

**Minute of the 53rd Main Board Meeting of the  
SCRR held on Wednesday 14th January  
2015, at the British Geological Survey,  
Murchison House, West Mains Road,  
Edinburgh.**

**Present:**

Prof Jonathon Seckl (Chair)  
Prof Steve Yearley (Chair, Executive Committee)  
Prof Stuart K Monro (Scientific Director)  
Dr Alastair A Macdonald (Secretary/Treasurer)  
Dr Simon Gilmore (Society of Antiquaries of Scotland)  
Prof Davy McCracken (SRUC)  
Ruth Wolstenholme (SNIFFER)  
Prof Martin Price (Centre for Mountain Studies, UHI)  
Dr Kathy Velander (Edinburgh Napier University)  
Dr Ian Bainbridge (SNH)  
Prof Pete Hollingsworth (RBGE)  
Dr Valentina Bold (Solway Centre, University of Glasgow)  
Prof David Elston (BioSS)  
Dr Andy Kerr (ECCI)  
Prof David Gray (School of Biological Sciences, University of Edinburgh)  
Dr Dairmid Campbell (BGS)

Apologies:

Dr David Kerridge (BGS)  
Prof Gavin Gibson (Heriot-Watt University)  
Prof Kenny Black (SAMS)  
Dr Ron Wilson (School of GeoSciences, University of Edinburgh)  
Prof Mike Bonaventura (Crichton Carbon Centre)  
Dr Alistair Dawson (CEH)  
Dr Chris Quine (Forest Research)  
Dr Simon Shackley (School of GeoSciences, University of Edinburgh)  
Prof Ian Bryden (UHI)  
Prof Colin Campbell (Hutton Institute)

**Guests:**

Dr Karen Halliday (EPS)  
Dr Hermione Cockburn (Our Dynamic Earth)

1. **Welcome:** Dr Dairmid Campbell welcomed the Main Board to BGS and outlined the programme to follow. Prof Seckl opened the meeting by welcoming the various members of SCRR and the guests.
2. **Minutes of the 52<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Main Board:** These were accepted as a record of the meeting.

3. **Matters arising:** There were no matters arising which were not covered elsewhere in the agenda.
4. **Centres of Excellence and other networks:**
  - 4.1. **SNIFFER:** Ruth Wolstenholme reported that SNIFFER has been chosen to deliver the Adaptation Scotland Programme for the next three years. Collaboration is continuing with the Futures Forum and SAGES on a workshop on climate resilience to take place on the 28<sup>th</sup> January. There is also engagement with Dr Andy Kerr, ECCI, to identify opportunities for European funding on climate services. Ruth also serves on the engagement committee for Future Earth, a two-year international research programme.
  - 4.2. **CAMERAS:** Dr Ian Bainbridge reported that a secretariat had now been agreed for CAMERAS, which would be in place in the Spring. Publication of the Rural Affairs and Environment evidence strategy is still awaited. Tender documents for the 2016-20 strategic research programmes are in preparation. Dr Susan Davies who has been heading up RESAS at Deputy Director level, has returned to SNH as acting Chief Executive. The new Head of RESAS is Dr Linda Pooley, and Bridget Campbell will replace Bob Macintosh as Director, Environment and Forestry. Dairmid Campbell commented that BGS along with the MET Office and SAMS felt they could contribute significantly with CAMERAS related to monitoring. This issue should be raised again with the new head of RESAS. It was noted that a grouping on Advanced Learning and Science had been set up in Scottish Government.
  - 4.3. **EPS:** Dr Karen Halliday reported that Edinburgh Plant Science (EPS) had been established in 2014 to bring together those working in plant science across Edinburgh in order to provide the critical mass necessary to secure funding. Joint projects are being set up with the backing of SULSA. There are also plans to expand the post-graduate programme and increasing impact through industrial partners and student outreach. It was noted that there was overlap between the interests of EPS and those of SCRR giving an opportunity for jointly sponsored workshops. Both organisations would keep in touch as opportunities arise. Dr Valentina Bold noted that there was interest in EPS beyond the Edinburgh area. It was anticipated that the network would extend in the future with links across a wide range of scientific disciplines.
  - 4.4. **Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation ClimateXChange:** Dr Andy Kerr reported that ClimateXChange will be re-commissioned by the Scottish Government as a knowledge translation service on climate change issues. CAMERAS has identified the need for evidence plans on various themes including integrated land-use management and planning. ClimateXChange will be bringing together policy-makers with researchers to identify future research requirements.
  - 4.5. **Scotland's Rural College (SRUC):** Prof Davy McCracken drew the attention of the Board to a high-level workshop on RESAS requirements for research

would take place at Moredun on the 27<sup>th</sup> February. He further noted that the Rural Policy Centre (RPC) within SRUC provide the secretariat for the Cross Party Group on Rural Policy. Details of these meetings will be circulated to Directors.

**4.6. E3 (Edinburgh Earth and Environment Doctoral Training Partnership):**

The programme, which had begun this year, has a large number of partners and provides an opportunity for cross-cutting research.

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/geosciences/postgraduate/phd/e3>

5. **Scottish Science Advisory Council:** Prof Stuart Monro reported that the Scottish Science Advisory Council seemed to be in limbo at the present time with the departure of the Chief Scientific Advisor at the end of 2014. New appointments have been put on hold. Current work on **Synthetic Biology: opportunities for Scotland** has been completed and a report published. A report on **Research Infrastructure: SSAC recommendations** has also been published in response to a request from Dr Allan, Minister for Learning Science and Scotland's Languages. Regular updates following meetings of the SSAC are published on the web site <http://www.scottishscience.org.uk/article/ssac-update-note>.
6. **SCRR membership:** Prof Stuart Monro reported on the continual desire to widen membership of SCRR while retaining its mission as a consortium of organisations active in research into land, freshwater, coastal and marine resources, and their uses – including farming, forestry, aquaculture and recreation. Approaches have been made to SEPA and to the Field Studies Council and further efforts are being made with Dundee, Aberdeen and St Andrews Universities. There are also collaborative approaches being made to other complimentary networks, particularly Edinburgh Plant Science (EPS) and An Ecosystem Service Community for Scotland (ESCom Scotland).
7. **SCRR fora and workshops:** Prof Stuart Monro reported that the pattern of engagement across the Consortium continues to focus on the Directors' Research Lunches, which present the latest research in the hosting organization, and facilitates future collaborations. A proposal for another metagenomics meeting was put back to 2015 and is now fixed in the diary for the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2015. Collaborative meetings were held on Citizen Science with Scottish Natural Heritage and another in Moray House hosted by Prof Yearley. Other meetings hosted by consortium members have been made available to other SCRR members and have been widely advertised on our web site. These include John Muir Conference 2014: National Parks and Protected Areas for the 21st Century, The Geoscience Context for Europe's Urban Sustainability - Lessons from Glasgow and beyond and UK Plant Evolution 2014. SCRR also participated in the SRUC event Rural Scotland Refocused. In 2015 an event was planned based on the successful previous forum on Metagenomics, which would take place on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February in Dynamic Earth on "Exploring and Exploiting the Microbiome". A further workshop was being planned with SRUC on "Unban-Rural Interdependencies".

8. **SCRR Annual lecture:** The Peter Wilson Lecture for 2015 is to take place in the Royal Society of Edinburgh on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015 when Professor Tim Benton, UK Champion for Global Food Security and Professor of Population Ecology, University of Leeds will talk on Feeding the Future: Can we do it Sustainably? The Board were asked to begin thinking of a suitable topic and speaker for 2016 and communicate ideas to the Scientific Director.
9. **Minutes of Executive Committee meeting 121:** The minutes of this meeting were noted.
  - 9.1. **Matters arising:** Prof Steve Yearley noted that a National Centre for Resilience had been discussed. Dr Andy Kerr stated that this had been proposed before the referendum and aimed to bring together various strands of activity to create a more resilient society.

The Board delegated to the Executive the task of finding new members of the Executive in the light of the impending change of Secretary/Treasurer.

Prof Stuart Monro presented papers resulting from reviews that were carried out in preparation for the impending change in Secretary/Treasurer. These included a review of the job descriptions for Scientific Director and Secretary/Treasurer, a proposed change in the distribution of the remuneration package and an update of the Constitution of the SCRR. Various suggestions for changes were suggested and these will be incorporated into the document and re-circulated to the Board.

The proposal to revise the remuneration package was approved subject to a clear statement of the time commitment in the job descriptions. This was to be set at approximately 35 days per year. There was some discussion on the appropriate levels dependent on experience. **[post-meeting note: with the proposed appointment of Prof Willie Donachie as Secretary/Treasurer, the equal division of the total remuneration package is appropriate]** Prof Jonathon Seckl proposed that the salary should be increased annually in line with general university increases. This was agreed.

10. **Finances 2013-14:** Dr Alastair Macdonald 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 meeting 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. Dr Macdonald noted that there was significant variability in the levels of support offered by SCRR in partnership events but this was negotiated to the satisfaction of all.
11. **SCRR Website and Newsletter:** Dr Macdonald reported that the web site was regularly updated and the format for both is working well. Material for the next Newsletter is now coming through.

12. **Future Directors' meetings:** It was reported that these were listed on the web site.

13. **Date of next Board meeting:** Decision on this would await a consideration of the most appropriate time when the accounts could be examined. An annual summer meeting would be preferred in line with the revised constitution.

**ACTIONS:**

**Item 4.3:** SCRR secretariat and EPS to maintain contact with a view to possible future joint meetings. (Stuart Monro/Willie Donachie/Karen Halliday)

**Item 4.5:** SRUC to inform SCRR secretariat of meetings of the Cross Party Group on Rural Policy for wider dissemination. (SRUC)

**Item 6:** Progress further membership of SCRR. (Stuart Monro)

**Item 7:** Explore potential of joint meeting with Rural Policy Centre. (Stuart Monro)

**Item 8:** Suggestions for speakers for 2016 Peter Wilson Lecture. (All)

**Post-meeting note:** Following further consultation by email, the Board approved an amended version of the Constitution. By the same email consultation, the Board approved the appointment of Prof Willie Donachie as Secretary/Treasurer of SCRR.