



Society of Biology 'Biology: Changing the World' Stakeholder Meeting

28th February 2014, 10:00 – 13:00

Charles 2, Charles Darwin House, 12 Roger Street, London, WC1N 2JU

Meeting Report

Attendees

The event was free to attend and open to all, and was advertised on the Society of Biology website, and promoted through social media and emails to the membership. The event had 14 attendees, ranging from interested individuals, to member organisation contacts. Over six member organisations of the Society were represented at the meeting.

Presentation on 'Biology: Changing the World'

Natasha Neill, executive officer at the Society of Biology, gave a presentation to attendees on the project, explaining that the project had been developed over the past twelve months, and had successfully achieved funding from both Heritage Lottery Fund and BBSRC.

The project had arisen from initial discussions between Dr Mark Downs and Prof Doug Kell, then Chief Executive of BBSRC regarding blue plaques for biologists. In researching blue plaques, and discussions with Heritage Lottery Fund, the importance of wider engagement was made clear. The project was then developed to include an educational resource, public engagement activity and digital output to more broadly celebrate biologists.

The project would be delivered by a project manager and officer, based at the Society of Biology. 40 regional volunteers, who would receive training, would then support the project across the UK by donating half a day of time, and 6 regional consultants would be contracted to focus on schools engagement for 3 days each.

Group discussion on scientists to be celebrated

The room then split into pairs to discuss what sorts of scientist should be celebrated. Attendees were asked to specifically consider what sort of attributes would be valuable, and how scientists celebrated by different mediums (e.g. online or by plaque) might have different attributes.



Suggested scientists included:

Marcel Jaspars	Dorothy Hodgkin
David Attenborough	Robert Brown
Richard Dawkins	Honor Fell
Paul Nurse	Helen Muir
Society of Biology Hon. FSBs	Richard Owen
William Harvey	Mary Anning
Rev. Martin	CB Williams
James Lovelock	Patrick Steptoe
Fred Sanger	Florence Nightingale

The group also discussed that individuals with the potential to change the world could also be celebrated – and the L’Oreal Women in Science scheme might be a good place to identify individuals. The group agreed that the website could be clearly searchable by discipline, and should include science communicators, those working in policy and education and founding directors of institutions or hospitals.

Group discussion on public engagement activities

The group, again in pairs, then discussed public engagement activities, what format they might best taken and what best practice the group could advise for the project. The discussion was very varied, and many good ideas were suggested.

Suggested public engagement activities included:

- fortune teller
- use of an off the shelf product for a heritage linked activity
- knitting activity
- activity related to food
- activity related to art
- transcribing of letters from scientists
- creative writing activity
- matching pairs activity
- hands on practical with a competitive element
- use of live actors
- skeleton matching activity.

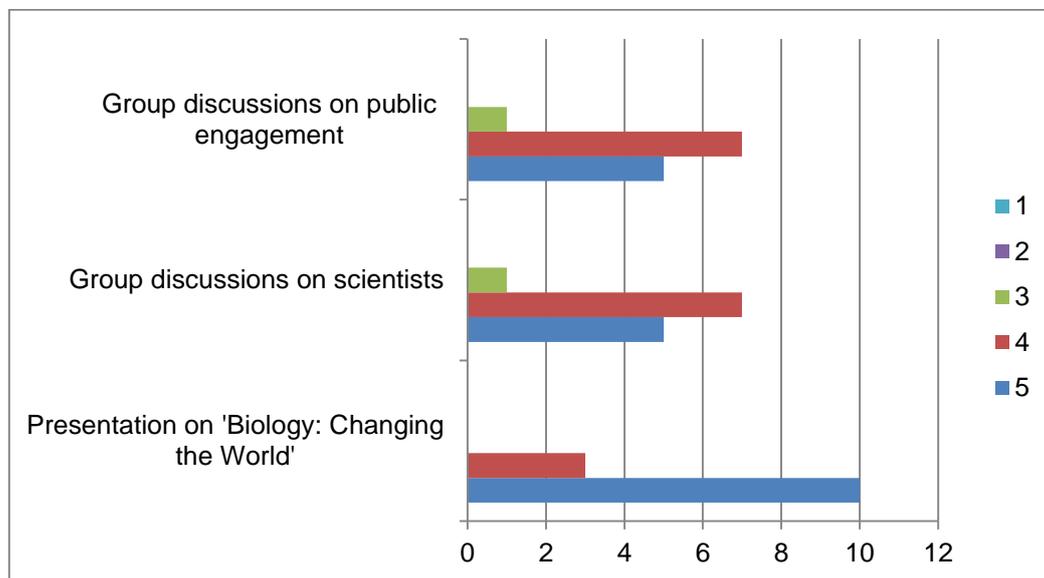
The group also discussed what makes a good public engagement activity. It was felt the best activities would

- engage the whole family
- relate to one learning outcome
- be a single activity that can be adapted to different levels of ability
- memorable
- be delivered by trained individuals

- complement the project with a clear link to biology heritage
- be something that could be taken away by children.

Feedback and evaluation of the meeting

The group were asked to feedback on the content of the meeting, so that future stakeholder meetings could be improved. Attendees were asked to score each aspect of the meeting from 1 – 5, with 1 being not useful and 5 being useful. The results from attendees can be seen below.



Attendees were also asked for comments regarding the most useful aspect of the day, and anything that should have been added, or could be improved. Attendees felt the meeting gave a good opportunity for networking and generating ideas alongside learning more information about the project. Attendees felt that the meeting could have been improved by providing longer lead time about the event and requirements, so that attendees could do more research of individuals in advance. It was suggested that future meetings allow for a wider perspective to be shared, perhaps mix groups between discussions and provide name badges for attendees.