

SCIENCE IN THE NEWS

September 2019 – Monthly Newsletter



Monthly Meeting 5th September 2019:

Having taken a month's vacation during August, the Group re-convened on 5th September with 19 members present. I announced that Alec Hillier has decided to stand down from his participation in the Steering Group. After a call for a volunteer, I am very happy to welcome **Jane Newbold** to replace him.

The topic for the month was to be general science news items and to start we had an excellent briefing by George Fisher on the recent power outage in Suffolk and Norfolk. This was triggered by a double lightning strike close to the Little Barford generating station resulting in the generators at Barford dropped out of the network completely and the output from a major offshore wind turbine farm was switched off. As we all know, it took some time for the knock-on problems with trains and a major hospital to be resolved. One interesting point to emerge was that due to the incorrect shutdown new electric only rolling stock were unable to re-start without the presence of an engineer. The diesel electric engines can of course run without electric power but it soon became apparent that these were blocked on the track by the immobile electric only units. Hence the long delays in getting the system running normally.

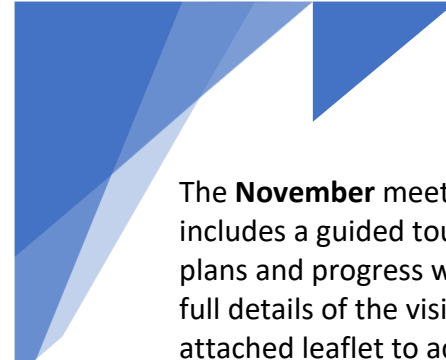
Following this we were given a really informative presentation on the history and current status of DNA research and applications by new member (at least to this Science Group) Jane Newbold. This was very well received by all and generated many questions. This is exactly how we want to see this group develop, more as a science discussion group rather than a lecture theatre. Our thanks go to George and Jane for their efforts in creating these presentations. Links to these for members to view and/or download are available by following the relevant **LINK** entry on our web site. T

The meeting concluded with another couple of small news items. – apologies if we didn't fit yours in but time beat us., it was overall a very good get together for the group.

Diary of future activities:

The **October** meeting will start with a presentation by Bob Howitt. Bob as an ex-engineer from the Sizewell power complex, has offered to give us a useful introduction to what we can expect during our upcoming site visit in November. This will I am sure be of interest to all but particularly so to those who will be taking part. And Bob is open to any questions from the floor, so do come prepared.

This will be followed by an open discussion meeting including a short item from Alec Hillier on the subject of Bats.



The **November** meeting will be replaced by the visit to the Sizewell "B" facility which includes a guided tour of the site followed by a presentation in the visitors centre on current plans and progress with the "C" site/facility. We have circulated all members of our group full details of the visit. There is stringent security to enter the site and so please read the attached leaflet to acquaint yourselves.

PLEASE NOTE: As we forewarned, the attendee list is now closed.

As mentioned at the last meeting, to kick-off the festive season our **December** meeting will have a completely different format as a social get together for members. We are setting up a science-based quiz in four teams (RW will set up the teams on arrival) and Jon Roots will organise a "Bring a mystery object" session. *We do need volunteers to provide a range of "refreshments", including some snacks, perhaps mince pies, sausage rolls or whatever. Please, anyone happy to join in and make this a fun day, give me a call or drop me an email.*

Our **first meeting in 2020** will not be held on the usual first Thursday but on the second Thursday i.e. 9th January 2020 at St Michael's Undercroft starting at 2pm. We plan for this to be an open session with your own news items but making these fit one of two fixed themes. "Plastics and their recycling and/or disposal" or "Humour in Science". Put your thinking caps on, start searching and bring along your news items under these themes.

February 2020 we focus on the subject of dendrology - Trees. This will be presented by John Loftus - should be very interesting.

Summary of Future Dates/Meetings:

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| 3 rd October 2019 | Introduction to Sizewell Open Science in the News |
| 7th November 2019 | Visit to Sizewell – 0945 at the entrance. |
| 5 th December 2019 | Christmas Social meeting Including a Science quiz in teams and a Mystery Objects quiz. |
| 9 th January 2020 | Two themes Science in the News Plastics and their recycling/disposal Humour in Science |
| 6 th February 2020 | Dendrology |

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible and please do bring along your own science news bites. We try to fit in everyone but sometimes the clock beats us as we must vacate the room by 4pm. However, do not let this deter you and try again at the next meeting.

I should also remind you that all our newsletters are available on our U3A Group web page. Just access Beccles U3A and follow the link to **Science in the News/ LINKS/Past Newsletters** and then select the month you would like to access.

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