

President's Message April 2020

Whilst the rain trickles down the window of my "office" here at home in the depths of Surrey and writing my first President's message I thought I would take some time to reflect on why we call ourselves a "Society."

The term "society" comes from the Latin word "societas" which in turn is derived from the noun *socius* meaning comrade, friend, ally and used to describe a bond or interaction between parties that are friendly, or at least civil. This sums up the British Toxicology Society.

For me personally the Society has always been there, running through my veins from my early days as a student until now as the President. It provides a platform for networking, meeting up with friends over a glass or two of wine (and no not Blue Nun or Black Tower!) and to learn about new initiatives in the field of toxicology.

At each Congress I meet up with many of my past students and it is lovely to see how each of you is flourishing in your roles, some of whom are now on our Executive Committee. My problem is that I just can never remember which year you studied at Surrey as all the different years are merging together!

Times have certainly changed in recent months and in the last few weeks our immediate focus has been our response to COVID-19 at both a human and operational level. It is satisfying to know that as a Society we are working together under these strange and difficult times to ensure that the BTS is there for its members and continues to thrive. The Executive Committee, under the leadership of Dr Chris Powell, has seen a number of changes going on in the last few months from the reschedule of our Congress to now take place in September 2020, a virtual AGM (the first in the history of the BTS) and the postponement of the very successful PATDD course until June 2021.

As I take over the helm and lead the BTS as your President over the next two years, together with Professor Brian Lake as the new Vice President, I want to acknowledge and thank Chris, as the outgoing President, for his leadership and hard work he has undertaken on behalf of the Society. I would also like to thank Diane as General Secretary for her tireless work and in keeping us, the Executive Committee, in check, Liz for her sterling efforts as Treasurer and the Executive Committee in maintaining the running of the Society for its members. I look forward to working with you all.

The Society is also grateful to those in Executive Business Services (EBS) who help with the operational side of the Society and special mention to Gail, Steve and Shona.

My thanks also to past members of the Executive Committee who retired this year, Drs Ernie Harpur and Paul Brooker.

I would also like to welcome both Drs Lesley Reeve and Phil Botham as newly elected members to the Executive Committee.

I would also like to take this opportunity to single out Dr Jason Gill, the Chair of Scientific Meetings Subcommittee (SSC), the members of the SSC and our secretariat, EBS, for all the work they have been doing behind the scenes to reschedule the April Meeting to September and at the same time plan for the April 2021 Congress in Durham. This has meant a great deal of additional work for everyone and Jason, we are grateful for your leadership and to all those working hard to keep our Congresses on track in these challenging times.

The mission statement for the Society is *"To provide the forum for toxicology in the UK, to support and enrich the careers of toxicologists, and to promote the importance and advancement of toxicology in the wider scientific and lay communities."* The subcommittees play a pivotal role in ensuring your

Society is sustainable and is the forum for UK toxicology. They do this by working conscientiously behind the scenes and here are some examples:

- The [Finance Subcommittee \(FSC\)](#) have ensured that the Society is in a strong position in terms of balancing income and expenditure.
- The [Scientific Subcommittee \(SSC\)](#) has worked tirelessly to move Congress 2020 in Cardiff from April to September and are on track for April 2021 in Durham.
- The [Communication Subcommittee \(CSC\)](#) have been key to promoting the Society through a number of Social Media Channels such as Twitter and LinkedIn. They have also promoted and supported the Ambassadors scheme and details can be found [here](#).
- The [Education Training and Career Development Subcommittee \(ETCD\)](#) promote many activities for our members from the Continual Education Programme at the Congress, which are now available on the website, to promoting toxicology at an number of events including Career Fairs

More information on the remit and membership of each subcommittee can be found at each of the hyperlinks. My thanks also go to all members of our subcommittees for their contributions to the Society under the leadership of the respective Chairs

In addition, following requests from our members, the Society publishes position papers on a number of topics and current papers can be found [here](https://www.thebts.org/publicstatements/). Thanks go to the Steering Group for all their work on this under the leadership of Dr Phil Botham.

You can see just how all the Executive Committee and its subcommittees are working hard to ensure we meet what the membership wants but the Society can only remain sustainable if it is meeting what the members require so please do get in touch (bts@execbs.com) with ideas and comments as this is your Society. Later this year we will be sending out a survey to capture your thoughts and comments to refresh the Society.

We are also keen to hear from any of you interested in joining the Executive Committee and any of our subcommittees (<https://www.thebts.org/contact-2/>). Being part of a subcommittee is one way of making your voice heard so please do get in touch if you would like to be considered (bts@execbs.com).

We also have an active community of Ambassadors and speciality sections which are there for you to join so again please go to the website for more information www.thebts.org.

Our journal, Toxicology Research, published by Oxford University Press, benefits the Society in being a vehicle for the publication of high-quality toxicology papers and provides a financial benefit as well. All papers from the UK published in the journal attract funds to the Society, which will help us provide the best possible Congress and meetings. I would like to encourage you all to consider publishing articles in this journal. The Editor in Chief is Professor Heather Wallace who is keen to hear from our members.

In my next President's message, I will provide you, the membership, with our Strategic Vision for the Society for 2020-2024. The Executive Committee are meeting in June to discuss this so watch this space for further updates.

In the meantime, do let me know what you are all doing to stay safe and well during this current Covid-19 situation. It may be volunteering, raising money for a local charity, finding new ways to keep the children home schooled or ways to stop being bored at home! Let me know and we can post some of these on our Newsfeed and share some of your stories. We can publish these stories in our Newsfeed which is there to keep you all informed of activities both within the BTS, our and current updates on the world news on current trends, and developments within the toxicology world. Please send items

of interest to the editor@thebts.org. My thanks also go to the Editorial Team, Rani Ghosh, Guy Healing, David Jones, David Woolley for their work in keeping us abreast of the news.

I do hope we will be able to catch at our Congress in Cardiff in September which has an excellent programme.

Until then stay safe and well.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shirley". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Professor Shirley Price

President of the BTS

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