

Cross-Party Group on Science and Technology

Tuesday 23 June 2026 (1800 – 2000)

Minutes

Attendance

MSPs

Clare Adamson MSP (CA); Patrick Harvie MSP (PH); Calum Kerr MSP (CK); Andrew Baxter MSP (ABa); David Kirkwood MSP (DK); Jenny Young MSP (JY)

Non-MSP Group Members

Alex Browne (ABr)
Andrew Mackenzie (AM)
Athina Frantzana (AF)
Byron Hyde (BH)
Carolyn Thomson (CT)
Charlotte Lester (CL)
Christie Marr (CM)
Daria Tuhtar (DT)
Ian Strachan (IS)
Isabelle McMahon (IM)
Kathleen Hill (KH)
Katherin Kirk (KK)
Lorraine Duncan (LD)
Louise Jack (LJ)
Martyn Pickersgill (MP)
Niall Sommerville (NS)
Rebecca Simpson (RS)
Rian Duncan (RD)
Robert Mcgeachy (RMc)
Rory MacDonald (RMa)
Sonja Vernes (SV)
Tara Brendle (TB)
William Duncan (WD)

1. Welcome and apologies

- Clare Adamson welcomed the group to this meeting of the Cross-party group on Science and Technology and noted that, as this was the first meeting under the new parliament, it would include election of a Convenor, Deputy Convenor(s), and Secretariat.
- Apologies: Karen Petrie; Mridula Chakraborty; Alastair McGregor; Gemma Peach

2. Re-establishment of CPG and AGM

- Election of CPG Convenor, Deputy Convenor(s), and Secretariat
- Convenor – Clare Adamson
Proposed by Patrick Harvie and seconded by Calum Kerr.
- Deputy Convenors – Patrick Harvie, Calum Kerr, Andrew Baxter, David Kirkwood, and Jenny Young

Proposed by Clare Adamson and unanimously agreed by group.

- Secretariat – The Royal Society of Edinburgh
Proposed by Clare Adamson and unanimously agreed by group.

3. Item for Note – ‘Vision for the Future’ Document

- The Convenor (CA) invited RMa to explain the output of the previous CPG meeting. RMa noted the previous meeting of the CPG on 12th November 2025 had been used to create a ‘Vision for the Future’ document. The document laid out the areas which members wanted to see prioritised by the next Scottish Parliament and Government following the 2026 Scottish Parliament election. The points in the document fell under the headings of innovation and research, artificial intelligence and ethical literacy, futureproofing education and skills, climate change and health, and inclusion in science and technology.
- **Action Point:** For the benefit of new members, RMa to recirculate the ‘Vision for the Future’ document along with the minutes from this meeting.

4. 'The Contribution of Chemistry: Understanding how chemistry capability translates into economic value across the UK'

- CA invited The Royal Society of Chemistry to present their in-confidence briefing on their new report, 'The Contribution of Chemistry: Understanding how chemistry capability translates into economic value across the UK'.
- CL presented the briefing, discussing the economic impact of chemistry in the UK and Scotland including growth, jobs and the role of universities.
- ABa asked what understanding there was amongst policymakers about the need for a consistent flow of chemistry graduates into the workforce, particularly in the life sciences. CL said it was very important to ensure resilience in higher education pipeline. NS said if Scotland did not capture the potential growth within the chemical sciences sector, other parts of the UK would. He argued Scotland has a huge opportunity to do this, with a strong graduate pipeline and excellent research capabilities at its universities.
- DK asked about barriers to realising the full economic potential of the chemistry sector. NS said there was an issue with scale-up funding for SMEs, but the SNP had laid out plans for improving this in its election manifesto, progress on which the RSC will be following closely. He said there were good examples of success in scaling-up in Scotland, such as in the innovation cluster in Glasgow. He argued the problem was ensuring that companies stayed in Scotland once they scale to a certain point, which is why the graduate pipeline is essential. CL highlighted elements of the upcoming report which spoke about local and national value capture, particularly on barriers SMEs face in scaling up and noting the benefits to companies of staying close to local skills and research pipelines. CA noted scaling up needed to be area-specific, as some businesses looking to scale up did not want to then move out of Scotland. RD argued lots of SMEs want to stay local after being invested in, with workforce, trade links, suppliers and distributors already established.
- WD asked how this report could be presented to make sure it is understood within a wider ecosystem beyond just chemistry. NS and CL said the Royal Society of Chemistry had worked carefully to identify which parts of Scotland's workforce were closely aligned with chemical sciences built on previous workforce analysis [[Future Workforce and Educational Pathways](#)] to ensure that the report's methodology and attribution of economic output was robust and representative.
- KH spoke of the importance of teaching young people about the scientific method as a foundation for understanding discipline-level concepts. Speaking from her experience as a teacher, JY shared that colleagues often spoke of the importance of understanding maths and numeracy to foundations for success in the sciences. DK agreed on the need for young people to be

taught foundational skills. PH agreed it was important to communicate that science education was not just about producing scientists, but giving people the ability to understand the world, particularly in an age of disinformation. LD spoke about the importance of igniting curiosity and enthusiasm in young people by exposing them to different careers in the sciences.

5. AOB.

- CA said the group would look at holding its next meeting on Thursday 1st October to coincide with the 46th TB Macaulay Lecture, delivered in partnership by the Macaulay Development Trust and The James Hutton Institute.
- **Action Point:** The Royal Society of Edinburgh will look at arranging the next CPG meeting at this event.