



Scottish Consortium
for Rural Research

**MINUTE OF THE 130TH MEETING OF THE SCRR
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 24TH APRIL 2017,
BRITISH GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, LYELL
CENTRE, RESEARCH AVENUE SOUTH,
EDINBURGH, EH14 4AP**

Present:

Prof Stuart K Monro (Scientific Director and Acting Chair)
Prof Willie Donachie (Secretary/Treasurer)
Dr Nick Fraser (NMS)
Dr Sonja Rueckart (Edinburgh Napier University, for Dr Kathy Velander)
Prof Bob Ferrier (JHI, for Prof David Miller)
Graeme Cook (Director of Knowledge Exchange and Information Centre for the Scottish Environment, Food and Agricultural Research Institutes (SEFARI))

Apologies:

Prof Steve Yearley (Chair)
Prof Pete Hollingsworth (RBGE)
Prof Martin Price (Centre for Mountain Studies, (UHI)
Prof Alistair Stott (SRUC)
Ruth Wolstenholme (Sniffer)
Prof Lee Innes (MRI)
Prof David Miller (JHI)
Dr Kathy Velander (Edinburgh Napier University)

1. **Welcome & Apologies:** SKM welcomed those present especially Graeme Cook.
2. **Minutes and matters arising from 128th Executive meeting:**
Agreed with minor changes.
3. **Centres of Excellence and Networks: update on all networks**
 - 3.1. **Edinburgh Napier University:** (SR) New funding has been obtained for ongoing research into seabirds nesting around St Abbs Head, for a MASTS collaboration with Heriot Watt University on stressors. St Andrews has funded the Gatty Marine Laboratory.
 - 3.2. JHI (BF) The season for shows is approaching. Potatoes in Practice. Also the TB McAuley lecture, in Edinburgh. JHI working with the Scottish Government on the hydrogenation agenda and an new initiative has been launched, Hydrogenation International which highlights the high international profile of Scottish water research. JHI has been very successful with EU grants and also with Innovate UK. SKM asked about the Global Challenge bids. It is unclear what is happening and there is currently no information about what has been funded. The SCRR members should be asked about developments. Professor Tim Jackson will be delivering the McAuley lecture in October 4th 2017 at Dynamic Earth.

- 3.3.** SEFARI GC) Scottish Environment, Food and Agricultural Research Institutes is a collective of Scottish Research Institutes. The driver is the opportunity to increase impact and KE of public funded research at the Institutes through a collective approach. GC has previous experience through his work at SPICE. The role of SEFARI is to deliver across policy, business and to trying to get research information to the right people, in the right format, at the right time. In the first six months GC has been getting to know the research landscape of the Institutes. Think Tank meetings with scientists have been set up in areas such as Climate Change. Key Conversations with individuals have also been held to discuss topics such as international opportunities. Two Fellowships have also been funded, one on Scotland's Futures Forum and the other with Cairngorms' National Park Authority. Partnerships with others is a major objective. This involves groupings such as CAMERAS. There are synergies with SCRR as most of the participants are SCRR members, which offers interaction with a wider circle of Scottish researchers. There will be opportunities for joint initiatives. Events such as the Royal Highland Show and The Edinburgh International Science Festival could be a focus for interaction.
- 3.4. NMS (NF)** New Laboratories are being completed at the NMS Collections Centre at Granton, Edinburgh. That will improve facilities for Research Visitors. The EISF went well at the museum and visitor number were up. NF recounted his pleasant experience on the Life Scientific on Radio 4.
- 3.5. SSAC (SKM)** No updates on activities have been released.
- 3.6. SRUC** The SRUC Strategic Vision has been released for consultation.

4. Events

4.1 Annual Peter Wilson Lecture 2018. Roger Crofts, Chair of RSGS, was suggested as a possible speaker. Land Use would be the topic. SKM will follow up on this.

4.2 Workshops:

4.2.1 Biological Collections: NF presented a briefing paper drawn up by himself and Pete Hollingsworth. In summary three main areas were identified, preserved morphological specimens (museums, Herbaria) Molecular specimens (DNA etc), Live collections. Fossils have not been included at this stage. There is a need for a pre-meeting survey to try and get some knowledge of the range of specimens in collections around Scotland. There is undoubtedly a huge amount of data around. Worldwide there is estimated to be 3 billion specimens so Scotland will have a substantial number. However such a survey will be a challenge. Looking at the vent itself Ian Owens at the Natural History Museum or Judy Skoag from the USA would be useful speakers at any meeting we organise. A small sub-group needs to be identified to organise the survey. Names were suggested for this. WD and SKM will contact individuals to join this sub-group which will aim for a Strategic Overview of Biological Collections in Scotland. The possibility of aligning this with a student project was discussed.

4.2.2 SCRR STEM Strategy Workshop: This took place on February 24th at Dynamic Earth. SCRR Members amongst others discussed the Government's paper on the STEM Strategy. A report is being written.

4.2.3: Coastal Event Workshop: A number of SCRR members have interests in this environment and an SCRR workshop on this topic will be organised. ST Andrews,

SAMS, Napier Edinburgh, St Abbs Head will be contacted. This was identified as priority. A meeting of interested parties will be organised.

4.2.4: Extremophiles: This is on hold at present.

4.2.5: Scotia/SCRR Essay Competition and Lecture: The details for this are nearly complete. It is still the intention to launch this in 2017 for award in 2018. The Committee will look for speakers for the public lecture.

4.3 Directors' Lunches

- Thursday 1 June 2017: Directors' Lunch at Field Studies Council Station, Millport
- Friday 17 November: AGM and 56th Main Board Meeting, RBGE, Edinburgh.

5. Membership

5.1 Consortium: The National Trust are still not signed up due to reorganisation issues. The Rowett Institute will be approached about membership.

5.2 Executive Committee: The Executive is one member short as Kevin O'Donnell has resigned.

6. Finances:

WD reported that the Finances remain healthy. A number of subscriptions are still due. And those organisations will be contacted again.

7. Publicity and Communications

7.1 SCRR Website: The website has been updated and new material is now being added..

7.2 SCRR Newsletter: The Winter edition was issued in January in time for the 2017 Peter Wilson Lecture. The next newsletter will be Summer 2017 in time for The Royal Highland Show. The deadline for article submission is 26th May 2017

8. Any other business:

No other business

9. Date and place of next Executive meeting

Monday 19th June 2017 at MRI.

KEY

Prof Stuart K Monro	SKM	Prof Bob Ferrier	BF
Prof Willie Donachie	WD	Graeme Cook	GC
Dr Nick Fraser	NF	Dr Sonja Rueckart	SR

Abbreviations:

CAMERAS – Coordinated Agenda for Marine, Environment and Rural Affairs Scotland