

National Assembly for Wales

Cross-Party Group on Science and Technology

Meeting at 6.30pm, Tuesday 8th July, 2014, Conference Room C&D, Ty Hywel

MINUTES

Present: David Rees AM (in the chair); Keith Davies AM; Helen Francis (WJEC); Dr Stephen Benn (Society of Biology); Prof Keith Smith (Royal Society of Chemistry); Beti Williams MBE (British Computer Society); Dr David Jones (Geological Society); Dr Tom Crick (Campaign for Science and Engineering); Andy Pugh (Institution of Mechanical Engineering); Jessica Leigh Jones (Morgan-Botti Lightning Laboratory, Cardiff University); Cerian Angharad (Association of Science Education); Sara (Welsh Crucible), Samantha Murphy (Royal Society of Chemistry) and Leigh Jeffes (Group Coordinator).

Welcome

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, including guest speaker, Prof Denis Murphy, and Samantha Murphy and Jessica Leigh Jones.

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from: Simon Thomas AM; Eluned Parrott AM; Angela Burns AM,; Nick Ramsay AM; Dr Rhobert Lewis; Dr Geertje van Keulen; Joanne Ferris; Prof Peter Knowles; Elizabeth Terry; Alison Braddock; Dr Dayna Mason; Prof Faron Moller; Prof John Tucker; Dr Rhys Phillips, Prof Ian Wells and Dr David Cunnah.

Minutes of the meeting, held on 5th November 2013

These had been circulated (the last scheduled meeting was not fully constituted, due to an important debate in the Senedd), so the minutes of the November meeting were considered.

Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

Science and the Assembly 2014

Leigh Jeffes commented on this year's premier science event, at the Pierhead and the Senedd, held on 20th May, which drew a record attendance, a capacity exhibition with 25 organisations represented, together with a first class-speaker programme. The theme was: Science Education in Wales.

He thanked David Rees AM, for sponsoring the event, supported by Simon Thomas AM, Eluned Parrott AM, and Suzy Davies AM, who stood in for Angela Burns AM.

Next year's Science and the Assembly will be being held on Tuesday 19th May.

The Chair thanked Leigh Jeffes and the Royal Society of Chemistry for organizing such a highly successful event.

Upcoming events/news – Learned Societies and Professional Bodies

Representatives of the Learned Societies and professional gave an update Group on forthcoming events.

These included Biology Week (13th - 18th October); ASE Annual Conference, Saturday 4th October, on the Art of Science Communication, speaker Professor Alice Roberts; and WJEC referred to the forthcoming announcement on new 'A' Level specifications.

Speaker topic for November meeting

The Group has received an approach from Cardiff University's Morgan-Botti Lightning Laboratory at Compass Business Park, Cardiff, to make a presentation at the next meeting. Jessica Leigh Jones who will be the speaker, gave a brief preview of her talk.

Presentation by Professor Denis Murphy, Head of Genomics and Computational Biology Research Group, University of South Wales

Professor Murphy spoke on the subject of: *Bioinformatics - the powerful marriage of information technology with bioscience. New global developments and future prospects in Wales.*

Synopsis:

In recent years, advances in computing and information technology have led to the so called 'big data' problem. This involves the creation of massive quantities of

data in many fields including medicine, commerce, agriculture, communications, state security and basic science. The analysis of big data and its reduction to meaningful knowledge is a major challenge in today's information-rich society. The new science of bioinformatics involves the use of high performance computational systems and novel mathematical tools to make sense of big data in fields related to bioscience. Our work at the University of South Wales is particularly related to the use of genomic data analysis in two areas, namely the emerging field of personalised medicine to address health concerns and in the improvement of key crops to address food security. In my talk I will give a brief overview of the big data problem and will discuss our use of the super-fast high performance computing (HPC) Wales network in specific areas such as antibiotic resistance, cancer, and crop improvement in developing countries.

The Chair thanked Professor Murphy for his presentation.

Questions to Professor Murphy

Professor Murphy answered a wide-range of questions from members.

Any Other Business

No other business had been notified.

Date of Next Meeting

***Please note that the date of the next meeting, which will be the AGM, has been subsequently changed to **Wednesday 5th November** – to comply with new Assembly rules for CPGs.*

The meeting had been due to take place on the 25th November

Close of Meeting

The Chair closed the meeting at 7.45pm