

**Minute of the 122nd meeting of the SCRR
Executive Committee held on Monday 16th
March 2015 at Forest Research, Northern
Research Station**

Present:

Prof Steve Yearley (Chair, Executive Committee)
Prof Stuart K Monro (Scientific Director)
Dr Fiona Burnett (SRUC for Prof Geoff Simm)
Prof Martin Price (Centre for Mountain Studies, UHI)
Dr Kathy Velandar (Edinburgh Napier University)
Dr Helaina Black (James Hutton Institute for Prof Colin Campbell)

Apologies:

Dr Ian Bainbridge (SNH)
Prof Colin Campbell (James Hutton Institute)
Prof Willie Donachie (Secretary/Treasurer)
Dr Nick Fraser (NMS)
Ruth Wolstenholme (SNIFFER)

1. **Welcome & Apologies:** Prof Yearley welcomed those present and particularly Drs Burnett and Black who were standing in for Profs Simm and Campbell
2. **Minutes and matters arising from 121st executive meeting:** The minute was approved and all matters arising were covered in other agenda items.
3. **Minutes and matters arising from 53rd Board meeting:** Prof Monro reported actions following the main Board meeting. The Constitution had been revised and approved by email and would be ratified by the Court of the University of Edinburgh at its next meeting. Prof Willie Donachie had agreed to take on the role of Secretary/Treasurer and this had been approved by the Main Board by email. The arrangements for putting in place the new remuneration package were in hand with the finance section of University of Edinburgh. The effective date of the handover would be the 1st March 2015.
4. **Centres of Excellence and Networks: update on all networks**
 - 4.1. **Moredun:** No further information available
 - 4.2. Sniffer - knowledge brokers for a resilient Scotland: No further information available
 - 4.3. **SRUC:** Dr Burnett reported that work on closer alignment with the University of Edinburgh was progressing with enthusiasm from the grass roots on the potential for new research initiatives. Issues related to governance are progressing. Prof Monro highlighted a proposed joint meeting between SCRR and the Rural Policy Centre of SRUC on Rural/Urban Interdependencies to be held, probably in Perth on the 9th June 2015.
 - 4.4. **CAMERAS:** Dr Bainbridge reported by email that the RAE strategy was now published and outlines how CAMERAS partners aim to make best use of resources through strengthening collaboration and co-ordination between

CAMERAS partners and by improving the delivery of evidence to users. It seeks to:

- ≡ Set out CAMERAS partners shared understanding of high level evidence needs for rural affairs and the terrestrial environment in order to help inform their science plans.
- ≡ Target specific areas of evidence need for coordination and collaboration, in order to improve the provision of timely, integrated evidence users.

CAMERAS will also be looking to appoint a seconded executive office to push the agenda forward. The strategy is available on the web site <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/02/6963> . A link is also available from the CAMERAS website: <http://www.camerasscotland.org/cameras-publications>

On RESAS issues; SG issued all the invitations to tender for their strategic research programme 2016-21, and for the Centres of Expertise, at the end of January, and the MRP institutes are working to complete their tender bids by April 13th. A Plant Health CoE invitation is likely to follow later this year.

4.5. **Social Sciences:** Prof Yearley noted that a Memorandum of Understanding had been signed between the University of Edinburgh and the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland with emphases including biodiversity and public engagement/social science aspects. Under the aegis of the Belmont Forum, a new initiative on Food Security and Land Use: The Telecoupling Challenge was being instigated. Further information available on <https://igfagcr.org/funded-projects/food-security-and-land-use-the-telecoupling-challenge-abc-telecoupling>. An item on this will be in the next Newsletter.

4.6. **SSAC:** Prof Monro noted that an advert had been issued for a new Chief Scientific Advisor for Scotland and that following this appointment, new members of the SSAC would be sought.

4.7. **Cross-Institute collaborations:** Dr Black noted that a Centre of Expertise would be set up on plant health with a further centre on ecosystems also mooted. These would involve a number of institutes many of whom were within SCRR. Dr Velandar highlighted the growing area of ecotourism as a potential area of future activity. The National Centre for Resilience was highlighted but no further developments were believed to have taken place since the Board meeting. Dr Burnett noted the centres of innovation were developing which again involved cross-institute collaboration.

5. Events

5.1. **Annual lecture 2015 and 2016:** Prof Monro reported that the Annual Peter Wilson lecture given by Professor Tim Benton, UK Champion for Global Food Security and Professor of Population Ecology, University of Leeds, had once again been filled to capacity. Subsequently the IoB had indicated that they could no longer support the lecture. Both SCRR and RSE were determined that it should continue as an annual event whether or not IoB wished to participate. It was suggested Prof Anne Glover could make a timely lecturer. It was also noted that Prof. Andrew Pullin from the University of Bangor's

Centre for Evidence-Based Conservation (see <http://www.cebc.bangor.ac.uk/>) had been suggested at the January Board meeting.

5.2. **Workshops etc. in 2014-2015:** Prof Monro reported that the Metagenomics Forum “Exploring and Exploiting the Microbiome” held on the 23rd February had gone very well with an attendance of around 200. A further meeting in a year or two’s time was contemplated. There would also be a joint meeting between SCRR and the Rural Policy Centre of SRUC on Rural/Urban Interdependencies to be held, probably in Perth on the 9th June 2015. Discussion on further workshops will take place at the next Executive meeting. Further contact with EScom was encouraged.

6. Membership

6.1. **Consortium membership:** Prof Monro reported that there were ongoing discussions with St Andrews University regarding membership of SCRR.

6.2. **Executive membership:** The requirement for a replacement for Willie Donachie on the Executive as he would now be present in his new role. This would be considered at the next Executive meeting taking note of where there was a need for representation be it Stirling, Glasgow or RBGE.

6.3. **Secretary/Treasurer replacement:** This was considered earlier in the agenda.

7. Finances

7.1. **Accounts and current financial position:** The financial situation was as reported at the Main Board meeting.

8. Publicity & communications

8.1. **SCRR website:** The web site is currently up-to-date.

8.2. **SCRR Newsletter:** Prof Monro reported that the Spring Newsletter was published and was in the process of distribution. It was suggested that a key element of the summer Newsletter should be a guide to the various networks and Centres for Expertise. Among those suggested were;

- ≡ EScom
- ≡ EPS
- ≡ AIMMS
- ≡ Precision Farming
- ≡ Cereals Hub
- ≡ MASTS
- ≡ CAMERAS
- ≡ SSAC

It was agreed that those present would forward details of these networks to Scientific Director and Treasurer/Secretary.

9. **Any other business:** no other business.

10. **Date and place of next Executive meeting:** Monday May 4, 2015 · 11.00 at Institute of Aquaculture, Stirling University. Other areas within Stirling University related to SCRR activities should be encouraged, including archaeology.