



2004 has seen a momentous event in the Association's history – the granting of a Royal Charter to include, through the Science Council, the maintenance of a Register of Chartered Science Teachers. This is a truly historic occasion which not only recognises ASE as an important professional body but also, and more importantly, the teaching of science as a highly valued profession. The successful petition to the Privy Council to be granted a Royal Charter has been the result of immense hard work by ASE Council members over several years. Previous Trustees, in particular Betty Preston who had the vision to initiate the whole process and drive it forward in

the early stages, and Association Chairs have taken a very active role in producing documentation and consulting with ASE members and external organisations.

What does being a Chartered body mean? On page 11, Keith Lawrey explains the nature of a Royal Charter and the implications for professional practice which stem from Chartered Status. Sir Gareth Roberts, in his article SET for Success: A key role for Chartered Science Teachers (page 8), provides further background to important initiatives in science education in which the Association has taken a major role.

It is, perhaps, fortunate that the award of the Association's Royal Charter coincides with considerable investment in the scientific activities of the nation. The Ten Year Science and Innovation Investment Framework produced by the Treasury, DTI and DfES shows the financial commitment of government to supporting teachers of science and their professional development. Besides increased financial incentives for entrants to the profession and to Advanced Skills Teachers of Science, the Government will *'... improve the quality of science teaching by expanding the continuing professional development opportunities available to science teachers and enhancing support for the new Science Learning Centres'*. The national commitment to professional development and the potential for teachers of science, from primary to HE, to gain Chartered Teacher of Science status are a powerful combination for the enhancement of science teaching.

This year's Annual Conference in Leeds provided a good opportunity to celebrate ASE's newly Chartered status and to reinforce ASE's unique contribution in supporting science education in the UK. The achievement of Chartered Status was formally announced at the Annual Business Meeting and was celebrated at the Annual Dinner, the Presidential Address and Members' Reception. As Roger McCune's report of the Conference shows (page 14), there was professional stimulation and highlights for all who attended this major event for professional development. Clearly, attendance at the Annual Conference and Area Meetings could be just one of the elements in a Chartered Teacher's professional development portfolio.

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