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[Scottish Consortium
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**Minutes of the 149th meeting of the SCRR Executive Committee**

**Thursday 28th April 2022 online via Zoom**

In attendance:

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| Geoff Simm, GS (Chair) | Stuart Monro, SM |
| Sarah Skerratt, SS | Tracey Shimmield, TS |
| Lyndsey Hayes, LH (Minutes) | Karen Halliday, KH |
| Alexandra Davey, AD | David Miller, DM |
| Nick Fraser, NF |  |

1. **Welcome & Apologies**

GS welcomed all and noted apologies from David Hopkins, Des Thompson, Lee Innes, Willie Donachie and Kathy Velander. DM joined late and KH left early due to clashes.

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 3rd March 2022 were accepted with no changes.

Matters arising:

* Notes of Strategic planning meeting held on 31st March 2022: SS paper is summary of previous discussions and it was decided to focus on purpose and actions.
* GS suggested change to ‘rural researchers **who are in** the early stages of career’.
* All agreed AD proposal to reword as ‘support, sustain and **address** the crisis’.
* All agreed with SS suggestion that ECR mini conference to be joined with AGM on 17 Nov to encourage more people to attend in person.
1. **SCRR strategic direction discussion**

GS invited comments on functions and themes:

* TS thinks intent is good but remembers discussion on a lot of support for ECRs and all agreed this should be on front page as well as in purpose.
* NF agreed with AD that need positive slant on addressing ‘crisis’.
* SM sent an email to SS on rural support for education and felt we should have a focus on rural from other organisations.
* AD requested that EDI discussions be reflected in function.
* GS suggested perhaps various forms of malnutrition rather than poor diets.
* TS asked about network role and SS explained discussions held on this at previous meetings, but no conclusion reached due to resource and capacity. TS going to a meeting soon where she will investigate.
* KH noted that some ‘gaps’ as had to make sure have consistency of message so adding EDI in important and then function components need linked to action components – just making sure all the info. is mapped correctly so people can understand how we are doing things. SS agreed that we should build up to ensure story consistent, plus also work back the way to ensure we do what we say we do. KH agreed that we need substance behind the words on the page on the website so that people really understand what we do. SS described how she sees this in a table.
* SM drew attention to the limited resources we have to work with and how to be most effective using partnerships.
* **Focus on ECRs**

GS felt inspired by KH updates and suggested recycling some into future newsletters. NF thought it important to secure an ECR member on the SCRR committee to ensure buy in and suggested an executive member could lead on each theme area. SM advised first step is to get ECRs to engage with newsletter to present their research in a way they are familiar and comfortable with, then involve them further. GS recommended ECRs have their own group, but wondered how to link in with this committee. KH, noted recent increased involvement of students on senior committees in her organisation. AD proposed considering a similar model to what Edinburgh Plant Sciences does. SS stated she has a previous advert she could update and ask all members to send out through their networks to judge interest. KH suggested ad should be visual and NF stressed need to be proactive in our own institutions to promote this and identify people.

ACTION: SS to update advert to attract ECRs.

SS asked KH for a meeting pre-summer to scope out something together to bring back to this group on an SCRR award, which could become a USP.

ACTION: SS/KH to meet to discuss EDI and possible SCRR award.

* **Mapping / gap analysis**

TS suggested a template to get more engagement and GS suggested hiring an intern student over the summer. KH noted need to get the ball rolling on this as recruitment for summer can take a while. SM concerned about reactive vs proactive balance, as this will change over time. SS responded there might be a way of categorising research to show capacity within the system (e.g., some places just an individual while other places a whole department). This mapping process could help identify extent of forward looking capacity to be proactive/reactive. Government ring-fenced funding could be identified subtly within the template. SS feels it needs someone to spend time on as a mini research project doing web searches and emailing to follow up, then committee members to input help. Will require detective work / sleuthing and SS would be happy to help with supervision of a student where her hours allow.

ACTION: SS to draft a mini project brief for some feedback.

* **Networking**

GS invited views on how to scope work/resource needs. GS asked about existing connections with local festivals. NF suggested talking with Simon Gage. TS advised trying to reach young people. A sub-group was suggested with perhaps LI to be invited to lead. SM, AD, NF expressed interest in joining and GS and SS volunteered to sit in. Noted need to get ECR on this group. SS noted LI keen on this and not here today, so needs a conversation with her.

* **Partnering**

All agreed sub group remit could also look more widely at partnering. NF reminded of the need to be careful of resources. GS suggested a future standing agenda item of events/partner links we should be building.

* **Engagement/communication**

It was thought this will emerge from above. SS picked-up NF point on resourcing and thinks the rural festival and mapping exercise could be a smart way to reuse and recycle some of the things we already do in this way. SS feels we need to work on mapping first, so to defer other activities until after that is done. All agreed.

1. **Membership**

SS noted no new updates.

1. **Events**

Peter Wilson lecture, 23rd May 3-5pm, RSE now confirmed. RSE/SCRR will split costs. Format, speakers and panelists to approach were discussed.

ACTION: LS to invite Julie Fitzpatrick and Claire Taylor as speakers at PWL.

ACTION: SS to invite Lesley Mabon as speaker at PWL.

ACTION: all to encourage ECRs to be panelists at PWL.

1. **Discussion on written member updates**

Written member updates noted and all agreed this as a good way forward for future meetings.

DM gave a verbal update, noting strategic research programme commences on 1 April. RESAS and policy officers meeting people across the country. Centers of expertise on climate change and water also commenced. Plant health tender due 23 May. Biodiversity will go out sometime this calendar year for next year.

1. **Finances**

LH stated majority of annual fees now collected in and she will follow up on others. Outgoings since last meeting were salaries and graphic design costs for Spring newsletter.

1. **Publicity & communications**

LH noted Spring newsletter now published on website and emailed electronically to all members and MSPs. DM noted ministerial announcement on CAP replacement strategy tomorrow and offered to work with colleagues to write editorial on this for June newsletter.

1. **Any other business**

No other business was raised.

1. **Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 5 October, 11am-12.30pm