

CaSE celebrates 30 years of standing up for British science

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This January the 30th year of the Campaign for Science and Engineering (CaSE) was marked by the Charity's Annual Lecture at the Royal Institution in London, given by Jo Johnson, MP, the Universities and Science Minister.

The Campaign for Science and Engineering (CaSE), or Save British Science as it was known then, was founded in 1986 by a group of university researchers who were concerned about the difficulties they were facing in obtaining funding for their research. Today CaSE is a respected figure in science policy regularly speaking out to support the science and technology community, as well as universities and learned societies such as the Biochemical Society, regarding important topical issues such as the spending review and Nurse review of research councils.

Johnson used the opportunity to highlight the importance of the UK research sector, emphasizing the significance of international partnerships for its continued success.

He commented on the recent spending review saying that the government has committed to "protecting science resource funding in real terms" by maintaining the current level of £4.7 billion for the rest of this parliamentary term.

Referring to autumn 2015 review of the seven Research Councils by Sir Paul Nurse that described his plan to bring all the Councils together under the aegis of Research UK, Johnson confirmed that the government is now moving forward with these recommendations. However, he reassured the audience that "we're preserving what works well" and added that the dual support system and Haldane principle will be retained.

Recognising the importance of science education and access to science, technology, engineering and medicine (STEM) resources for inspiring a new generation of researchers, Johnson announced that the government will be partnering with the Wellcome Trust to set up a £30 million Inspiring Science Capital Fund to support Science and Discovery Centres around the UK.

He also used his speech to announce a significant increase in the Newton Fund's budget from its current £75 million a year to £150 million a year by 2021.

Johnson concluded by emphasising the importance of global collaboration in research, something the Society strongly advocates, saying that it has been "a central pillar of Britain's proud scientific legacy". ■



CaSE Director Dr Sarah Main speaking to Universities and Science Minister Jo Johnson, MP, at CaSE Annual Lecture *Photo: Will Dawson*