

The Secretary of State has approved the appointment of Venki Ramakrishnan as a Board Member of the British Library.

News story

Venki Ramakrishnan has been approved by The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport as a Board Member of the British Library, following his nomination by the Trustees of the British Museum, for a four-year period from 15 June 2020 to 14 June 2024.



Venki Ramakrishnan is a senior scientist at the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge, where he and others determined the precise atomic structure of the ribosome, the enormous molecular complex that reads our genes to make the proteins they specify. The work also showed how many antibiotics work by blocking bacterial ribosomes, which could help to design better antibiotics. For this work, he shared the 2009 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. Since 2015, Ramakrishnan has been president of the Royal Society, one of the oldest scientific organizations in the world, and in this role has been a leading voice for British science.

Ramakrishnan is also the author of a popular memoir, *Gene Machine*, which tells about the quest for the structure of the ribosome and also describes in very frank terms what it is like to be an outsider who found himself in the middle of a race for an important problem. It is a frank look at the process of science with its mixture of insights and persistence as well as blunders and dead ends, and how scientists behave, with their mixture of competition and collaboration, their egos, insecurities and jealousies, but also their kindness and generosity.

This role is remunerated at £9130 per annum. One member of the British Library Board is nominated by the Trustees of the British Museum. The Government's Governance Code requires that any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years is declared. This is

defined as holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation or candidature for election. Mr Ramakrishnan has not declared any activity.

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