

Senedd Cymru / Welsh Parliament
Cross-Party Group on STEM

Meeting at 18:30, Tues 1 October, via Teams

Chair Notes

Attendees: David Rees MS, Mark Isherwood MS, Niall Sommerville, Paul Bulmer, Leigh Jeffes, Geertje van Keulen, Rhobert Lewis, Helen Taylor, Keith Jones, Glyn Owen, Faron Moller, George Baldwin, Prof. Tom Crick, Lewis Dean, Benjamin Lloyd, Robert Hoyle, Steffan James, Emma Yhnell, Rob Beynon, Tom Addison, Wendy Sadler, Prof. Chris Johnson,

1) Welcome

Colleagues were welcomed to the meeting, and it was noted that this is the first time we have met formally since the Science and the Senedd event as our previous meeting was postponed at the last minute due to late running Senedd business. A particular welcome was extended to our two guests- Prof. Tom Crick, Chief Scientific Adviser, Dept. for Culture Media and Sport, UK Govt; and Prof. Chris Johnson, Chief Scientific Adviser, Dept. for Science, Innovation and Technology, UK Govt

Since the last meeting there has been significant changes in the Government and therefore the group would like to place on record our congratulations to Jack Sargeant MS on being appointed Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership. Jack has served on the CPG since his election to the Senedd in 2018 and we wish to thank him for his service to the group and his support for STEM in the Senedd.

2) Apologies for absence

Apologies have been received from Prof. Jas Pal Badyal and Cerian Angharad.

3) Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

Minutes were proposed by Robert Hoyle and seconded by Paul Bulmer. One matter arising was to write to Prof. Tom Crick to congratulate him on his new role and invite him to speak at a meeting – which has been done.

4) AGM – Election of office bearers

David Rees MS was proposed as Chair by Mark Isherwood MS and seconded in absentia by Joel James MS. David Rees MS was therefore re-elected as Chair. Mark Isherwood MS and Joel James MS were both elected as Vice-Chairs by acclaim. The Royal Society of Chemistry was again re-elected as Secretariat by acclaim

Following the meeting NS will complete all the necessary paperwork with the Senedd including the annual report and membership list updates.

5) Guest Speakers:

The CPG was joined by two guest speakers:

- Prof. Tom Crick, Chief Scientific Adviser, Dept. for Culture Media and Sport, UK Govt
- Prof. Chris Johnson, Chief Scientific Adviser, Dept. for Science, Innovation and Technology, UK Govt

They talked about their reach and roles, the link of missions across the UK, devolution across the UK and how they tackle cross-cutting challenges. Noted they are keen to give a devolved voice at Westminster due to backgrounds and that the CSA Network is very tight and works closely together. Noted a real focus on serving the citizen in new administration. Talked through nuance of the roles and responsibilities and how they work with Ministers and the different levers of power.

After giving an overview they opened to CPG members for a Q&A session on a range of topics.

6) Update from Welsh Government Office for Science

Dr Robert Hoyle, Welsh Government Office for Science, provided an update on recent workstreams. This has included looking at the priorities of the new First Minister and linking in with the new UK Government Missions approach. Noted an interest in end-to-end R&D and the voice of the citizen in R&D endeavors. Provided an update on work around medical radioisotopes.

7) Updates from professional bodies and learned societies

Members provided short updates and were encouraged to share written updates with NS that will be collated and shared with members and MSs.

8) Topics for future meetings

We are currently looking at organising a joint CPG meeting on routes into STEM alongside the CPG on Colleges with a particular focus on engineering. This was suggested by Dr Rhobert Lewis who has kindly shared initial ideas with Niall and Colleges Cymru. This is planned for February, and we will share more details in due course. We will also look to reschedule the postponed meeting on Space Wales in the coming months.

9) AOB

It was noted the date for the next Science and the Senedd event is 13 May 2025.