

Senedd Cymru / Welsh Parliament

Cross-Party Group on STEMM

Meeting at 18:15, Tues 14 March, via Zoom

Attendees: David Rees MS (Chair), Mark Isherwood MS (Vice Chair), Jack Sargeant MS (Vice Chair), Niall Sommerville (Secretariat), Naomi Williams, Geertje van Keulen, Tom Addison, Dayna Mason, Emma Yhnell, Prof. Jas Pal Badyal, Dr Robert Hoyle, Keith Jones, Eluned Parrott, Dave Harwood, Faron Moller, Sarah Morse, Helen Taylor, Wendy Sadler, Dave Jones, Mike Edmunds

Apologies: Mike Charlton, Helen Obee Reardon, David Cunnah, Glen Gilchrist

1) Welcome

David Rees MS (Chair) welcomed colleagues to the meeting and extended a particular welcome to Prof. Jas Pal Badyal who has recently been appointed as the new Chief Scientific Advisor for Wales.

2) Apologies for absence

Apologies were noted for the minutes

3) Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

Minutes were circulated to members prior to the meeting for information. Minutes were accepted as read by members. One matter arising from previous minutes was the topic of subject specific science teachers. Niall Sommerville noted that this issue had been raised by Joel James MS at First Minister's Questions on 27 September 2022 and a response was provided by the Welsh Government. Further clarification and input from the Welsh Government is being sought.

4) Professional bodies updates and introductions

Colleagues from across the STEM sector provided short oral updates on the current work of their organisations. Colleagues were asked to share written updates with the Secretariat for future meetings.

One key topic that continues to emerge is in relation to a lack of STEMM graduates and the knock on this is having on business, investment, and the Welsh economy. This was coupled with issues raised around education – such as lack of subject specific science teachers, resource issues, and the impact this has on young people taking STEMM subjects, and subsequently

moving into the STEMM sector as a career. It was felt this issue was not simply one of education or the economy, but of both, and that the group were keen to explore the role of STEMM in education and the role of STEMM as a key driver of economic development in Wales.

Action: It was agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chairs would co-sign a letter to the Minister for Economy and Minister for Education inviting them to the next meeting of the CPG. This would allow them to outline their vision for STEMM in the Welsh economy and how the education is set up to achieve this. It would allow the sector to raise their concerns with them directly and open a useful dialogue.

5) Chief Scientific Advisor for Wales – Prof. Jas Pal Badyal

The group were delighted to welcome Prof. Jas Pal Badyal who took up the role of Chief Scientific Advisor for Wales in February 2023. Prof. Badyal gave a presentation on his work, background, and ambitions for his new role which will work closely with colleagues on the CPG. Following the presentation there was a Q&A with members.

6) Update from Welsh Government Office for Science

Dr Robert Hoyle provided an update on the work of the Welsh Government Office for Science.

7) Science and the Senedd Update

Leigh Jeffes talked through current plans for the annual Science and the Senedd event taking place on Tuesday 13th June from 12:45 to 19:30. The event is sponsored by David Rees MS. The topic for this year's event is *STEM driving the economy – and have we got the workforce for the future*.

8) Topics for future meetings

It was agreed that the Minister for Economy and Minister for Education should be invited to the next meeting to discuss workforce issues in the STEMM sectors amongst other topics. Any suggestions for future meetings should be sent to the Secretariat for consideration.

9) AOB

The next meeting is scheduled for Tues 27 June in the Senedd, dependent on availability of guest speakers.