@uar.org.uk](mailto:hhobson@uar.org.uk).

### **[Pre-announcement of Opportunity: Understanding and countering bacterial plant disease](#)**

## Consultations

### [The Scottish Government has opened a consultation introducing amendments to the Animal Health and Welfare \(Scotland\) Act 2006](#)

**Closes: 26 April 2019**

### [Commercial genomics inquiry](#)

The Science and Technology Committee launches an inquiry into commercial genomic testing to establish what safeguards need to be put in place to protect those who get tested.

**Closes: 26 April 2019**

### [Plastic food and drink packaging inquiry launched](#)

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee is launching an inquiry into plastic food and drink packaging.

**Closes: 2 May 2019**

### [Call for climate change evidence launches today](#)

**Closes: 10 May 2019**

### [Consultation on Environmental Principles and Governance in Scotland](#)

**Closes: 11 May 2019**

### [Future frameworks for international collaboration on research and innovation: call for evidence](#)

**Closes: 24 May 2019**

### [UK-Malaysia Joint Partnership on Non-Communicable Diseases](#)

**Closes: 29 May 2019**

### [BBSRC asks for community input on data intensive bioscience](#)

BBSRC is conducting a review of data-intensive bioscience research in 2019.

**Closes: 10 June 2019**

## Events

### [A Sustainable Future: The role of microbiology in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#)

**2 May 2019**

Central Hall Westminster, London

The Microbiology Society warmly invites you to attend the launch event for their '[A Sustainable Future' policy project](#). The afternoon will include a panel discussion and Q&A session about the opportunities and challenges in achieving the SDGs. This event is free to attend. Please go to the [event page](#) to register your attendance before the deadline on 23rd April.

### [Valuing our Life Support Systems 2019 – Book your place now!](#)

**21-22 May 2019**

The Crystal, London

Book your place now for the Natural Capital Initiative's 10th anniversary summit by **9th May**. The summit offers an independent platform for people in science, policy,

NGOs, businesses and local communities to discuss and debate innovative natural capital solutions that enhance the environment and strengthen society. [The programme for this event is now online.](#)

### [Inside our world; Inside EI](#)

**21 May 2019**

Earlham Institute (EI), Norwich

Ever wonder what goes on behind science institute doors? Come and find out about EI's unique and fascinating bioscience at the Open Day: 'Inside EI' on Tuesday 21 May 2019.

### [Quantitative Methods in Gene Regulation](#)

**9–10 December 2019**

Institute of Physics, London

And finally...

### [Fearsome ancient carnivore discovered after fossil lingered for decades in museum drawer](#)

Twenty-two-million-year-old bones reveal a meat-eater that ruled long before the big cats.

### [T rex traders: should the sale of dinosaur bones be stopped?](#)

With rare fossils being sold on eBay, and Hollywood stars bidding for skulls, there's a case for curbing what is becoming a collectors' market for the mega-rich

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