

RSC Environment, Sustainability & Energy Division: Letter from the President May Update

Dear ESED member,

With 2020 well underway, I'd like to take this opportunity to update you on the Division's recent activities, as well as the Division's plans during the uncertain period we all find ourselves in. The RSC continues to operate remotely, with its staff working with ESED, other Division Councils, and the wider community to support our activities. While many events have been postponed, the Division leadership will continue to plan for community activities later in the year, and the RSC will still offer [support](#) to its members. If current events are having a negative financial impact on you, your partner or dependants – especially if they have led to changes in your regular income – please speak to the [Chemists' Community Fund](#), the benevolent fund for RSC members.



On behalf of the entire Division Council, I'd like to thank you for being a member of the Environment, Sustainability and Energy Division; with nearly 6000 members, we are one of the Royal Society of Chemistry's biggest communities and represent scientists from a diverse range of sectors, backgrounds and disciplines. I hope to see you at one of our upcoming events and look forward to another year of exciting engagements. As always, feel free to [send in](#) any suggestions, feedback or news you might have for the Council or wider Division community.

2019 highlights

Grants

Last year, ESED awarded a total of 54 travel bursaries to support PhD students, postdoctoral and early career researchers to attend conferences. The Division also awarded 12 Scientific Meeting Grants to support events in the UK, Spain and Kenya, covering topics such as the circular economy, next generation photovoltaic materials, and chemical safety in high schools.

Awards

Congratulations to our four 2019 award winners for their achievements:

- *Professor Barbara Finlayson-Pitts*, University of California, Irvine (Environment Prize)
- *Dr Federico Bella*, Politecnico di Torino (ESED Early Career Award)
- *Professor Yang Yang*, University of California, Los Angeles (Sustainable Energy Award)
- *Professor Frank Kelly*, King's College London (Toxicology Award)

Events & Activities

On 20th May 2019, ESED hosted a [Future Waste Science-Policy Workshop](#) in Swansea, attended by Defra, the Environment Agency, Welsh government and experts from our community. This science-policy interface work followed on from ESED's [Future Waste](#) event on 5th September 2018, helping to inform the RSC campaign [Elements in Danger](#) and contribute to policy positions that were delivered to Defra as they evolve their Resources and Waste Strategy. To this end, the RSC released a [policy pack](#) in September 2019 that draws on evidence provided by ESED, the Materials Chemistry Division (MCD) and chemical scientists in our community working on these issues. This includes:

- Overarching [principles for waste strategies](#)
- Principles for management of [critical raw materials in waste electrical and electronic equipment](#) - drawing on our Elements in Danger research
- Principles for management of [plastic waste](#) - drawing on [Sustainable Plastics – the role of chemistry](#)

On 1st October 2019, ESED hosted a one-day science meeting at Burlington House, London on the topic of [Sustainable Water in the 21st Century](#). This meeting brought together experts from academia, industry and government to deliver sessions on topics such as regulation, policy and the role of the chemical sciences. Details are covered in the meeting report that features in the Environmental Chemistry Group's [January 2020 Bulletin](#). The RSC has also produced a 'Sustainable Water for All' [policy position](#) drawing upon evidence from this event. This truly international event featured speakers from the UK, India, Switzerland, and Kenya and the presentation of the ESED Sustainable Water award to Professor Dionysios Dionysiou from the University of Cincinnati, USA.

With a common interest around plastics pollution, ESED and the RSC's Materials Chemistry Division members contributed to the RSC report prepared by MCD and the consultation response to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs committee [inquiry on plastic food and drink packaging](#).

Looking ahead, the RSC is working on '[A chemicals strategy for a sustainable chemicals revolution](#)' as part of their 25 year plan for the environment. If you are interested in volunteering your experience and perspectives into the ongoing work in this area, please contact policy@rsc.org.

Dates for the calendar

As you will be aware, global efforts to manage the recent COVID-19 pandemic are having an enormous effect on the delivery of events, including those organised by the RSC and its Interest Groups. The events listed below are therefore subject to change. As the plans for postponed events are developed, look out for updates on our events website or in a future newsletter.

- [Disposable Attitude: Electronics in the Environment](#), ~~24th March 2020~~, **Postponed**, London, UK

- [5th RSC Early Career Energy Sector Chemists Symposium](#), ~~27th May 2020~~, **Postponed**, London, UK
- [The Analytical Research Forum 2020 \(ARF20\)](#), ~~16th June 2020~~, **Cancelled – will run in 2021**, London, UK
- The Joint NSFC-RSC symposium on energy, September (date TBC), UK
- [Air quality in megacities Faraday Discussion](#), 18th – 20th November 2020, Edinburgh, UK

Thanks again for your continued membership of ESED and for engaging with us throughout the year; the Division Council looks forward to seeing you at an event in future.

We hope that you and your families stay safe and well.

Professor Mercedes Maroto-Valer
ESED President, on behalf of ESED Council

Contact us

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