

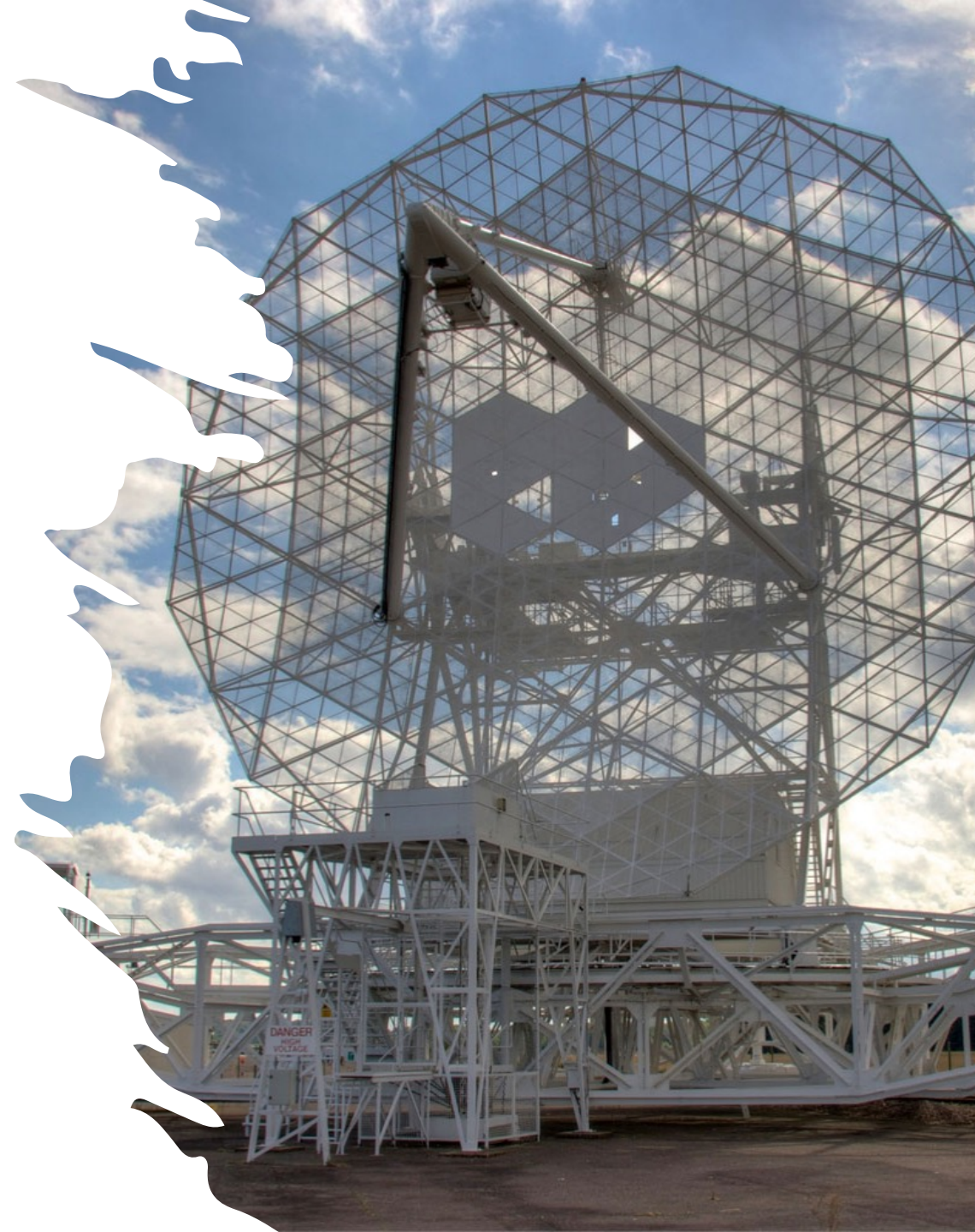
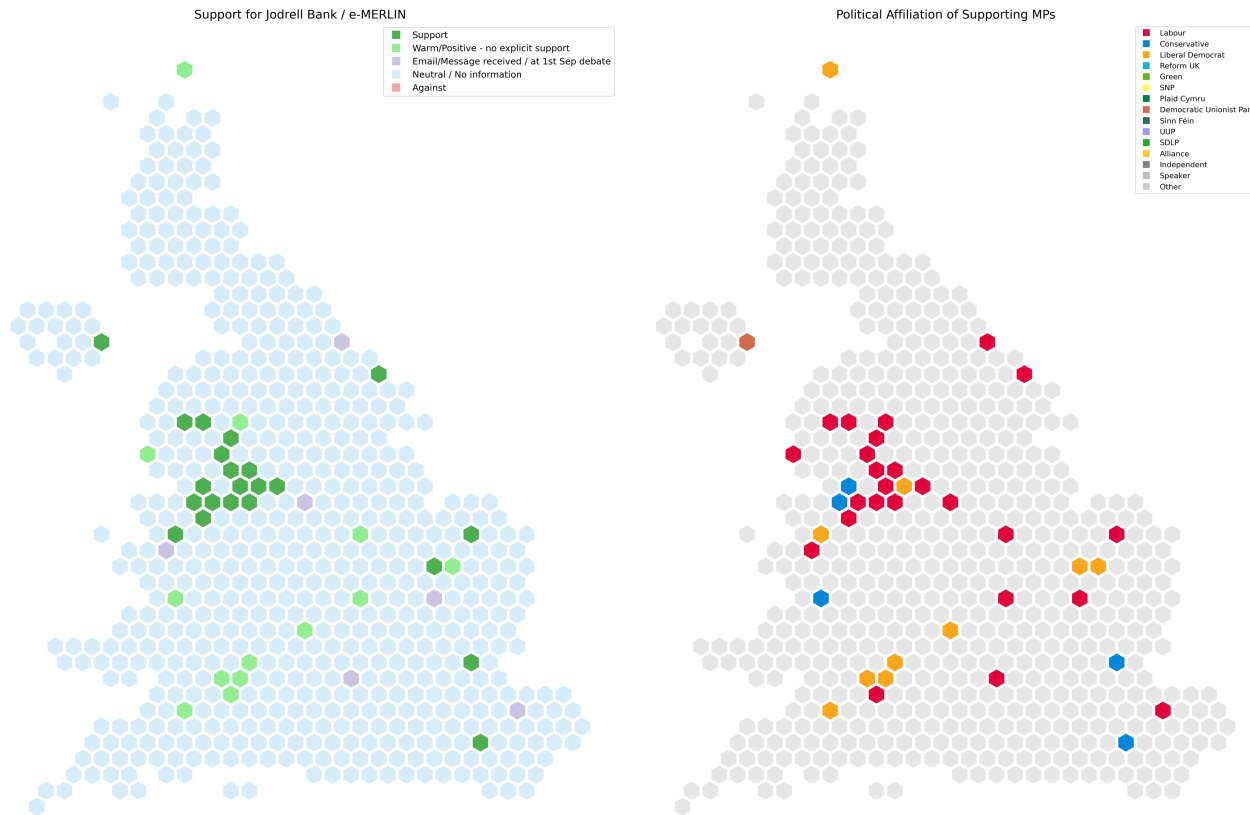


What can you do to help
support e-MERLIN?

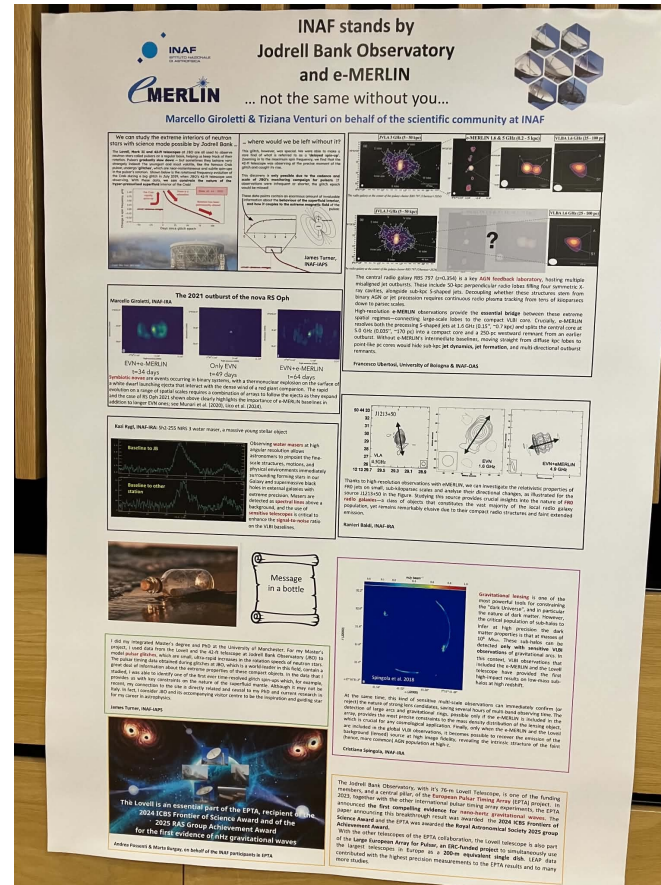


Photo by Ant Holloway

For those in the UK – contact your MPs



Please tell others about the funding cuts



Thank you Gabriele Bruni, Marcello Giroletti and Tiziana Venturi!

Raise awareness through social media



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Science Community Statement Available Now



International Science Community Support Statement

For many decades, the United Kingdom has been a world leader in radio astronomy, driven by scientific excellence, innovation and international collaboration. Central to this success has been Jodrell Bank Observatory, home to the iconic Lovell Telescope and e-MERLIN, the UK's National Radio Astronomy Facility. The seven telescopes of e-MERLIN have been funded by the UK's Science and Technology Funding Council (STFC) and provide an indispensable component of the global astronomical research structure.

We, the undersigned researchers, academics, educators and members of the international scientific community, write to express our profound concern regarding the planned withdrawal of operational funding for e-MERLIN as an astronomy facility from 1st April 2028.

e-MERLIN is a unique and vital component of global radio astronomy. Its 217 km baselines provide capabilities unmatched by any other current radio observatory, bridging the gap between facilities such as the Karl G. Jansky Very Large Array (VLA) and international Very Long Baseline Interferometry (VLBI) networks. With a resolution comparable to ALMA, the Hubble and James Webb Space Telescopes, e-MERLIN has enabled major discoveries spanning star and planet formation, black holes, pulsars, fast radio bursts, supernovae and galaxy evolution. Its observing programme is open to the international community and awarded solely on scientific excellence.

The facility is also fundamental to international VLBI. As a founding contributor to the European VLBI Network (EVN), e-MERLIN regularly provides between one-third and one-half of the telescopes used in EVN observations, while the Lovell Telescope remains one of the network's most important instruments. These long-standing collaborations are essential for future SKAO-VLBI science, where e-MERLIN's intermediate baselines will significantly enhance imaging performance and scientific return.

Beyond science, e-MERLIN plays a critical role in developing highly skilled researchers, engineers, software specialists and technical staff. It serves as a major training platform for future generations of radio astronomers while contributing expertise that benefits the wider research, technology and innovation sectors upon which modern society increasingly depends.

As the international community enters the SKAO era, e-MERLIN's importance will increase rather than diminish. The facility is not superseded by the SKAO; instead, the two are highly complementary. While the SKAO is optimised for transformational surveys, e-MERLIN provides the high-resolution follow-up observations needed to understand individual objects in detail. Together with the EVN and other international facilities, it forms part of a balanced global ecosystem that maximises scientific discovery. The future success of radio astronomy depends on a balanced ecosystem of National-scale and international facilities operating at different wavelengths and angular resolutions. Major international observatories achieve their greatest scientific impact when supported by strong national capabilities, local expertise and complementary instrumentation.

As members of the international scientific community, we affirm that e-MERLIN remains a unique and indispensable component of worldwide radio astronomy. Preserving it is not simply about maintaining a telescope network. It is about safeguarding a globally important scientific capability, protecting decades of expertise, and ensuring that future generations can continue to build on the UK's longstanding leadership in astronomy.

We acknowledge that this development occurs against a backdrop of wider funding pressures on particle physics, nuclear physics, astronomy and related disciplines across the UK research landscape. We urge the UK Government, UKRI and STFC to commit to sustained investment in curiosity-driven research and innovation, recognising its vital role in driving discovery, fostering innovation and supporting the UK's future growth and prosperity.

We therefore respectfully urge UKRI, STFC and the UK Government to work with the University of Manchester to secure a sustainable funding solution that secures the future of Jodrell Bank Observatory and the UK's National Radio Astronomy Facility, and the expertise of its staff and the scientific opportunities it enables.



Please sign our
Support Statement
for the International
Science Community





Thank you for all
your continued
support

