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**Minutes of the 150th meeting of the SCRR Executive Committee**

**Wednesday 5th October 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) | David Miller, DM |
| Alexandra Davey, AD | Lee Innes, LI |
| Nick Fraser, NF |  |

1. **Welcome & Apologies**

GS welcomed all and noted apologies from David Hopkins, Des Thompson, Willie Donachie, Kathy Velander and Karen Halliday.

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 3rd March 2022 were accepted. SS apologised that due to sickness and taking up a new post at RSE, she hadn’t been able to complete all actions.

1. **SCRR strategic direction**

SS ran through papers 1 and 2, stating what is hoped to get out of today’s discussions.

GS would like to downplay ‘crisis’ text in Paper 2.

ACTION: All to send any tweaks on Paper 2 ‘Purpose, function and themes’ wording to SS/LH, so this can be finalised and go onto website.

SM stressed importance of SCRR USP of connecting across academia, research institutions and wider, and need to demonstrate Scotland wide impact. DM/NF commented on SCRR membership representation at recent events, reflecting on the network’s benefits of longevity and resilience to contemporary events. Discussion took place on how to make SCRR more visible, with LI suggesting a Rural Science Festival, working with tourism organisations to highlight scientific research on popular walking routes and sponsor a sheep at Highland Show next year.

SM mentioned his discussion with Mike Cantley on diminishing funding for Scottish rural research over recent years and how partnerships will become increasingly important. GS suggested SM could consider putting together an article on this for next newsletter.

Theme group initial membership agreed as:

1. **ECRs**

KS/SS to co-lead. SS suggested can link in RSE EDI work.

1. **Mapping / gap analysis**

DM/NF/TS. DM happy to arrange first call. SS noted funding could be available for a research intern/post doc.

1. **Networking / connecting/showcasing**

LI/NF/GS. GS raised decolonization agenda.

1. **Partnering**

Expected will come out of no. 3 above. Group to be activated later following feedback back from other groups.

1. **Engagement/communication with rural communities**

SS stated KV not here today, but aware she is keen on this area. Group to be activated later following feedback from other groups. DM raised Biennial Scotland’s Rural Parliament.

ACTION: Groups 1-3 to aim to hold initial high level scoping meeting soon to consider opportunities, challenges and resourcing required.

These meetings are open to any other Executive Committee members who wish to join. Then group membership to be opened up to wider SCRR membership. LH offered support to any group, though not available until W/B 7th Nov.

1. **Membership**

SS noted long running intention to have ECR membership on this committee.

LH has been contacting members to collect in remaining outstanding annual fees.

1. **Events**

SS gave a brief verbal report on the Peter Wilson lecture 2022. All who had attended agreed it a successful event, with GS noting hybrid format was helpful.

It had been hoped to restart member lunches towards the end of 2022, after workplaces returned more fully following the pandemic, but LH reported that diaries will not allow this until early 2023. TS has kindly offered to host the first one at BGS on 19 Jan. LH working on scheduling more for 2023, with a mix of in-person and hybrid to allow members all across Scotland to participate. TS suggested widening lunch invitation to raise SCRR profile (venue size permitting).

ECR mini conference on 17 Nov in Perth was discussed and reasons for disappointing uptake from ECRs considered. It was agreed to postpone, and move AGM to Edinburgh venue if hybrid, or hold fully online, depending on numbers. It was noted a cancellation charge would be due to Perth venue. All agreed to LI genius suggestion that the ECR conference be combined with the Peter Wilson lecture in May 2023. LI also noted ECRs are keen on hearing about career and funding opportunities, so speakers on those topics would be a draw. SS added the RSE awards would tie in nicely.

ACTION: LH to consult on numbers for either in-person or online attendance at AGM.

ACTION: LH to cancel Perth venue and remove from website.

ACTION: SS/GS to consider how best to inform ECRS who had shown interest in attending the mini-conference, and instead try to involve them in other ways.

Chairperson for AGM was discussed. GS has spoken with J. Seckl about his replacement. SM advised Executive Committee Chair can fill in if needed, as this has happened in the past. GS kindly agreed to do this if required for upcoming AGM.

1. **Discussion on written member updates**

Updates in online document noted. DM commented on Scottish Government future funding.

1. **Finances**

LH preparing full financial report for AGM and WD has kindly agreed to audit. LH reported that since the last meeting annual fees have now been paid by 20 out of the 23 member organisations. Outgoings since last meeting were to RSE for the Peter Wilson Lecture, salaries and graphic design/printing costs for summer newsletter copies taken to Highland Show.

1. **Publicity & communications**

Deadline for winter newsletter articles to be sent to LH is 21 October. LH suggested extending this into Nov to allow time to perhaps approach ECRs who had signed up for the mini-conference, and instead run articles on their research, with the newsletter having an ECR focus for this edition. All agreed this a good idea.

1. **Any other business**

No other business was raised.

1. **Date of next meeting**

AGM – 17 November 10.30-12.00 (Edinburgh venue/hybrid or fully online meeting TBC by mid Oct).