

2022 Westminster Photonics and Quantum Showcase - Event report

“Showcasing the British Photonics and Quantum Industry”

Wednesday, 6th July 2022

Breakfast meeting, 8:30 – 10:00 hrs

Cholmondeley Room and Terrace, House of Lords



Summary

- Strong engagement with a select group of parliamentarians, ~50% of whom have not previously engaged with the photonics and quantum community.
- Excellent business to business interaction between participants, described as ‘well worth the participation alone
- Enthusiasm for more similar events in future.

The event coincided with significant ministerial resignations starting with the Chancellor Rishi Sunak and Health Secretary Sajid Javid late on 5 July, ~10 more resignations had followed by close of the event and a total of 30 and rising at the time of writing. Creating significant turmoil in Westminster these events impacted the number of parliamentarians attending with a number previously indicating attendance not showing.

Those parliamentarians attending engaged strongly, spending 30 minutes to over an hour with photonics representatives taking time to speak with organisations in their own constituency and with others. Particular emphasis was given to introducing MPs to organisations across the UK that are key to the supply chain of companies in their particular region. Feedback from parliamentarians was very extremely positive, including indications that quality of organisation participating and technology on display would be relayed to the Science Minister (who was invited but unable to attend).

The event coincided with the lasted evidence session (5 July) on the BEIS select committee enquiry into the UK semiconductor strategy. The manager of this enquiry took significant time to meet with all companies present to gain further understanding of the UK photonics semiconductor ecosystems helping inform their report to government.

Timing as a breakfast meeting was required in order to secure the event in 2022 and new for a photonics showcase. On the downside this required most industrialists to stay overnight. On the upside this enabled substantial more informal interaction between participants which was welcomed by all those attending dinner.

The original date of 22 July to be postponed due to industrial action on the rail network that would have made travel into London impractical. This impacted the ability of some parliamentarians and industrial representative to attend.

Stats

- 30 representatives from UK photonics and quantum ecosystem (21 industry, 9 Academic/ RTO) from 25 separate organisations
 - 20 attending pre meeting dinner on 5/7 + similar for post meeting coffee off-site

- 3 late Covid related cancelations
- 20 separate table tops exhibits
- 8 MPs/ Lords attending or represented by staffers, 12 Parliamentary no shows (assumed due to the untimely Westminster turmoil)
- 3 Parliamentary support staff inc manager of BEIS select committee semiconductor enquiry

Images (not for external use without verification)



General photography and social media posting is not permitted whilst within the Place of Westminster estate.

Preparation

A brochure feature all attending organisation was prepared and distributed to attending parliamentarian on entry along with copy of the UK Photonics visions for 2030. This included a map of organisation location to demonstrate distribution across the UK

Alongside standard logistics industry representative were briefed with typical question likely to be raised by parliamentarians including

- What difference do your products make to society?
- Where are you are based, how many people you employ?
- What you make and your position in supply chain – who are your customers?
- Your history and future i.e. why are you in a given location and your plans for future?
- Challenges your organisation faces?
- What can they (the parliamentarians) do for you

As is common with all Westminster meetings access to the room and security was available only 30mins before the meeting start and finished promptly at 10 with room vacated by 10:10.

Breakfast was provided to all participants and parliamentarians attending.

Acknowledgements

The PLG is extremely grateful to following, without which this year's showcase would not have happened

- Karin Burger (SPIE) who contributed significant time and effort to organise this year showcase and adapt to the change of date
- Rt Hon Baroness Neville-Jones kindly provided parliamentary sponsorship for the meeting to enable it to be hosted in the House of Lords
- Carol Monaghan, MP for chairing the APPG in Photonics and Quantum, championing and supporting the industry and the showcase
- Catherine Frazer and Ciara Gallagher, Carol's staff for supporting and liaising with the Westminster machine.
- To all the photonics and quantum industry and eco-system representatives who gave up their time, energy to engage with parliamentarians
- Photonics21 Bestphorm Horizon 2020 CSA project for helping support substantial costs of host a meeting in Westminster.

Attending organisations

AILU	National Physical Laboratory (NPL)
Alter Technology	ORC/University of Southampton
Bay Photonics	Photonics Leadership Group
Coherent Scotland	PowerPhotonic
CS Applications Catapult	Quantic
CS Connected	Resolute Photonics
Effect Photonics	Rolls Royce
EPSRC National Epitaxy Facility	Senko Advanced Components
Fraunhofer UK, Centre of Applied Photonics	Sivers Photonics
IQE	UKRI STFC
Laser 2000 (UK)	University College London
Leonardo UK	Vector Photonics

Organisational notes

- Power only available on the backside of room, not window terrace side
- Trestle tables not in place on arrival, but rapidly placed
- Sharing round tables a squeeze
- Access doors to the outdoor terrace occupy some of the window side space
- Security and room access was not available before 8am

end