

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE NEWS 34

Research to Real-World Impact: Engaging with techUK, Society of Chemical Industry (SCI), and MAKE UK

In our previous [KE Newsletter 33](#) we shared information about the University's memberships to [techUK](#), [Society of Chemical Industry \(SCI\)](#) and [MAKE UK](#), all aimed at expanding our external partnerships. In this issue, we focus on the wide array of events and opportunities available through these organisations, which are also actively seeking new speakers and event topics. If you are interested in volunteering to speak or run an event, please contact clare.murgatroyd@york.ac.uk.

AI, Digital & Cybersecurity

- **(Feb 03)** Webinar on sector-specific AI assurance in justice and emergency services
- **(Feb 03)** Timing resilience for data centres webinar
- **(Feb 06)** techUK/DSIT roundtable: international cyber regulatory cooperation
- **(Feb 11)** What is AI insurance and how is it related to incentivising AI assurance and risk mitigation?
- **(Feb 23)** LASR x techUK AI security market insight event



Emerging Tech & Engineering

- **(Feb 04)** Quantum Readiness Series: An industry primer on quantum technologies
- **(Feb 05)** What does the UK's photonics industry need to succeed?
- **(Feb 11)** Engineering biology: Unlocking opportunities for UK business
- **(Feb 25)** Navigating IP risks and opportunities: strategies for tech companies

Defense & National Security

- **(Feb 03)** Next generation SECRET capabilities: HMG's requirements: National Security Briefing
- **(Feb 05)** Defence Digital commercial briefing with Victoria Cope

Public Services & Health

- **(Feb 05)** Member drop-in: maximising your techUK membership in health, social care and life sciences
- **(Feb 06)** Home Office digital quarterly market engagement session – policing focus

Policy, International & Regions

- **(Feb 16-20)** techUK delegation to New Delhi for the India AI Impact Summit 2026 International Policy & Trade
- **(Feb 19)** Telecoms Security Act: Industry Sessions Telecoms

- **(Feb 25)** Trusted Research Workshop 2: Grey areas and proportionate practice – building the trusted research playbook Education & EdTech

Academics interested in engaging at a strategic level (e.g., sitting on boards or committees) with the SCI should contact Clare, clare.murgatroyd@york.ac.uk for one of the available enhanced memberships.



Look out for:

- Technical interest groups and career related groups: [SCI - Interest Groups](#)
- Y&H group here: [SCI - Yorkshire and the Humber Group](#)
- Innovation Enabled by Partnership award: [SCI - SCI Innovation Award](#)
- Technical and training related upcoming events can be found on our [website](#)
- [Society of Chemical Industry - Mentoring Programme](#) (open to mid-career mentees as well as mentors)
- Postdocs - [Ramsay Trust Memorial Fellowship](#)

Look out for:

- **(Feb 28)** MAKEUK Apprenticeship Open Day
- **(March 03)** National Manufacturing Conference 2026.
- **(April 20-24)** Exhibit with Make UK at MACH 2026
- **(June 11)** Inspired and Make UK Energy Procurement Workshop



Reports: Access [blogs](#), [reports](#), and [publications](#) via the [Insights | Make UK](#) section, including the [Executive Survey 2026 report](#) published this week, in association with PwC, which shares manufacturers' expectations and insights for the year ahead. The [Impact Report 2025](#) highlights the achievements delivered for members.

There is still plenty of time for you to join any of these memberships. Please contact Clare Murgatroyd clare.murgatroyd@york.ac.uk for membership logon details.

UNIVERSITY OF YORK RESEARCH BOOSTS UK FOOD SECURITY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Controlled environment agriculture (CEA), including greenhouses and indoor vertical farms, is essential to the UK's food infrastructure, supporting domestic production and increasing resilience to climate change. However, the sector is under severe pressure due to rising energy costs, which threaten the sustainability of growers.

Dr Daphne Ezer, a Lecturer at the University of York is involved in several research and innovation projects focused on strengthening CEA's resilience and improving UK food security.

Small-to-medium urban vertical farms struggle to test new conditions without disrupting production. The Ezer lab solved this by developing a data-driven algorithm, published in *Quantitative Plant Biology*, that iteratively optimises lighting during continuous commercial operation. This system makes small, data-driven adjustments over time, improving plant growth, yield, and energy efficiency, helping these farms remain competitive.

A second Innovate UK-funded project led by Dr Ezer and **Professor Katherine Denby**, in partnership with Farm Urban, Tozer Seeds, Vertically Urban, the Wellness Doctors, and Alder Hey Children's Hospital, tackles nutritional and social issues. The Ezer lab screened rocket, lettuce, and kale varieties for maximum vitamin/mineral content under energy-efficient lighting. Farm Urban delivers the resulting nutrient-dense living greens to chronically ill children, their families, and staff at Alder Hey.

Finally, Dr Ezer, in collaboration with **Dr Nicola Favretto** (University of York) and Sven Batke (Edge Hill University/UK Greenhouse Consortium), is leading a UKRI-supported project with partners like Priva and the British Tomato Growers Association. This initiative aims to completely redesign the standard greenhouse for the future, integrating energy efficiency, plant biology and grower needs from the start.

Together, these projects demonstrate how targeted research and cross-sector collaboration can improve the energy efficiency and resilience of Controlled Environment Agriculture, supporting domestic food production at an important time for secure and sustainable food systems.



THE CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURE AND WORK WITH THE NATIONAL CHURCHES TRUST

The Centre for the Study of Christianity and Culture (CSCC) is collaborating with The National Churches Trust (NCT) on a major survey of churches, analysing nearly 5000 responses on the current state, societal role, and challenges faced by places of worship. This collaboration extends a long-standing relationship, leveraging CSCC's global research reputation and grassroots expertise. The main report was launched to stakeholders and policymakers at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in October 2025, featuring speakers including Hugh Dennis, Rob Rinder, and 'History Alice,' with the University of York's contribution acknowledged.

The Centre Director, Professor Kate Giles and the Deputy Director, Dr Louise Hampson were part of the Steering Group and continue to explore projects and collaborations emerging from the Survey and the V&A's 'call to action'. Key recommendations include informing Government policy decisions on funding the sector, resourcing and supporting church volunteers, and exploring how churches can understand, interpret and share their stories with the public. These will form the basis of future funding applications by CSCC and form part of a proposed Impact Case Study for the next Research Excellence Framework (REF).

Contact the Centre for the Study of Christianity and Culture at candc@york.ac.uk.

NOW IS THE MOMENT TO ACT

This report shows both the scale of what is at stake and the hope that continues to shine through. Churches are not passive relics of the past; they are active, living places, powered by volunteers and sustained by communities who depend on them. They embody resilience in its truest form – adapting to changing needs, welcoming the vulnerable, and safeguarding treasures for future generations. What emerges here is not only a portrait of struggle but also one of remarkable strength, and a reminder that these places deserve our continued commitment.

The National Churches Survey sets out clearly the challenges that churches are facing, and also the opportunities for renewal, if we act together.

Without intervention the risks are high – we risk losing these buildings and all they embody – for good. Let us rise to that call, so that churches, chapels and meeting houses continue to stand as beacons of hope in the United Kingdom now and for many generations to come.

Sir Philip Rutnam
Chair, National Churches Trust

 There are an estimated 38,500 churches, chapels, and meeting houses in the UK, approximately half of which are listed buildings.

Photo: Ruth Toward



NEW! RESEARCH IMPACT SUPPORT AND RESOURCES GOOGLE SITE

Our new **internal Google site** is a dedicated resource for up-to-date information about research impact at York, containing:

- Guidance on key topics - such as an introduction to impact, planning your impact, impact in grant applications, and evaluating and evidencing impact
- Information on support available at York, including colleagues and funding
- Details of upcoming training and materials from previous sessions