1) (Mis)communication Between Scientists and Policymakers

James Wilsdon (Royal Society) suggested that scientists and policymakers are both at times complicit in a simplified and overly-linear account of the science-policy relationship. He described how expert advice is often thought most useful to policy when it is presented as a single, definitive interpretation, with uncertainties and unknowns reduced to measurable 'risks'. But this is an inadequate response to incomplete knowledge. As thinkers such as Andy Stirling have argued, we need to pay more attention to neglected areas of uncertainty, ambiguity and ignorance, and develop a more 'plural and conditional' account of expert advice. Drawing on Roger Pielke Jr.'s work, he also outlined the different roles that scientists can play in policy processes (from 'pure scientist' to 'issues advocate' to 'honest broker') and emphasised the need to be clear which role is being adopted at particular times.