The close of the year is inevitably a time for reflection – to consider what we have been doing enabled and supported by the Biochemical Society in the final quarter of 2017, before turning to what we hope to achieve in 2018 and beyond.

In October, we ran our sixth annual Biology Week, by many measures the most successful to date, and we thank our Member Organisations including the Biochemical Society for helping us reach out and bring this annual celebration of the biosciences to even more people than ever before.

Over 100 events took place across more than 50 locations globally, engaging with thousands of people worldwide, with more than 600 bioscientists also joining in on Twitter for our first ever #iamabiologist social media campaign.

Two of our events were in collaboration with the Biochemical Society, including our annual debate hosted by the Royal Institution (Ri), and our Policy Lates discussion evening on mental health and wellbeing.

The debate, Genome editing: where do we draw the line? took an expert look at the rapidly expanding field of genome editing, which brings technical challenges and options, and raises fundamental questions of ethics and values.

The Ri was packed to the rafters with an audience ranging from school children to professors who came to listen to bioethics experts and genetic researchers discuss the facts and opinions surrounding this hot topic.

A vibrant discussion followed the panel discussion, organized in collaboration with the Biochemical Society, British Ecological Society and Physiological Society, on the biological research underpinning our understanding of mental health and mental health policy. It was again encouraging to see such a diverse cross section of people speak openly and progressively about mental health research and policy challenges for the future.

Recently we’ve also responded to a number of consultations, including most recently the life sciences Industrial Strategy enquiry, the Migration Advisory Committee call for evidence on EEA-workers, and the call for evidence by Defra on digital sequence information and the Nagoya Protocol.

We are working to ensure our members’ voices are heard and that decisions made at a Government level are in the best interest of the biosciences community, especially as Brexit discussions continue. The RSB is feeding into the High Level Stakeholder Group on EU Exit, Universities, Research and Innovation, co-chaired by Jo Johnson, MP, Minister of State for Universities & Science, from BEIS and Robin Walker from the Department for Exiting the European Union. Movement of people, skills and regulation have of course featured prominently.

In September, we hosted a discussion workshop on Open Access for learned society publishers across all specialisms. There are over 600 learned societies in the UK, and just under half of these publish academic journals and conference proceedings, including the Biochemical Society.

The health of our specialist research communities is tightly bound to their publishing activity and surpluses and understanding the current business threats and opportunities is key.

We launched our HE Bioscience Technician of the Year Award for the very first time this year, in collaboration with University Bioscience Managers Association. We want to showcase the essential work technicians do in labs and universities across the UK, and the award is a new and visible step in our efforts to do this.

RSB Director Rachel Lambert-Forsyth has also joined the Department for Education’s Healthcare Science Technical Level panel to advise on the content of their new education programmes. Through this panel, we hope that we will be able to help shape the new programmes that will deliver a thorough and robust training programme for the next generation of technicians.

As we move into the New Year, we will also be moving into the final year of our three-year strategy, and of course will be thinking how to progress beyond 2018 with a refreshed strategy.

We look forward to developing further in partnership with the Biochemical Society and our other member organizations and hope the members of the Biochemical Society will continue to be closely involved in our progress.