



Scottish Consortium
for Rural Research

MINUTE OF THE 55TH MAIN BOARD MEETING (ANNUAL BOARD MEETING) OF THE SCRR HELD ON 7TH NOVEMBER 2016, AT EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY, SIGHTHILL CAMPUS, EDINBURGH.

Present:

Prof Jonathan Seckl (Chair)
Prof Steve Yearley (Chair, Executive Committee)
Prof Stuart K Monro (Scientific Director)
Prof Willie Donachie (Secretary and Treasurer)
Dr Kathy Velandar (Edinburgh Napier University)
Diarmid Campbell (British Geological Survey, BGS)
Dr Alistair Dawson (Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, CEH)
Dr Ed McKay (Scottish National Heritage, SNH)
Dr Madhu Satsangi (University of Stirling)
Prof David Miller (James Hutton Institute)
Prof Kevin O'Donnell (Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture, SASA)
Dr Simon Shackley (School of GeoSciences, University of Edinburgh)
Dr Phil Wookey (Heriot Watt University)
Ruth Woolstoneholm (Sniffer)

Apologies:

Prof David Argyle (RDSVS, UoE)	Dr Andy Kerr (ECCI, UoE)
Mike Bonaventura (Crichton Carbon Centre)	Dr David Kerridge (BGS)
Prof Jeremy Bradshaw (University of Edinburgh)	Murdo Macdonald (CoS)
Ian Bryden (UHI)	Dr Marc Metzger (School of Geosciences, UoE)
Prof Colin Campbell (James Hutton Institute)	Dr Nick Owens (SAMS)
Prof Julie Fitzpatrick (Moredun Research Institute)	Prof Josephine Pemberton (Evolutionary Sciences, UoE)
Prof Nick Fraser (NMS)	Prof Martin Price (Centre for Mountain
Prof Gavin Gibson (Heriot Watt University)	Prof Wayne Powell (SRUC)
Simon Gilmour (Society of Antiquaries)	Dr Chris Quine (FR)
Prof David Gray (School of Biology, UoE)	Prof Michael Rayner (UHI)
Dr Carol Hill (University of Glasgow)	Prof Ian Simpson (University of Stirling)
Prof Pete Hollingsworth (RBGE)	Prof Judith Phillips (Natural Sciences UoS)
Prof David Hume (Roslin Institute)	Dr Antony Weir (Heriot Watt University)
Prof Lee Innes (Moredun Research Institute Studies, UHI)	Prof Jeremy Wilson (RSPB)
	Dr Aubrey Zerkle (University of St Andrews)

- 1. Welcome:** The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.
- 2. Minutes of the 54th meeting of the Main Board:** These were accepted as a record of the meeting.
- 3. Matters arising:** The matters arising from the 54th Meeting were noted as action points in the minutes.

4. Centres of Excellence and other networks:

- 4.1. Coordinated Agenda for Marine Environment and Rural Affairs Science; CAMERAS (KOD):** There is now a new secretariat and Fiona Comrie has been seconded to the group to lead this. There is a sense of purpose with the formation of an Operational Group. One early initiative is to draw up a “Landscape of Research Needs” which will feed into the Scottish Government’s new Centre for Knowledge Exchange. There will also be a mapping of science resources and skills within the members. CAMERAS contains members such as BGS which are not funded by the SG.
- 4.2. SASA (KOD):** Proposed Roddinglaw housing development, which impinges on the Green Belt and SASA land, is being considered on appeal by the Scottish Government after agreement by Local Authority. There are concerns about the biosecurity of SAS operations if this goes ahead.
- 4.3. SNH (EMcK):** member of CAMERAS Operational Group, which is concerned with policy user needs objectives. SNH is mainly focussed on user research and from this perspective, Scotland’s biodiversity strategy. SNH are interested in identifying where the technological breakthrough areas are earth watch and sensor technologies, DNA surveillance in fresh water and soil environments.
- 4.4. Edinburgh Napier University (KV):** St Abbs Marine Station in cooperation with Heriot Watt University has now been opened. The Department of Animal and Plant sciences has a wide portfolio of research projects from polycystic ovaries to Crohn’s Disease to ecosystems in Africa. Grants in excess of £1M have recently been acquired.
- 4.5. James Hutton Institute (DM):** Centre for Knowledge Exchange and Impact now has a Director, Graham Cook. The centre should provide a single badge and banner for research organisations funded by the Scottish Government. It will work closely with Centres of Excellence and Expertise; Plant Health, Climate exchange, Centre for Expertise in Water and EPIC. This will be a virtual Centre with bases in a number of Institutes. One topic already on the table for the Centre is a think tank on biodiversity Scottish Parliament event to discuss impact of academia on policy held to highlight the importance of this influence and how it can be developed. Barley Hub exhibition taken to Westminster recently looking for support. During discussions on this report the dangers associated with meeting political and popular expectations for science impact were highlighted. A suggestion for a survey on Members views on the impact of Brexit on their research.
- 4.6. Sniffer (RW):** Informed by SG policy, in particular climate change, air quality and transport. Also informed by research from a number of sources with a focus to build capacity of a number of stakeholders such as public bodies and communities in relation to climate change, public transport and cleaner air agenda. Is there a place for Climate Exchange centre to be a member of SCRR?
- 4.7. Social Sciences (SY):** SY represents SS in Edinburgh but obviously there are other social sciences within other members more closely aligned with rural research. Geoff Simm recently appointed to the University in the Global Academy in Agriculture and Food Security. Social Sciences aim to work closely with Geoff and colleagues. Rural research in the School is focussed on renewable energy use and also some interest in

agricultural innovation. There is also a Citizen science initiatives around flatworm control.

During discussion on this report suggestions were made for;

- i) A more coordinated community for Social Scientists within SCRR
- ii) SCRR coordination for Global Challenges Research Fund (£1.5B)
- iii) Rural development post Brexit as a social science topic for a workshop may be relevant.
- iv) Should the SCRR group be increased to include urban researchers if accessing GCRF is a serious objective.
- v) Is there a link with SAGES that should be developed further.

4.8. University of Stirling University (MS) Rural research is on ageing in communities while the Institute of Aquaculture has interests in aquaculture in developing countries. Renewable energy is a focus for some groups.

4.9. CEH (AD): CEH in the process of re-jigging all research in line with ODA.

4.10. Heriot Watt University (PW): Organisational change has also taken place at HWU. School of Life Sciences now formed and hoping that this school along with others can be more involved in SCRR. Relevant links are through SAGES and the new Lyell Centre at HWU campus.

4.11. BGS (DC):

5. Scottish Science Advisory Council: Prof Stuart Monro informed the meeting that the new Scientific Advisory Council is now in place. However information is at a premium as the website is a year out of date. SCRR should invite the Chief Scientist, Sheila Rowan, to an SCRR meeting.

6. SCRR membership (SM): The University of St Andrews has joined up through the School of Geoscience. Discussions with the National Trust for Scotland have stalled at present as they undergo restructuring. A suggestion to use video-conferencing will be followed up as members have facilities

7. SCRR fora and workshops:

- Land Reform – This needs to be moved forward and perhaps has to be wider based to involve aspects such as GPS mapping.
- Social Science aspects. This to be arranged
- Collections – A meeting of interested organisations was held at Moredun in August. The aim is to have a forum in Battleby in 2017.

Future events include:

- Scotia Agricultural Club: Discussions have been held and agreement to fund an essay competition for 5th and 6th Year school students and a public lecture have been agreed in principle. This will be launched in 2017 for award in 2018.

- 8. SCRR Annual lecture:** The Peter Wilson Lecture for 2017 is to take place in the Royal Society of Edinburgh on the 6th February 2017 when Professor Bill Sutherland, University of Cambridge
- 9. Minutes of Executive Committee meeting 125, 126, 127:** The minutes of these meetings were noted.
- 10. Membership of the SCRR Executive:**
The Committee is at full strength. Dr Kathy Velandar was re-elected to serve another 3 years. Profs Monro and Donachie were also re-elected for a further year.
- 11. Finances 2014-15.** Prof Donachie reported that the finances were in good shape with a small surplus having been recorded. The budget for the coming year was also projecting a small surplus. Monies have been allocated for anticipated meetings but further allocations could be made when proposed meetings are suggested by members. The principle adopted has been to have sufficient funds in the bank to cover a full year's worth of expenses.
- 12. SCRR Website and Newsletter:** Prof Donachie reported that the web site was currently being redesigned and updated. The Spring 2017 Newsletter should be available by end of January 2017 in time for the Peter Wilson Lecture in February.
- 13. Future Directors' meetings:**
- 6 February 2017: Executive Committee and Directors' Lunch; National Museum of Scotland
 - April 2017: Executive Committee and Directors' Lunch; BGS, Riccarton Campus, Edinburgh
- 14. Date of next Board meeting:** A date in November 2017 will be sought.