

Public Affairs in 2021:  
a review

# Positioning the IET as the leading voice of independent, impartial engineering expertise



Despite the ongoing global pandemic, 2021 was another busy and impactful year for Public Affairs activities across the IET.



# The IET's Josie Fraser gave oral evidence on Green Jobs to the House of Commons' Environmental Audit Select Committee.



We were delighted that Josie Fraser, a member of the IET Education and Skills Policy Panel, and Deputy Vice Chancellor of the Open University, was one of only four people to give evidence. In giving evidence, Josie impressed upon the committee the need to consider and incentivise adult skills. Recognising the need for retraining as we transition to net-zero must be a high priority she suggested.

Following publication of the IET's Green Skills survey, we met with colleagues from the UK Government's Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, to brief them on the survey. This briefing fed into their Green Jobs Taskforce and its evidence gathering stage.

The House Live, an online resource widely regarded by parliamentarians, published an article promoting the report and included comment from Parliamentarians, including four

members of the Environmental Audit Select Committee: Phillip Dunne MP (Con, Ludlow, Bridgnorth and South Shropshire), Duncan Baker MP (Con, North Norfolk), Cheryl Mackrory MP (Con, Truro and Falmouth) and Jerome Mayhew MP (Con, Broadband). The article highlighted how members of the committee said the IET report must serve as a "stark wake-up call" for the government.

We continued to produce episodes of our podcast, Engineering a Better World, a new episode focused on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Panellists included Amanda Solloway MP (Con, Derby North), Minister for Science, Research and Innovation, Baroness Berridge, Minister for Women and Ella Podmore, IET Young Woman Engineer of the Year 2020.

Listen to the podcast [here](#).



In March, we launched our new 6G report with an article on The House Live, featuring comment from senior Parliamentarians, including Matt Warman MP (Con, Boston & Skegness), Digital Minister, Stephen Metcalfe MP (Con, South Basildon and East Thurrock), former Chair of the Science & Technology Committee, Chi Onwurah MP (Lab, Newcastle upon Tyne Central), Shadow Minister and Stephen Timms MP (Lab, East Ham) member of the Broadband and Digital Communication APPG.

Chi Onwurah said the IET, was "quite right" in calling for active government engagement in the development of 6G technology.

Meanwhile, the Minister for Digital Infrastructure, Matt Warman, welcomed the report, noting that it highlighted the "huge potential" for the next generation of mobile technology. "The government is working to place the country at the forefront of next

generation networks to maximise the benefits for our future economy and level up," said Mr Warman. "This includes investing in research and development and leveraging the strengths of UK industry and academia."

Along with EngineeringUK, IMechE and the Royal Academy of Engineering, we met with officials from the UK Government's Department for Education to discuss careers advice in schools. The meeting was arranged in preparation of the publication of an Engineering UK-led report on careers advice, in which the IET has been involved.

To mark International Women's Day, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak MP, held a virtual meeting with IET President, Prof Danielle George, IET Trustee Yewande Akinola, and finalists of the IET Young Woman Engineer of the Year Awards. It is believed this is the first time that an IET President has met with the Chancellor.



# Later in March, we launched the fourth episode of our podcast, Engineering a Better World, which focused on the road to net-zero.

Panellists included Ian Brown MP (SNP, Kilmarnock and Loudoun), SNP spokesman for Energy and Climate Change, Jerome Mayhew MP from the Environmental Audit Committee and Elaine Greig from the IET Energy Policy Panel. The podcast provides a valuable opportunity to promote the recently published IET report: Offshore energy infrastructure landscaping – UK and neighbouring waters. In total, our podcasts were listened to by Parliamentarians and their teams 2,000 times during the year.

We were delighted to welcome the Shadow Minister for Energy and the Green New Deal, Dr Alan Whitehead MP (Lab, Southampton Test), to the IET's Green Skills webinar. During the webinar, Dr Whitehead said: "Engineers will save the planet".

Chair of the Government's Innovation Expert Group and Royal Academy CEO, Hayaatun

Sillem, hosted a roundtable with Alex Jones, BEIS Director of the Innovation Strategy to discuss the Government's innovation strategy. Dr Timothy Dafforn, Chair of the IET's Innovation and Emerging Technologies Policy Panel, represented the IET. The meeting focussed on BEIS's new Innovation Plan, which is believed will be the successor to the Industrial Strategy.

Working with the Manufacturing All Party Parliamentary Group, we took part in a manufacturing roundtable. Chaired by Sarah Olney MP (Lib Dem, Richmond Park), the event focused on Delivering Net-zero through Digital. Following the roundtable, a report was produced, due for publication in 2021.

The report is likely to call for Government incentives to drive green investment and help achieve zero carbon manufacturing.



To coincide with the IET's 150 anniversary in May, Stephen Metcalfe MP, Chair of the AI All Party Parliamentary Group, tabled an Early Day Motion in Parliament relating to the IET's 150th anniversary.

The logo for the IET's 150th anniversary. It features two horizontal teal bars on the left. To their right is the number '150' in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below the '150' is the text '1871 - 2021' in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

150  
1871 - 2021

Early Day Motions (EDMs) are motions submitted for debate in the House of Commons for which no day has been fixed. EDMs are used to put on record the views of individual MPs or to draw attention to specific events or campaigns.

The text of the Motion was as follows: "That this House congratulates the Institution of Engineering and Technology on its 150th anniversary; notes the Institution's considerable work to share and advance independent engineering expertise; further notes the opportunity that the anniversary brings to engage and inspire young people so that engineering and technology is seen as a force for good and key to solving many of the biggest challenges facing the world."

There was cross-party support for the Motion, including from Carol Monaghan MP (SNP, Glasgow North West), SNP Spokesperson for Education, Jim Shannon MP (DUP, Strangford), and Tahir Ali MP (Lab, Birmingham Hall Green).

To celebrate 150 years of the IET, we worked with a number of Parliamentarians to appear on the IET's The150Show. Guests included Greg Clark MP (Con, Tunbridge Wells), Chair of the Science & Technology Select Committee, Darren Jones MP (Lab, Bristol North West), Chair of the Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy Select Committee, Stephen Metcalfe MP, Co-Chair of the AI APPG, Chi Onwurah MP, Shadow Digital Minister and Jack Sargeant MS (Lab, Alyn and Deeside), a Member of the Welsh Parliament.

We have also worked with Parliamentarians to show their support by sending us "birthday messages".

Darren Jones MP, appearing in the Green edition of the show, talked about the need for Britain to meet our climate change targets and what this would mean for people. He emphasised the need to decarbonise travel and industry as well as insulating our homes.

Appearing on the People edition of the show, Chi Onwurah, MP talked about the diverse and exciting world of engineering. "It is important to make our world representative of the people who live in it and therefore better for the people who live in it", she said.

Stephen Metcalfe MP talked about engineering's perception problem, the reason behind the UK Government's Year of Engineering campaign in 2018. "The perception problem requires Government, businesses, schools and organisations such as the IET to come together to highlight the excitement of engineering", he said. Greg Clark MP appeared in the Digital edition of the show and highlighted that all areas of our lives are transformed by technology.

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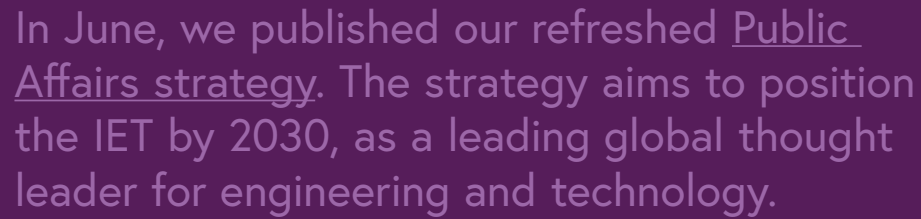
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Our 150th anniversary gives us a fantastic opportunity to celebrate our rich history. We also want to use it to engage and inspire young people so that engineering and technology are seen as a force for good and key to solving many of the biggest challenges facing our world.

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Julie is keen to engage more girls and women in STEM subjects. She was very interested to hear about our awards & scholarships as well as our education programmes and offered her support in promoting these across her constituency.

A new IET report: Advancing safety in transport through automation, was published in September. It examines potential approaches to advancing safety in transport through automation. It was written for the transport industry, the engineering community, policymakers, and anyone with an interest in autonomy and how it can transform how we move people and goods. It was shared with key Parliamentarians with an interest in this area.

“Our Public Affairs work draws on the expertise and insight of our global membership and highlights how engineering and technology drives economic growth and improves quality of life for us and future generations.”



In October, we interviewed Prof Phil Blythe, IET Vice President, and former Chief Scientific Adviser at the UK Government Department for Transport. Phil shed light on his time in the role, which sits at the heart of Government, and how the IET assisted him.



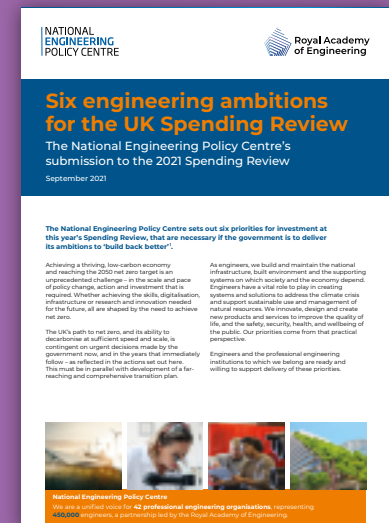




## Working in partnership with the National Engineering Policy Centre, which brings together many of the PEIs, we responded to HM Government's Spending Review consultation.

Entitled: Six engineering ambitions for the UK Spending Review, the document set out six priorities for investment for the government to deliver its ambitions to 'build back better'.

We were one of 33 signatories to a letter sent to the Chancellor urging him to use the Spending Review to deliver the commitment made in the 2020 Budget to increase public investment in research and development (R&D) to £22bn by 2024/25. Other signatories to the letter included the Royal Academy of Engineering and Engineering UK. The letter received coverage in the national press.



# We were delighted to host a Parliamentary reception in December. The event was to mark the end of the IET's 150 anniversary celebrations.

We welcomed over 50 guests, including 15 Parliamentarians. Speeches were given by: Chi Onwurah MP, Shadow Minister for Digital, Science & Technology, Lee Rowley MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Net Zero Industry Champion, and Sir Julian Young and Professor Danielle George from the IET.

The Parliamentary event also enabled us to kick off work to highlight the need for more primary aged children to have access to STEM education from an earlier age. This work will gather pace in 2022.

Further podcasts were launched, focused around the COP climate change conference. "Strengthening our climate resilience" included Parliamentarians Wera Hobhouse MP (Lib Dem, Bath), Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Climate Emergency and Energy, and Philip Dunne MP, Chair of the Environmental Audit Select Committee. IET Fellow Simon Harrison appeared on behalf of the IET.

The final podcast of the year focused on how Net-zero starts at home. It featured Anthony Browne MP, Chair of the Environment APPG and Rick Hartwig and Stephanie Baxter from the IET.

Also in December, IET staff and volunteers met with Patrick Harvie MSP, Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings at the Scottish Parliament. We were delighted to brief him on the IETs activities including retrofit and green skills. We hope to continue working with the Minister into 2022.

In total, throughout the year, we engaged with 82 key stakeholders. These were a mixture of Senior Ministers, Chief Scientific Advisers, Peers and MPs. Despite the challenges we all continued to face in 2021, it was a successful year as we continued to engage with Parliamentarians across the UK and beyond.

We will continue to work with Parliamentarians to highlight changes that need to be made to the school curriculum to ensure our young people have access to STEM education from an earlier age. There is also exciting work looking at the barriers to modernisation in the construction industry and built environment sector and communicating these to government.



As we move into 2022, we will continue to focus on our Strategy 2030 which aims to position the IET as a global thought leader. We look forward to furthering our activities into more countries and territories. We will be raising awareness among Parliamentarians of areas they must look at as part of the Online Harms Bill.



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