

SCHOOLS FORUM EVENT:

A MODEL FOR SUSTAINABILITY

ASHLYNS SCHOOL

NOVEMBER 17TH 2009, 6.30PM

To live in a sustainable way means that how we live our lives today should not adversely affect the lives of future generations.

In the biological world, species often cannot consciously determine their own environment and so merely adapt to whatever changes occur in that environment. The ability to adapt is seen as an important way to ensure survival. Humans, on the other hand, have the option to take actions in order to alter or reverse previous activities that in hindsight have been shown to cause ill effects (people refer to this as mitigation).

A google search using the word 'sustainability' brings up links to a staggering 31,600,000 documents or sites – so clearly some people have a lot to say on this matter.



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This discussion event seeks to identify what the important questions are, and explore potential solutions:

- What are the main issues that need to be considered?
- What are the barriers to achieving a sustainable society?
- How can we, as a society and as individuals, achieve sustainability?
- How do we know if we have succeeded in this challenge?
- How can scientific modelling be used to determine policies to form a sustainable society?

PROFILES OF PANELISTS



Prof. Brian Collins has been Chief Scientific Advisor to the Department for Transport since 2006, and is also Professor of Information Systems at Cranfield University. His early career was in the scientific civil service, culminating as Deputy Director of RSRE and then Chief Scientist at the Government Communication Headquarters. He then worked in the private sector at KPMG, Wellcome Trust and finally as Chief Information Officer for Clifford Chance. He has been an adviser to several Government Departments. Brian's role at DfT is to ensure that the department's scientific activities are well directed and that all policy is soundly based on good science.



Dr Sarah Bell's research interests lie in the relationships between engineering, technology and society as they impact on sustainability, particularly in relation to water systems. Sarah is co-director of the UCL Environment Institute, (EI) with responsibility for the Water Initiative and UCL's Bridging the Gaps: Sustainable Urban Spaces, programme. In 2007, Sarah received the ExxonMobil Excellence in Teaching award from the Royal Academy of Engineering. She works in collaboration with partners including Thames Water, Waterwise, AECOM and Arup.



Prof. Steven Bishop is coordinator of the GSD project and Professor of Non-Linear Dynamics at UCL Department of Mathematics.

Helen Sinclair is a researcher working in the Sustainability area.

Sustainability groups from Tring School, Ashlyns School and Berkhamsted Collegiate School have organised this event. Its planning was motivated and is funded by the GSD project – an EC coordinated action tasked with reviewing how complex systems analysis can be applied to policy decisions (www.globalsystemdynamics.eu).

For more information on the GSD project, please visit the website: www.globalsystemdynamics.eu

