

President's Newsletter Number 3: March 2022

Dear Colleagues

As I complete my second and final year as President at this year's AGM in April, I have reflected over the last 11 months and want to thank everyone who has supported the Society and myself. I have certainly enjoyed my role as President and look forward to supporting our incoming President. Professor Brian Lake.

However, before I continue with this Newsletter, I wanted to us to remember and reflect on the current situation in Ukraine and the effect this is having on so many. Our thoughts are with all those affected by this conflict.

I would like to wish all our Welsh Colleagues a "Dydd Gŵyl Dewi Hapus" for St David's Day (1st March) and Lá Fhéile Pádraig sona duit! for St Patrick's Day (17th March). And of course, International Women's Day was celebrated on the 8th March and Commonwealth Day on the 11th March.

September 2021 marked 50 years since the inception of the BTS. It started from very humble beginnings, when in 1971, (two years after the Moon Landing, the year decimalisation was introduced and Walt Disney opened its theme park in Florida) two University of Surrey staff members, namely Professors Jim Bridges and Ron Walker, formed the Toxicology Club. It is amazing how a discussion at 2am in the morning in a KUB (Kitchen, Utility and Breakfast room in Surrey speak!!) at the University eventually led to the founding of the British Toxicology Society in 1979 - The Society we know now. Between 1971-1977 it grew from 45 to over 200 members. Those humble beginnings set out the path for a Society whose remit has always been to promote the advancement of the science of toxicology, for public benefit. The Toxicology Club membership initially comprised UK-based toxicologists as its members, but the Society is proud to have, amongst its numbers, many from across the world and work across academic, clinical, government and industrial organisations.

The BTS use to hold two meetings a year, one in the Spring and one in the Autumn. In 1979, the first Congress was held on the 5-6th April 1979 at the University of Warwick on "In vitro and in vivo models of toxicity". In September of 1979, a second meeting was held at Manchester University on "Inhalation Toxicology". These meetings were the showcase of the Society, and our Congresses continue to highlight key areas of Toxicology. We have held Annual Congresses every year since 1979 and COVID-19 did not stop us, even if we had to resort to a virtual platform for 2020 and 2021 meetings. So, this year I am pleased we are returning to an in-person meeting.

This year the Annual Congress will be held from the 4th-6th April 2022. The Scientific Subcommittee has been working extremely hard with all those presenting in Gateshead, bringing together individuals from academia, industry, the NHS, regulatory science and governmental agencies, with a shared interest, enthusiasm and passion for the science and practice of toxicology. It offers a fantastic opportunity to meet and network with colleagues, industry representatives and peers across the spectrum of experience and interests within the field. The Continuing Education Programme (CEP) will precede the main Congress on the morning of Monday 4th April. The programme and how to register for the Congress can be found here; <https://www.thebts.org/bts-annual-congress-2022/>

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on the 4th April from 13.30-14.30 and which is open to all members. I look forward to seeing you at the AGM and for you to hear what has happened over the last year and what there is to look forward to including the revamping of the website led by Fiona Sewell to allow more interaction with our members. For those unable to attend the Congress the AGM will be on-line too and further details will be sent out to all members in due course on how to join the AGM virtually.

At this year's AGM we will be considering the proposal for a fee increase and the paper was circulated to the membership on the 28th February with the AGM papers. Membership fees for the BTS have been frozen since 2019. This has not had an adverse effect on the Society during this time, as inflation has been historically low. However, the economic effects of the COVID pandemic are likely to be substantial and long-lasting. The immediate financial consequences of the pandemic (and other macroeconomic factors) have led to an acute increase in the rate of inflation. Whilst this may have a positive (albeit minor) impact on the Society's income from capital reserves, the increased cost of living will be a significant factor which will impact our running costs and Congress budgets for the foreseeable future. Therefore, it is important that the BTS has a strategy to compensate for the anticipated inflationary pressures over the next few years to ensure financial sustainability. The Executive Committee has approved the proposed increase in membership fees and this proposal will be considered by the membership at the AGM and, if agreed, ratified for implementation from January 2023. It is also proposed that fees should be reviewed on an annual basis.

The AGM will also allow us the opportunity to say our goodbyes to some of the members of the Executive Committee who have come to the end of the terms of office namely Drs Jason Gill, Tina Mehta, Carol Courage, Chris Powell and one of our Editors of the NewsFeed Team, Guy Healing. My thanks to each of you for your support and friendship over the years. More to say at the AGM and Congress Dinner!

Currently there is a vacancy for the General Secretary on the Executive Committee. As we have not been able to secure anyone for this post at the moment the Executive Committee, at its meeting on the 16th March, has put in place a contingency plan to ensure that there is business continuity for the Society, and we meet the requirements as set out by the Charities Commission. For the short term, I will take over the role of General Secretary and anyone applying for the role will work alongside myself and the Executive Committee for one year until they are ratified at the 2023 AGM. If there is more than one applicant for the post a ballot will be held prior to the 2023 AGM. The successful applicant will then become the General Secretary from April 2023 for a two year term, with the option for renewal for one further term of office.

The BTS Newsfeed Editorial Team is also looking for a new member to join them. This is an exciting opportunity for you to be part of this team and would be an excellent way to get involved with the Society. The Team is looking for someone who is enthusiastic and able to put together short Newsfeeds from contributions, such as Society news and policy, educational events and scientific articles of interest, supplied by individual members of the Society as well as members of the editorial team. If you are interested in joining the team please email an expression of your interest, a short biography and contact details to secretariat@thebts.org.

There are many other ways to get involved in the Society such as becoming a member of the Executive Committee or one of its subcommittees or serving as a BTS Ambassador. Helping to run the Society is a fantastic way to network and meet new people. If you are interested in supporting or joining a committee, please email bts@execbs.com or president@thebts.org to find out more.

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Team, Winston Morgan and Emma Marczylo and David Mason, have been working hard on the EDI Strategy which was recently approved by the Executive Committee. The mission of the British Toxicology Society (BTS) is *"To provide the principal 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."* To fulfil our mission, it is essential to create an inclusive culture that supports equality, diversity and inclusion which fully reflects its membership and the toxicology community; treating all members, participants in BTS facilitated activities and stakeholders with dignity and respect. Our EDI Policy commits the Society to promote equality, value diversity and demonstrate fairness and inclusivity in all of the Society's activities. In 2021, the

BTS Executive Committee drew up a strategy and action plan to embed EDI within our leadership and governance, committees, communications and events. To support this work the Society has applied to become a member of EDIS, which is a coalition of organisations working to improve equality, diversity and inclusion within the science and health research sector; originally established by The Francis Crick Institute Research Centre, Wellcome Trust and GlaxoSmithKline. More information can be found here <https://edisgroup.org/>

The Society would also like to engage more proactively with the media and a small team (Phil Botham, Fiona Sewell, John Thompson, Heather Wallace and myself) has been set up to look at this. The team would like to hear the views of Society our members on what kind of topics or stories in toxicology they think would be of interest to the media. If you have ideas, please send these via email to s.price@surrey.ac.uk. There will also be an opportunity to provide some feedback at the Congress too, so please do come to the Registration desk to provide your feedback on this or come and talk with us at the Congress.

Your Society needs you – Animals in Safety Science: As a reminder we are still looking to add testimonials from BTS members describing why and how they use animals in their research. An example on inhalation toxicology by a government scientist can be found at: <https://www.thebts.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Inhalation-Toxicology.pdf>.

Similar testimonials from those involved in this and/or other areas of toxicology across different sectors such as industry, academia, regulatory/government institutes, clinical bodies, contract research organisations, and/or non-commercial research institutes would be much appreciated. This will help us better fulfil our commitments as a signatory on the Understanding Animals in Research Concordat and highlight the excellent work performed by BTS members. If you are interested in helping with this initiative and providing a testimonial, please contact BTS@execbs.com.

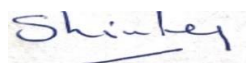
More information on various conferences, webinars, research grants and other activities will be provided by the NewsFeed Editorial Team in their next edition.

Finally, I want to thank you, the members, all for the support you have provided me as your President. My particular thanks go to all the Executive Committee members for their support over the last two years, My thanks to all those who support the Society through their contributions to the Subcommittees, the Speciality Sections, the Ambassadors and the NewsFeed Editorial Team who support the work of Executive Committee and the Society. It goes without saying that all those mentioned form a talented team and through them so much has been achieved for the benefit of the Society. Finally, my thanks to our secretariat and in particular my thanks go to Gail, Phil, Steve, Shona, Matthew and Freya for your support.

And so, in the words from that famous musical “So long, farewell, auf Wiedersehen, goodbye”

Your current President has left the building!!

Yours sincerely



Professor Shirley Price,