

[News story: VMD and VPC Open meeting 2017](#)

Presentations now available following the open meeting held on 29 September 2017.

The Veterinary Medicines Directorate and Veterinary Products Committee held their 2017 Open meetings on 29 September. The event was well attended and included a lively question and answer session on a number of issues.

Presentations were given on the following topics:

[EU Exit](#) (MS Powerpoint Presentation, 578KB) – by Paul Green, Director of Operations

[Pharmacovigilance, benefits of reporting adverse events](#) (MS Powerpoint Presentation, 757KB) – by VPC member Declan O'Rourke

[Control strategies to help deal with the worms that turned](#) (MS Powerpoint Presentation, 3.51MB) – by VPC member Professor Jacqueline Matthews

[Press release: Spawning success for new fish pass](#)

Young salmon have been found in the River Derwent at Shotley Bridge in Consett for the first time in 300 years.

The 33 juvenile salmon caught during recent routine sampling by the Environment Agency are the first evidence of salmon spawning this far upstream since a number of large weirs were built to power industry in the region.

Around £750,000 has been invested over the past decade to build fish passes at four of these weirs to allow fish to reach upstream spawning grounds of the Derwent – which is an important tributary of the River Tyne.

The latest, built a year ago at Lintzford in a partnership project between the Environment Agency, Tyne Rivers Trust and Esh Group, was immediately successful, with adult fish seen using it within hours of its completion.

As well as juveniles caught during sampling upstream at Shotley Bridge, the Environment Agency also found record high numbers of juveniles at three other locations downstream.

Great news for river

The Environment Agency's Phil Rippon, Fisheries Technical Specialist, said:

The presence of young salmon this far upstream has shown the immediate impact and success of the new fish pass. To find them so soon after the completion of the pass and during a single routine survey shows that significant numbers have spawned upstream.

It's also likely that many more sea trout and brown trout will also have been able to access their historical spawning grounds. This is great news for the River Derwent.

We've worked really hard together with our partners over the years to make dramatic improvements to water quality right across the country. But there's always more we can do and opening up our rivers to fish migration is vital for future biodiversity and river health.

Efforts have now started to build a fish pass at the only remaining large weir on the Derwent, further upstream at Shotley Grove, which may date from the 14th Century.

The Environment Agency and Tyne Rivers Trust have completed preliminary design work for a fish pass, and are now seeking funding to cover the estimated building costs of £275,000.

Douglas Phillips, Operations Director for Tyne Rivers Trust, added:

With more funding the Derwent could become a fantastic example of how intervention on a whole river system can improve spawning rates and the health of the river as a whole.

[News story: MMO welcomes National Grid for industry interchange](#)

Members of the Marine Management Organisation's (MMO) marine licensing team recently met with National Grid as part of ongoing improvements being made to the service it provides to industry.

The industry interchange programme involves MMO employees hosting and visiting a range of organisations, delivery partners and devolved administrations to learn more about day-to-day and strategic activities,

build awareness of other operating environments and establish relationships.

In September members of National Grid visited the MMO headquarters in Newcastle for a two day event aimed at learning more about the marine licensing process.

Matthew Kinmond, MMO senior marine licensing manager said:

We were delighted to host National Grid for a two day industry interchange in Newcastle. The interchange provided us with an opportunity to give National Grid an insight into the wider work of our organisation, as well as the marine licensing team's systems and processes.

This has improved National Grid's knowledge and understanding of the work involved in determining a marine licence application and the wider work we are undertaking to improve our services. We look forward to the return visit to National Grid, where we can continue to build upon our already positive working relationship.

Sean Stokoe, National Grid consents manager said:

Not only were we made to feel exceptionally welcome but we were given a well-structured and comprehensive insight into the work of the MMO, and specifically the marine licensing and environmental assessment process.

Particularly apparent, was the willingness of MMO personnel to work closely with us in the future, and technically guide us, so that we can successfully deliver our construction and engineering projects to specification, programme and cost.

- The marine licensing team often carries out interchange sessions with customers and organisations with an interest in their work. This provides an opportunity to learn more about how each other operates and strengthens relationships.
- Other organisations MMO has previously carried out interchange activities with include Lafarge Tarmac, Dong Energy, Peel Ports and Cemex.

[Press release: Business Secretary](#)

announces founding partners of £65 million battery technology research institute

- The flagship Faraday Battery Institute will bring together the best minds from 7 founding partner universities and industry to make UK global leader in battery research and technology.
- The Faraday Battery Institute, with £65 million from the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, is part of government's £246 million investment in battery technology through the Industrial Strategy.

Business Secretary Greg Clark has today (Monday 2 October) announced the consortium of UK universities that will form the Faraday Battery Institute, a new £65 million research institute responsible for building the UK's status as a global leader in battery research and technology.

The Institute will bring together the expertise and insight from its 7 founding partner universities, industry partners and other academic institutions to accelerate fundamental research to develop battery technologies. Ensuring the UK is well placed to take advantage of the future economic opportunities from emerging technology.

The universities forming the institute are:

- Imperial College London
- Newcastle University
- University College London
- University of Cambridge
- University of Oxford
- University of Southampton
- University of Warwick

Announcing this major investment in the UK's research base Greg Clark said:

Through the Faraday Research Challenge we are cementing our position as the 'go-to' destination for battery technology so we can exploit the global transition to a low carbon economy.

The Faraday Battery Institute will have a critical role in fostering innovative research collaboration between our world-leading universities and world-beating businesses to make this technology more accessible and more affordable.

We have huge expertise in this area already and the Faraday Battery Institute collaboration between our 7 founding universities provides a truly unique opportunity for us to bring together our expertise and an effort in this area behind a common set of strategic goals to ensure the UK exploits the jobs and business

opportunities.

With £65 million of funding through the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), the Institute will invest an initial £13.7 million to set up a headquarters.

EPSRC Chief Executive Professor Philip Nelson said:

Climate change and moving towards low carbon economies mean the demand for clean energy production and effective energy storage, in the UK and globally, is rising.

The Faraday Institute will bring leading academics in the field of battery development together to explore novel approaches that will meet these challenges and accelerate the development of new products and techniques

EPSRC is pleased to be helping establish the Institute, and the drive to keep the UK a prosperous and productive nation.

The Business Secretary confirmed in July that the government would be making an investment of £246 million, over 4 years, in the Faraday Research Challenge to ensure the UK builds on its strengths and leads the world in the design, development and manufacture of electric batteries.

The Faraday Research Challenge is divided into 3 streams – research, innovation and scale-up which is designed to drive a step-change in transforming the UK's world-leading research into market-ready technologies that ensures economic success for the UK.

The Faraday Research Challenge is just 1 of 6 areas that the government, together with business and academia, identified through its flagship Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF) as being one of the UK's core industrial challenges and opportunities, where research and innovation can help unlock markets and industries of the future in which the UK can become world-leading.

As part of cementing the UK as a global leader in autonomous and battery vehicles, the government will unveil shortly the winners of its first £55 million Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAV) testing infrastructure competition.

This follows the government opening its £100 million CAV test bed competition in April, inviting proposals for how to create a cluster of excellence in driverless car testing, along the M40 corridor between Coventry and London, to accelerate the development of this technology, grow intellectual capital and attract overseas investment in the UK.

Notes to editors

The Institute will host its administrative offices at Harwell Science and Innovation campus.

Government announced in April its first £1 billion of investment through the fund in cutting-edge technologies to create jobs and raise living standards. Other areas receiving government support through the ISCF in 2017 to 2018 include cutting edge healthcare and medicine, robotics and artificial intelligence, and satellite and space technology.

[News story: Government appoints Small Business Commissioner to champion voice of small business](#)

The appointment of the father-of-three from Birmingham marks an important step toward ensuring small businesses have the support they need to thrive and grow – a central tenet of the Government’s Industrial Strategy.

As Commissioner, Mr Uppal will lead an independent office tasked with empowering small businesses. The role will be crucial to supporting small businesses resolve disputes with larger businesses and will help drive a culture change in payment practices.

Mr Uppal and his team will provide general advice and information to small businesses on matters such as resolving disputes, including signposting small businesses to existing support and dispute resolution services, which will be delivered through the commissioner’s website. His priorities will reflect his 20-year experience as a small business owner in the real estate sector, where he saw how even sound businesses could struggle when faced with a culture of late payment by customers.

Mr Uppal said:

“Running your own business can be a very lonely experience and my priority will be ensuring small firms feel supported as well as helping to create an overall impression that business isn’t necessarily cut throat.

“In fact, successful businesses are built on integrity, entrepreneurial spirit and trusting relationships and I want to highlight that Britain can be the best place in the world for new entrepreneurs to establish and grow their own businesses.”

Business Secretary, Greg Clark, said:

“Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, providing jobs and opportunities across the country. I am delighted to announce Paul Uppal as the first Small Business Commissioner. His extensive experience as a small business owner makes him perfectly suited to champion the interests of small business and bring about a change in culture that will create a level playing field for everyone.

“Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, providing jobs and opportunities across the country. Supporting Britain’s 5.5 million small businesses is at the heart of this Government’s Industrial Strategy, and his ambition to tackle unfair payment practices will help support our goal to create an economy that works for all. I wish Paul luck in his new role, and I look forward to working with him in the future.”

The appointment of the SBC builds on the Government’s programme of support for small business, since 2010 including:

- British Business Bank programmes supporting £3.4 billion of finance to over 59,000 smaller businesses;
- over 50,000 Start-Up Loans worth almost £340 million;
- a network of 39 local growth hubs which make it easier for start-ups and existing businesses to access the support they need; and
- an additional business rates package, announced at the Spring Budget, providing £435m of further support for businesses facing significant bills in England.

The office of the Small Business Commissioner is expected to be operational by the end of 2017.