

SCOTTISH CONSORTIUM FOR RURAL RESEARCH

**Minutes of the 49th Main Board Meeting
held on Monday 3rd December 2012
in the University of Edinburgh, Old Moray House,
South side of the Canongate, Royal Mile, Edinburgh**

Present

Professor Steve Yearley (Chairman)
Professor Stuart K Monro (Scientific Director)
Dr Alastair A Macdonald (Secretary/Treasurer)
Dr Ron Wilson
Anne Marte Bergseng
Dr Alistair Hamilton
Dr Ian Bainbridge
Professor Mike Bonaventura
Dr Glenn Marion
Dr Richard Ennos
Dr Diarmid Campbell
Dr Iain Valentine
Professor Willie Donachie
Professor Martin Price
Dr Murdo Macdonald
Dr Helen McKay
Dr Kathy Velandar
Professor Colin Campbell

1. Welcome

Steve Yearley welcomed members and representatives and explained that the new Chairman of the SCRR, Professor Jonathan Seckl, had a prior appointment abroad.

Apologies had been received from:

Professor Jonathan Seckl (U of E)
Professor Peter Hollingsworth (RBGE)
Dr Nick Fraser (NMS)
Professor John Oldham (SRUC)
Dr Chris Quine (Forest Research)
Dr Andy Kerr (U of E)
Professor David Elston (BIOSS)
Dr Valentina Bold (Solway Centre)
Professor Brian Austin (Stirling Aquaculture)
Dr Gordon Machray (SASA)

2. Minutes of 48th Board Meeting held on 21st May 2012

Accepted.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

None that will not be covered elsewhere.

4. Centres of Excellence & Networks

Sniffer

Anna Marte reported that the Sniffer foci currently lay with climate resilience, particularly through Adaptation Scotland (<http://www.adaptationscotland.org.uk/1/1/0/Home.aspx>) and

the ClimateXChange network (<http://www.sniffer.org.uk/knowledge-hubs/climate-resilience/climatexchange/>). Sniffer is also working with community group engagement. Linking with these will cover the geography of Scotland. An information pack has just been produced entitled 'Are you ready' and will be piloted with 20 communities. They are also working on the key messages for the Scottish Adaptation Programme linking to both the ClimateXChange and adaptation indicator work. The Sniffer Flood Risk Management Conference will be held at Our Dynamic Earth 5-6 February 2013. Please find the registration page here <http://snifferfrm2013.eventbrite.co.uk/>

CAMERAS

Ian Bainbridge reported that there had been two substantial changes in staffing: At the end of March Dr Susan Walker stepped down from the Chair of the Board of CAMERAS and in April Professor Louise Heathwaite took up her role as Chief Scientific Adviser, Rural and Environment, to the Scottish Government (SG). Kevin Rae, who had been CAMERAS co-ordinator and Chair of the Cameras Coordination and Engagement Group (CEG), has been promoted to another position. This has presented Prof Heathwaite with an opportunity to review the past and present roles of CAMERAS, and to look at what it might achieve in the future. The review will be largely internal, with closer working relationships and a 'Team Scotland' approach perhaps becoming clearer. The review will look at what CAMERAS has, and has not, managed to do in the past.

Dairmid Campbell reported that BGS is not at present engaged with CAMERAS, but was very keen to engage more in the future and that this wish had been brought to the attention of Prof. Heathwaite. Since the time that it was formed CAMERAS has not included the main research providers; it was considered to be on the 'demand side' of the science equation, or research commissioners. There was a separate grouping of the main research providers (MRPs) that provided the 'supply side' information into Central Government. Colin Campbell indicated that there was a Strategic Research Programme Board that brings SG and the Main Research Providers together. Other national bodies (BGS & CEH) provide significant amounts of information with regard to 'environmental science' in Scotland.

Steve Yearley asked if there was anything that SCRR can do in relation to this. Perhaps there might be an opportunity for Prof Heathwaite to come and talk to SCRR. It was felt that SCRR has a broad constituency and that Prof Heathwaite should be made aware of its presence and membership.

Action DC & SKM

Scottish Biodiversity Information Forum (SBIF)

Stuart Monro reported a note from Nick Fraser about the Forum which was set up to integrate local and national structures for collecting, analysing and sharing biological data to inform policy making. (<http://www.biodiversityscotland.gov.uk/what-can-you-do/active/>) SNH has given funding for a co-ordinator post for two years. Three sub-groups have been established to deal with data sharing, data flow and commercial interests. The state of taxonomic training is a matter of concern, with the National Museum of Scotland and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh paying particular attention to this in view of the retirement of staff skilled in this subject. Ian Bainbridge reported that the SBIF has been formed to include both the 'data in' group (of specialist, perhaps amateur, biodiversity recorders as well as professional scientists) and the 'data out group' (of policy makers and those in the planning process). When SNH funds specialist societies, these are required to feed data into the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) gateway (<http://data.nbn.org.uk/>) which has over 6m data records in it from Scotland and over 60m records for across the UK. It was clearly important that an 'SBN' should not be formed. There is in place a Modern Apprenticeship Scheme for recruiting graduates into positions where they work with a mentor for 18 months full time to learn taxonomic skills. These are managed by The Conservation Volunteers,

www.tev.org, and advertised in various ways e.g. the British Ecological Society, Forestry Commission.

Scotland's Environment web project

Colin Campbell reported that the SEWeb project (<http://www.environment.scotland.gov.uk/>) had been established. He indicated that it was important that these various portals were known to one another and linked up such that the data available did get shared and made available to prevent repeated collection of the same data.

Stuart Monro commented that in relation to soils, a BGS soils 'application' had come about but did not include the archival soils data held by the James Hutton Institute. Colin Campbell indicated that these two databases were structurally different and although they had come together to some extent further links depended on the questions being asked.

5. Public policy and science strategy

Scottish Science Advisory Council

Stuart Monro had the impression that it was now inward looking, rather than looking externally as had been the case with the two previous Scientific Advisors. SCRR currently has no links to SSAC. Stuart suggested that he might be able to get an update from the secretariat on a regular basis.

Action SKM

6. SCRR – membership

Prospective new members

Stuart Monro reported that the potential for development of SCRR is significant. He is currently looking for engagement with Glasgow University, particularly through the Veterinary School, Geology and the Solway Centre for Environment and Culture. He would also like to re-engage with St Andrews, in particular to include the Sea Mammal Research Unit (SMRU). He indicated that the Secretary had carried out a fairly basic piece of 'Google' research in which the term 'rural research' was put into the site maps of various Scottish universities. The results were:

University of Aberdeen reported 'about 4,210 hits'

University of Glasgow reported 'about 3,440 hits'

University of St Andrews reported 'about 1,630 hits'

University of Dundee reported 'about 1,400 hits'

University of Strathclyde reported 'about 986 hits'

Glasgow Caledonian University reported '500 hits'.

It was pointed out that Dundee was important for plant sciences, and attention was drawn to its UNESCO Centre for Water Law, Policy and Science (Director Professor Geoffrey D. Gooch). Professor Chris Spray of that Institute was mentioned in discussion, as was John S Rowan of Dundee University's Geography section of the School of the Environment.

Attention was also drawn to the rural research going on in the University of Aberdeen. Suggestions of potential contacts and appropriate email links to these universities were requested from members. Stuart Monro will follow these up.

Action SKM

Web-publication of minutes of meetings

Stuart Monro, as vice convenor of the University of Edinburgh Court, indicated that the University likes to ensure that there is maximum transparency in all the activities that go on within it and elsewhere, unless there is a very good reason not to do so. Aware that the SCRR does not publish on the web the minutes of its meetings, he thought that in terms of good governance it should. After discussion it was agreed that the draft minutes (of Board and Executive meetings) would be circulated for one month to allow corrections to be made,

thereafter which these would be published on the web; formal ratified approval would be given at the following (Board or Executive) meeting. Action AAM

7. SCRR fora & workshops

Future workshops

Stuart Monro drew attention to a series of workshops that will take place in the coming months. Steve Yearley presented information on the first of these, the SCRR Rural Sociology workshop. 'Researching Scotland's Ruralities: Social Science Perspectives on Current Issues in Rural Scotland' which will be held on the 20th March 2013 in the Perth Concert Hall. The themes and who will be invited to speak have still to be finalised. The times of opening (10.00) and closing (16.00) have been coordinated with the times of trains.

Kathy Velder and Martin Price presented information on a joint SCRR workshop entitled 'Ecotourism in Scotland: Opportunities, Challenges and EU Standards' to be held from 12.00-16.30 on Thursday 28 February 2013 at the Carbon Centre in South College St, Edinburgh. It is aimed at consultants, practitioners and researchers interested in the European Ecotourism Labelling Standards. Further details will be put onto the SCRR website as they come available. Action KV & MP

Martin Price reported many SCRR members have signed up to the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan. He is a board member and heads up the group responsible for the research strategy that is part of that Partnership Plan. It is intended for the Park to become an area for long-term socio-ecological research. The Park will have a meeting to launch this sometime in the first quarter of 2013, and it makes sense for this to be a joint venture with SCRR. All areas of research in the Park are envisaged. Further details will be put onto the SCRR website as these come available. Action MP & AAM

Stuart Monro also mentioned the possibility in the near future of a meeting to examine the results of the British Geological Survey study of the Clyde basin; he will deal with this in his report.

Future forum

The SCRR Environmental and Agricultural Metagenomics Forum will take place at the Battleby Centre, Perth, on Thursday, 9th May 2013. A small group will discuss detailed arrangements for the Forum immediately after the Board meeting. Metagenomics is the sequencing and analysis of DNA of microorganisms recovered from an environment, without the need for culturing them. It was mentioned that CAMERAS had had a workshop on environmental metagenomics two years ago, and it might be worthwhile to be aware of the outcomes of that (possible contact: Dr Gerry Saddler at SASA). In addition, RBG Edinburgh has expertise in metagenomics as applied to fungi and bryophytes, and this could be relevant to the proposed meeting. Action SY, CC, SKM, AAM

8. SCRR Annual Lecture – 2013

The Annual Peter Wilson Lecture will be held at the RSE on Thursday 21st February 2013. The speaker is Professor Ian Boyd and the title of his lecture is 'The Evidential Basis for Food and Environmental Policy.'

Booking at: http://www.royalsoced.org.uk/eventorders.php?event_id=83

9. Minutes of Executive Committee meeting 113

Accepted. Matters arising are covered elsewhere in the agenda.

10. **Membership of the SCRR Executive**

Steve Yearley reported that he would be taking an academic year of research leave from the end of August 2013. He would like to step down temporarily from his position as Chair of the Executive Committee. An interim Chair would be required, but there remained time to identify the individual. Martin Price asked whether it should be someone who was already on the Executive Committee and who had experience of the work of that committee to maintain continuity. It was agreed to deal with this question at the next Executive Committee meetings and to present a recommendation to the Board at its next meeting.

Action Executive Committee members

11. **Science outreach**

Year of Natural Scotland (2013)

Stuart Monro reported that this provided an opportunity for the members of the consortium to engage more in the outreach aspects of their work. Last year we used the SCRR Newsletter to good effect by distributing it widely at the Highland Show. There are also a number of Science Festivals throughout rural Scotland, and these are good venues for promoting the impact of the Research being done. SCRR's role is to encourage and facilitate the presence of members at these events. From 2012-13 onwards the annual Science Engagement Grants scheme has been replaced by the Talking Science grants scheme. These grants are coordinated through Professor Muffy Calder's office (Chief Scientific Adviser for Scotland) (ScienceEngagement@scotland.gsi.gov.uk). The contact person is Joanne Ward (Joanne.Ward@scotland.gsi.gov.uk).

Ian Bainbridge indicated that SNH is very engaged with the Year of Natural Scotland.

The Secretary asked the members of the consortium to contribute short 250-300 word articles, with high-resolution pictures, of research work on the theme of Natural Scotland, which could then go into the February issue of the SCRR Newsletter; it could be a Year of Natural Scotland Special Issue.

Action all members

The Secretary also mentioned another idea that had occurred connected to the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (and perhaps the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh). The Zoo this year received just under 1,000,000 visitors, which is far more than come to visit other members of the Consortium. There is therefore the possibility, with appropriate discussion, of research work by Consortium members on the theme of Natural Scotland being exhibited there in some way. Iain Valentine commented that the zoo was very willing to receive approaches of this sort, and to act as a 'shop window' in this regard. He indicated that there were various public spaces in the zoo, at the entrance and at the lecture theatre areas that might be suitable.

Action all members

It was mentioned that the RBGE has got the John Hope Gateway as exhibition space that is similarly available for such a use. Potentially posters such as those used at the recent SNH Species Action Framework conference could be exhibited.

Action all members

Martin Price suggested that the SCRR website should have a link to the Year of Natural Scotland website.

Action AAM

The Secretary asked member organisations to make him aware of other websites that the SCRR website should be linked to.

Action all members

Ian Bainbridge said SNH is looking for 365 'Fascinating Facts about Natural Scotland' so that SNH can 'tweet' one a day throughout the year. They should be one-sentence sound-bite size in length.
Action all members

Edinburgh International Book Festival

Steve Yearley indicated that over the last five years the Genomics Forum, as part of its role in the area of knowledge brokerage, has been in collaboration with the Edinburgh International Book Festival. They have held a series of events around life sciences issues. These have been well attended and appreciated by the Book Festival, and the Executive Committee thought that the SCRR might be able to follow this up, since the Genomics Forum will come to an end in May 2013. Perhaps discussion about environmental or rural topics could be tied in with books and authors that the members know about, are linked to their science work, and have been published recently. The Genomics Forum events were typically in the Spiegel tent in the evenings for about 60-90 minutes. These had an open discussion format, and were a welcome and unusual event as far as the Book Festival was concerned. They did have to be financially supported by the Genomics Forum. He explained that it was necessary to make approaches to the Book Festival organisers towards the end of the autumn with an idea (e.g. synthetic blood and vampires) and then in February or March the actual business of organising the event would be carried out. It would be worth giving advance notice to the Book Festival organisers if SCRR members were thinking of holding such an event.

There are several book festivals around the country that such events could be taken to:
Edinburgh (<http://www.edbookfest.co.uk/>) 10-26 August 2013

Glasgow (<http://www.ayewrite.com/Pages/default.aspx>) 12-20 April 2013

Wigtown (<http://www.wigtownbookfestival.com/>) 27 September – 6 October 2013

The latter could perhaps be usefully linked to the recent (July) identification of Scotland's new UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in Galloway and southern Ayrshire.

Action Executive Committee

Mike Bonaventura also drew attention to the first International Festival of Environmental Arts in Galloway that will take place over four days in August/September 2013. Details remain to be made available and shall be distributed next year.
Action MB

Stuart Monro reported that there have also been a series of presentations in the Edinburgh Story-telling Centre. For example, science fiction writers presented the science within their books and thereby stimulated good discussion.

Colin Campbell reported that the James Hutton Institute had just run a very successful series of events entitled Murder, Mystery and Microscopes dealing with the science behind crime fiction (<http://www.hutton.ac.uk/events/mmm>).

Iain Valentine suggested that SCRR members could perhaps sponsor a good speaker at the Science Festival.

Beltane

Stuart Monro indicated that further investigation was required before more could be said about the status of Beltane in universities other than Edinburgh.
Action SKM

12. Scientific Director's report

Stuart Monro, in commenting upon the consequences of the change from ECRR to SCRR, asked how we, as a consortium, could better respond to our geographic spread. He suggested that perhaps the Directors' lunches should now become a more important component

(together with our workshops, annual lecture and biennial forum), with rather more material being presented at each one. Could they be developed into fuller, half-day events, which will make them rather more worthwhile and justifiable, particularly for those travelling a larger distance? Themes could be arranged with the host institution. Clearly the latter would be keen to present work from its own institution. However, a mixture of presentations with several from other members might help with science cross-fertilisation and make them more worthwhile. Dairmid Campbell indicated that he would be willing to host such a meeting with the work they had been doing on the Clyde catchment area as the basis for a possible theme. Helen McKay felt that a host institute plus wider-input format would help enable institutes to catch up on topics that were not their particular focus. It was agreed to implement this way forward as soon as practicable. Action SKM & AAM

13. **Finances & Secretary's report**

Finances 2011-2012

The treasurer indicated that the accounts had been circulated earlier. The external examiners, Professor Ian D. Aitken and Mr Mike Talbot, have approved these. As anticipated, there had been a deficit last year and it had been decided at the last Board meeting that there would need to be a rise in the membership fees to cover the forecast costs of the Newsletter and Website. Action on the sending out of invoices had been delayed briefly by the process of obtaining Court approval for the change in the name of the Consortium, and until now by the failure of the restructured Bank of Scotland to respond to correspondence advising them of this change. The Board was reassured that there were enough reserves in the bank to cover this financial hiatus. The accounts were approved. The Board was informed that as soon as there was clarity with respect to the SCRR's banking arrangements then the invoices for 2012-2013 would be sent out to member organisations.

Action AAM

Glenn Marion raised the question of the way in which fee levels had been set. The Treasurer replied that these were the result of a mix of historical reasons and weight of institutional involvement in the Consortium. The University of Edinburgh had been instrumental in founding the Consortium. Stuart Monro indicated that the Principal of the University was very comfortable with the change in name from 'Edinburgh' to 'Scottish'. Edinburgh was a large and multi-disciplinary university and was happy to contribute to support this Scotland-wide consortium in the same way that it was doing for other Scotland-wide consortia. The point was made and agreed that the topic of fee levels would need to be re-evaluated as other large universities joined the Consortium. The new chairman of the SCRR Board, Professor Jonathan Seckl, is the vice-principal with responsibility for Edinburgh University resources and so it can be expected that this matter will have his attention. Ian Bainbridge pointed out that it was unclear why the fees charged had been grouped into the various bands: £210, £420, £840, £1680, £9000. The Treasurer explained that the current structure had been inherited from the previous Treasurer who had rationalised the situation to reflect research involvement and apparent ability to pay. There are currently obvious differences between organisations in the amount that they might be able to contribute financially. In addition, universities that might be quite large in overall size may have only a small 'rural research' component to their academic structure. Invoice amounts have been judged accordingly. The Board asked the Executive Committee to have a look at rationalising the fee structure and to produce a clear system and explanation of the charges levied. This would be helpful not only for current members but also for advising future members. Action AAM

SCRR Website and Newsletter

The Secretary praised the creative skills of Damien Noonan for his design of both the website and the newsletter. There had been an editorial problem during the production of the third

page of the print edition of the newsletter; this had now been corrected in the on-line version. Arrangements have been put in place to prevent this from happening in the future. Damien has offered instruction to Stuart Monro and the Secretary so that they can make additions and corrections to the website without having to send them to him to implement; this will be taken up.

Action SKM & AAM

Stuart Monro indicated that feedback from the members of the Consortium helps to keep the website fresh and relevant. Making these additions and changes 'in house' would enable them to be rapid and less expensive. The Secretary reiterated that it would be good to have a Year of Natural Scotland issue in February, and would soon be writing to all members requesting 250-300 words plus two high-resolution photographs on this general theme to be submitted before the end of January 2013. This will enable it to be available for the audience attending the Annual Lecture on the 21st February. The Secretary also indicated that material from outside the Consortium had been included in the last few issues of the Newsletter because it was deemed of national research interest.

Action AAM

Future Directors' and SCRR meetings

Mon. January 21st 2013 Royal Zoological Gardens. Executive meeting and Directors' lunch
Host: Director Prof. Chris West

Thur. February 21st 2013 Royal Society of Edinburgh. Peter Wilson Annual lecture
'The Evidential Basis for Food and Environmental Policy' by Professor Ian Boyd FSB, FRSE.

Mon. March 11th 2013 Scottish Natural Heritage. Executive meeting and Directors' lunch
Host Dr Ian Bainbridge

Wed. March 20th 2013 Perth Concert Hall, SCRR Rural Sociology workshop. 'Researching Scotland's Ruralities: Social Science Perspectives on Current Issues in Rural Scotland.'

Thurs. May 9th 2013 Battleby Centre, SCRR Environmental and Agricultural Metagenomics Forum.

tba May/June 2013 Board meeting

Mon. August 19th 2013 James Hutton Institute. Executive meeting and Directors' lunch.
Host Prof Ian Gordon

14. Any other business

None

15. News from members

Helen McKay reported that Forest Research was awaiting the Governmental response to the Independent Panel Report on Forestry from DEFRA and the consequences of the Welsh decision to locally merge the Forestry Commission, Environment Agency and the Countryside Council for Wales. She said that there was willingness for Forest Research to remain an across-border arrangement. She distributed maps to show where the fungus *Chalara fraxinea* that was causing dieback in European ash trees (*Fraxinus excelsior*) had been found, and pointed out that so far the impact on Scotland had been small and was largely due to the recent planting of diseased stock. This has largely been removed. There is now a very welcome increase in the attention being paid to 'monitoring and detection', and to the possibility of breeding disease resistant stock.

Willie Donachie indicated that he has retired from Moredun Research and has now moved to be Managing Director of Moredun Scientific, the commercial arm of the Moredun Foundation. There are now two research pillars in Moredun Research, one dealing with Vaccines and Diagnostics headed by Dr Colin McInnes, and the other dealing with the Disease Control headed by Professor Jacqui Matthews.

Murdo Macdonald indicated that a report on the state of agriculture and how congregations could support their local food producers was now making its way towards the General Assembly in May. Another on water is at an earlier stage of development.

Martin Price reported that the ESRC knowledge exchange project entitled 'Working together for sustainable estate communities: exploring the potential of collaborative initiatives between privately-owned estates, communities and other partners' was now completed. The fact that the booklet resulting from this had gone to a second printing suggested that the people involved wanted to pursue this. They had also just completed a project on Mountain Foods for the European Commission that is leading to a new regulation specifically dealing with these. Unfortunately, it appears that the British government does not recognise that the UK has any mountains (as defined under these regulations). They have also completed a project on geographical specificity of the bits of Europe that say they are special: sparsely populated areas, mountains, islands, etc, which cover a large area of rural Scotland. It has been done at municipality level, resulting in a huge database for the whole of Europe. Up until now European Policy has dealt with large regions thereby missing out the inherent geographical variability and the diversity within each of these. This database will provide a basis for future work and policy-making.

Dairmid Campbell reported that in addition to all the other work on infrastructure and urban areas that they are doing, they have a very active rural research program and still produce geological maps that fill the gaps in knowledge of areas of Scotland, e.g. maps of the Nairn area and Aviemore and have plans for further research in the Loch Lomond area. BGS is actively engaged with Geodiversity work (<http://scottishgeodiversityforum.org/charter/>). BGS both commissions research work and carries out research work, and as indicated earlier will be in conversation with CAMERAS about their role in the future. The Scottish site of BGS is still under active consideration.

Iain Valentine reported that the zoo now had a new Chief executive, Chris West. Research projects are based both overseas and in the UK; these are currently being reviewed. Giant Panda work is occupying a large section of time within the zoo. There is a plan for the zoo to host a meeting early in 2013 with all of its partner organisations, including Forest Research and RBGE and the University of Edinburgh, that are interested in research connected with pandas and their habitat. They are also looking at the social research side and the conservation impact on the local people.

Glenn Marion reported the 25th anniversary of BioSS on the 18th March 2013 that happens to coincide with the International Year of Statistics. There is a bit of anxiety within BioSS concerning the current pressure for office space within the James Maxwell building, and they wished to alert the members of the SCRR who use their expertise to this.

Mike Bonaventura explained that the Crichton Campus had developed since 2000 as a place of learning for SW Scotland, on a site established by Elizabeth Crichton in 1838 that was originally seen as a site for a relocated St. Andrews University but became a leading psychiatric hospital for the first 150 years of its existence. Since then a unique multi-tenanted campus has developed housing the University of Glasgow School of Interdisciplinary Studies, one of the University of the West of Scotland' four campuses, Dumfries and Galloway College of Further Education, the Open University, the SRUC dairy research farm, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Crichton Carbon Centre, amongst others.

The Solway Centre for Environment and Culture is an organisation within the University of Glasgow, and was launched in October this year. The Crichton Institute is a separate initiative funded by Scottish Funding Council building capacity for collaborative research by the various campus partners. It will include a research dimension, a policy dimension and a regional observatory collectively providing knowledge exchange for research impacts on the local community.

The Crichton Carbon Centre itself is a post-graduate teaching and applied research organisation established in 2007. A PG(T) programme is delivered through an MSc in Applied Carbon Management with a broader of professional practice masters scheduled for delivery from academic year 2013. The Centre leads research on intra-national climate justice (differential and distributional impacts of climate change mitigation and adaptation policy) for ClimateXChange. Current work with Scottish Government includes an impact assessment of RPP2, which is due to be published early in the New Year, as well as on the first Scottish Adaptation Programme, which should be available in the spring of 2013. European structural funds support work with SMEs in lowlands and uplands Scotland, building capacity for sustainable business practices and the schools programs – Carbon Busters Clusters - mentioned in the latest SCRR Newsletter is an SRDP-funded program. The Centre is also broadening out public engagement in the sustainable development agenda by linking with Creative Scotland to enable artists and scientists to be brought together with a view to developing proposals for collaborative work during the Year of Natural Scotland linked to the first International Festival of Environmental Art mentioned previously under Science Outreach [§11]. One of these proposals has already been funded through Creative Scotland and supports artist residencies with low carbon food producing communities during next year's planting and harvesting seasons. He extended an invitation to visit the Crichton campus in Dumfries.

Ian Bainbridge indicated that SNH are now producing a science newsletter, initially for its Scientific Advisory Committee, but with the intention of a wider reach being developed. He also intimated that 'people interested in the promotion, care and sustainable management of Scotland's nature are being invited to apply to join the Board of Scottish Natural Heritage' (<http://www.snh.gov.uk/news-and-events/press-releases/press-release-details/?id=805>). 'Scottish Ministers are looking to appoint three new SNH Board members from 1 April 2013, to work as part of the organisation's strategic leadership team and make sure it delivers on Government priorities.'

Anne Marte said she was keen to collect notification of as many as possible of the events mentioned today by member organisations to put onto the Sniffer website, particularly those dealing with climate resilience. Similarly Sniffer would like to attract resources and websites for the Adaptation Scotland Newsletter, which can channel information through to local authorities and businesses, those parts of the community that SCRR members may not easily reach. Sniffer has recently initiated a project with Perth and Kinross Council on the use of citizen science in community engagement. Anna drew attention to the project called Flourishing Scotland, which is about using science and art around sustainable development goals. Summerhall, at the east end of the Meadows in Edinburgh, is a possible site Sniffer will use to bring these together.

Ron Wilson reported that the University had just been awarded a co-ordinating role in an EU project called OPERA - Operational Potential of Ecosystems Research Applications – which seeks to understand how ecosystem services contribute to human wellbeing and to establish how the concepts involved may be moved beyond the academic domain towards practical application. There are 27 organisations involved across Europe and beyond, with 1.5m Euros out of a total budget of 12m Euros being spent in Edinburgh over the coming five years.

Colin Campbell reported that the science side of things in the James Hutton Institute is going well. The 'transparent soils' paper that came out recently got a lot of media attention, as did the publication of the barley genome – JHI was part of the consortium. With respect to science policy there had been a response to Ash die-back with the newly signed partnership with Forest Research being very useful for coordinating a response. JHI is also developing partnerships with CEH in the soils and informatics area, which is also involving BGS. Some existing bilateral agreements are becoming trilateral, e.g. the one with University of Dundee in the area of food security is now going to include the University of Aberdeen. Professor Deb Roberts is a significant new joint appointment with the University of Aberdeen – in JHI she will be Science Group Leader of Social, Economic and Geographical Sciences. Today Professors Ian Gordon and Bob Ferrier will speak at the conference launching the Hydro Nation initiative which aims to capitalise on the competitive advantages of the water sector in Scotland and realise economic development opportunities through the development and export of water technologies and services, especially to emerging markets.

16. Date of Next Meeting – tba May/June 2013