

Senedd Cymru / Welsh Parliament

Cross-Party Group on Science on STEMM

ANNUAL REPORT Oct 2023 – Oct 2024

MEMBERSHIP

Chair: David Rees MS

Vice Chair: Joel James MS

Vice Chair: Mark Isherwood MS

Altaf Hussain MS

Luke Fletcher MS

Secretariat: Niall Sommerville, Royal Society of Chemistry

External Members:

Cerian Angharad (Association of Science Education); Dr Robert Hoyle (Welsh Government); Dave Harwood (Institution of Mechanical Engineering); Megan O'Donnell (Geological Society); Professor Faron Moller (Technocamps); Wendy Sadler MBE (Science Made Simple); Keith Jones (Institution of Civil Engineers); Dr Rob Janes (The Open University); Rob Beynon (Learned Society of Wales); Fiona Dakin (Learned Society of Wales); Dr Geertje van Keulen, (Microbiology Society); Jenny Scott (British Council); Dr Dayna Mason (Royal Society of Chemistry); Leigh Jeffes (Parliamentary and Scientific Committee/RSC); Helen Taylor (Cardiff Met Uni); Susie Rabin (Royal Society of Biology); Tom Addison (Physiological Society); Rhobert Lewis (Neath Port Talbot College Group); Talib Mahdi (Cardiff University); Stephen French (IFST); Eluned Parrott (Institute of Physics); George Baldwin (Institute of Physics); Emily Hugo-Webb (Microbiology Society), Andrew Bellamy (BCS); Paul Bulmer (BCS) Emma Yhnell (Biochemistry Society); Stefan James (IMechEng); Naomi Williams (Camlas); Prof. Jas Pal Badyal (Chief Scientific Advisor for Wales); Peter Arnold (IET); Lewis Dean (Universities Wales); Victoria Southam (Microsoft); Newsdirect Wales; Rhys Taylor (Bute Energy); Benjamin Lloyd (Cardiff University); Victoria Southam (Microsoft); Prof. Steve Eales (Royal Astronomical Society); Helen Francis (WJEC)

MEETINGS

The Group met three times:

12 December 2023 – The focus of this meeting was on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in STEMM and the group heard from: Dr Peter Cotgreave, CEO, Microbiology Society; Dr Emma Yhnell, Cardiff University, Equity in STEM Board; Prof Faron Muller, Technocamps. The meeting opened to a wider discussion on engaging young people in schools, diversity in the curriculum, science festivals, underrepresented groups, supporting minority and protected groups already engaged in STEM, and unconscious bias.

12 March 2024 – This meeting focussed on Artificial Intelligence and heard from two guest speakers:

- Prof. Phil Newton, Swansea University – *“AI in STEM Higher Education. Challenges, Opportunities and Evidence”*
- Dr Mabrouka Abuhmida, University of South Wales – *“Demystifying AI in Wales: Shaping the Future of Society and Industry”*

The talks included information on the bias within AI; ethical challenges of AI in education; opportunities in learning; opportunities for industry in Wales to capitalize on AI; the need to upskill employees in AI; issues faced by legislatures, including in Wales, on managing the pros and cons of AI; and embedding AI knowledge and understanding within the education system.

The group also received an update from the Welsh Government Office for Science and from Professional bodies including regarding the recently signed Burlington House Agreement.

1 October 2024 – This meeting included the AGM of the group where our office bearers were re-elected. We had two guest speakers for the meeting:

- 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.

Science and the Senedd – The annual Science and the Senedd event was held on Tues 21 June. Whilst not an official CPG meeting the event is organised in conjunction with the CPG on STEMM. The 20th edition of this event was held at the Senedd and Pierhead buildings and focussed on the topic of the Green Economy. The event was followed by an evening reception and exhibition from more than 20 organisations. The evening reception included speeches by all the political parties in the Senedd.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

As these meetings were held online there was no cost incurred or gifted over the period covered in this annual report.

Niall Sommerville
Secretary, Cross Party Group on STEMM
Royal Society of Chemistry

Public Affairs Manager
October 2024