



Scottish Consortium
for Rural Research

MINUTE OF THE 124TH MEETING OF THE SCRR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER 2015 AT SASA

Present:

Prof Steve Yearley (Chair, Executive Committee)
Prof Stuart K Monro (Scientific Director)
Prof Willie Donachie (Secretary/Treasurer)
Dr Ian Bainbridge (SNH)
Prof Geoff Simm (SRUC)
Dr Kathy Velandar (Edinburgh Napier University)
Ruth Wolstenholme (SNIFFER)
Prof Lee Innes (MRI)

Apologies:

Dr Nick Fraser (NMS)
Dr David Miller (JHI)
Prof Martin Price (Centre for Mountain Studies, UHI)

- 1. Welcome & Apologies:** Prof Yearley welcomed those present and particularly Prof Lee Innes who was invited along to speak about the Scottish Government's Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services Division (RESAS) plans for a Knowledge Exchange centre within the new Scientific Programme 2016-21.
- 2. Minutes and matters arising from 123rd executive meeting:** The minute was approved and all matters arising were covered in other agenda items.
- 3. Centres of Excellence and Networks: update on all networks**

3.1 Moredun:

Prof Lee Innes informed the Committee about a new Centre being created for Knowledge Exchange and Impact for the RESAS (Scottish Government) interdisciplinary research programme on Agri-Food-Environment. The new RESAS research programme will run from April 2016 to March 2021 and comprises three interlinked themes:

- Natural Assets
- Productive and Sustainable Land Management and Rural Economies
- Food, Health and Wellbeing

This Centre will, for the first time, bring together the multidisciplinary research outputs from leading Scottish Research Institutes tackling some of the major issues and challenges faced at a global scale including: options for land use and management of our finite resources, sustainable food production, food and water security, combating infectious diseases, improving human nutrition, enhancing health and well being, dealing with a changing climate and building resilient rural communities. The Centre will provide a single gateway, relevant to all stakeholders, for the research being undertaken in this ambitious research programme and to the combined expertise of the organisations involved.

It will be more coordinated and outward looking than previous arrangements for KE within the two earlier Scientific Programmes. A major objective is to increase the number of stakeholders and SCRR with its own expansive networks was an ideal contact for the KE centre. There followed a lively discussion on the possible contributions from SCRR to, and interactions with, the proposed KE centre. The development was viewed as a positive step by RESAS and the MRPs and had the potential for greater information flow and connections between stakeholders in Scotland and beyond.

3.2 Sniffer - knowledge brokers for a resilient Scotland:

- Sniffer is progressing a number of initiatives that help build capacity in relation to climate resilience. Work on the Climate Ready Biosphere Vision (Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere) is complete and will be launched in the autumn.
- Ruth noted that activities as part of the National Centre for Resilience are progressing, with the third Programme Board having met in August. Two of the working groups reported on progress at the Board meeting– the natural hazards working group which will develop Science Notes/Fact-Sheets on landslides and other natural hazards, and the research and training working group. The latter group has developed a work plan that covers mapping of research expertise, activities and projects across Scotland, identifying gaps and opportunities for translating research insights into practical support for responders and for enhancing community resilience; Mapping of training activity, with particular focus on understanding other agency, public funded and third sector training, with the aim of enhancing multiagency collaboration; a review of relevant datasets, a review gaps and opportunities http://www.readyscotland.org/media/81328/ncr_-_programme_board_-_minutes_of_meeting_-_24_august_2015.pdf
- ClimateXChange has published a report on windfarms, making a range of recommendations about how to improve predicting, measuring, assessing and documenting the impact of wind farms. <http://www.climatexchange.org.uk/reducing-emissions/wind-farm-impacts-study1/>
- ClimateXChange has published the findings from a unique research project which asked people (citizens' juries) to come up with criteria for decision making about onshore wind farms in Scotland. The practical recommendations for using citizens juries as part of engagement can boost participation in local democracy. Report here <http://www.climatexchange.org.uk/reducing-emissions/citizens-juries-wind-farm-development-scotland/>

3.3 SRUC:

- GS reported that the proposed merger between SRUC and the University of Edinburgh has been abandoned but both parties are continuing with "Alignment" arrangements.
- The proposals for the RESAS Scientific Programme 2016-21 are now at the stage of revision with the resubmission deadline set for November. There is no increase in funding over the previous programme so cuts are inevitable.
- SRUC engagement with the UK Agri Tech Strategy (£90M over 5 years and Industry led) has been productive for SRUC with the award to SRUC and collaborators of the 1st Innovation centre on Agrimetrics. This will address the issues associated with the capture and the more efficient application of Big Data. Two other submissions are still under review concerning Livestock and Precision Farming. CV raised a point about the availability of the data arising from the Innovation centre. GS responded that this was a complicated issue still to be finally agreed between the partners.

3.4 CAMERAS:

- IB informed the Committee that the creation of a Secretariat to improve the administration of the CAMERAS group had been agreed with the Scottish Government. Dr Fiona Comrie has been seconded for the FSA Scotland and she would be attending the Directors' Lunch immediately following the current Executive Meeting.
- Discussions are taking place about the role of CAMERAS in the delivery of science aspects of SG's rural affairs and environment policies.
- GS expressed a concern that representation of certain groups, such as farming, seemed to be missing on the CAMERAS membership.

3.5 Social Sciences:

The University of Edinburgh are reviewing their programme of topics with relation to agriculture.

3.6 Other:

- SSAC: SM reported that the Chief Scientific Officer post is still vacant following the latest recruitment exercise. This has resulted in further delays to the recruitment of SSAC members.

4. Events

4.1 Annual Lecture 2016: The Peter Wilson lecture 2016 will be given by Prof A.L Glover at the RSE on 25th February 2016.

4.2 Workshops:

- A Round Table workshop on Land Reform is being organized by SCRR to be held at UHI Perth on 15 January 2015. This will be a small group of around 25 invited individuals to discuss the remit for a larger meeting to take place after the passing of the bill later in 2016. This larger meeting will aim to define the areas of future research that the passing of the bill will precipitate. The committee made a number of suggestions for invitees including a political scientist. All Committee members are asked to consider potential attendees and let SM know.
- Extremophiles: SCRR will host an event at the Edinburgh Science Festival 2016 where the topic will be extremophiles. This will be followed up later in the year with an SCRR meeting on the same topic but a more scientific nature with the emphasis on connecting the Scottish Science groups looking at all aspects of extremophiles

4.3 Directors' Lunches

- Monday 23 November 2015: AGM and Directors' Lunch; SRUC, Roslin Institute Boardroom.
- Monday 18 January 2016: Executive Committee and Directors' Lunch; Roslin Institute
- Monday 14 March 2015: Executive Committee and Directors' Lunch; BioSS, JHI Invergowrie

5. Membership

5.1 Consortium: The National Trust for Scotland and the University of St Andrews have indicated strong interest in joining SCRR. SM and WD will follow up on this.

5.2 Executive Committee: At the previous meeting of the Executive it was agreed that the membership of the committee needs to be increased by at least two. Prof Lee Innes (MRI) and Dr Pete Hollingworth (RBGE) were nominated and accepted by

the members present. Prof Colin Campbell has resigned from the Executive and his recommendation for a JHI replacement, Dr David Miller, has been accepted by the Executive Committee. IB informed the Committee that he would be retiring from his post at SNH at the end of 2015 and therefore also the Executive Committee. A suitable replacement would then be required.

6. Finances

- The finances are in good shape with the balance at 31st August being £30,517. The invoices for member subscriptions 2015-16 will be sent out in October.
- SM asked the Committee members for permission for himself and WD to claim travel expenses where SCRR business necessitated visits outside the Edinburgh area. This was accepted by the members present with the provision that the University of Edinburgh rates were applied and the Chair of the Executive Committee would authorise payment.

7. Publicity and Communications

7.1 SCRR Website: The website is being updated regularly. SM and WD will arrange training for editing authority.

7.2 SCRR Newsletter: The summer issue of the Newsletter was prepared in time for distribution at the Royal Highland Show in June. The winter issue is scheduled for November and a call for contributions was circulated to members early in September.

8. Any other business: No other business.

9. Date and place of next Executive meeting

January 18, 2016, Roslin Institute

KEY	Prof Steve Yearley	SY
	Prof Stuart K Monro	SM
	Prof Willie Donachie	WD
	Dr Ian Bainbridge	IB
	Prof Geoff Simm	GS
	Dr Kathy Velandar	KV
	Ruth Wolstenholme	RW
	Prof Lee Innes	LI