



Scottish Consortium  
for Rural Research

## MINUTE OF THE 126<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE SCRR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2016 AT BIOSS, JAMES HUTTON INSTITUTE, INVERGOWRIE

### **Present:**

Prof Stuart K Monro (Scientific Director and Acting Chair)  
Prof Willie Donachie (Secretary/Treasurer)  
Dr Kathy Velandar (Edinburgh Napier University)  
Dr Nick Fraser (NMS)  
Prof Pete Hollingsworth (RBGE)  
Prof David Miller (JHI)  
Ruth Wolstenholme (SNIFFER)

### **Apologies:**

Prof Geoff Simm (SRUC)  
Prof Lee Innes (MRI)  
Prof Martin Price (Centre for Mountain Studies, (UHI)

1. **Welcome & Apologies:** SKM welcomed those present.
2. **Minutes and matters arising from 125<sup>th</sup> 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:** The new KE Centre is being finalised.
  - 3.2 **Sniffer - knowledge brokers for a resilient Scotland:** More being done on capacity building than research at the moment, climate resilience, air quality and flooding. In regard to the latter there is more engagement with local authorities on planning.
  - 3.3 **SRUC:** The recruitment process for the new Director is still ongoing.
  - 3.4 **Social Sciences:** No update on this for this meeting.
  - 3.5 **SSAC (SM)** A new Science Advisory Council with a Chair has been appointed. The new Chair is Paul Boyle, VC at Leicester University. The members are Ian Hunter (Strathclyde), Colin McInnes (Glasgow), Anna Meridith (Edinburgh), Any Mount (Edinburgh), Susan Posser (Edinburgh) and Tara Spiers-Jones (Edinburgh). There is good representation of women as well as a breadth and depth in the selection. There are opportunities to appoint further members. The recruitment process for a Chief Scientist for Scotland continues. There has been one meeting of the SSAC in March.

### 3.6. Other

3.6.1 CAMERAS: (DM) After some reorganisation there is an action plan and some of these will be closely related to the new research programme. The priorities for CAMERAS are dependent on the desires of the incoming government in May 2016. The formation of the delivery board (RAFE) policy linked to research will have an impact on CAMERAS activities. There is a series of "Outcome Workshops" organised, one of which is on Scotland's environment.

3.6.2 JHI: Colin Campbell is the new Chief Executive. The Board is also being repopulated. The new Corporate Plan is out for consultation.

3.6.3 RBGE: The Review process has been completed and a clean bill of health awarded. The new Research Programme is described as "exciting". A Plant Health Centre of Expertise being formed at RBGE is expected to be commissioned in August, and is a similar model to SEACC. It provides rapid summaries of plant health issues for quick response.. "From Mountaintops to the Coast" could be the strapline. It will work closely with the Chief Plant Health Officer for Scotland who is based at SASA.

3.6. Ecotourism: (KV) Napier has been involved in a number of European Ecotourism Network projects such as "Scenic routes" and modelling the economic impact of small local/specialist events.

3.6.5 National Biodiversity Network: (NF) Jo Judge has been appointed as the new CEO. Her research has been concerned with wild animal disease.

3.6.6 National Centre for Resilience. (RW) This will be based at Crichton as part of the University of Glasgow looking at foresighting data in relation to natural hazards. Carol Hill is the main academic contact.

## 4. Events

**4.1 Annual Lecture 2016:** The Peter Wilson lecture 2016 was given by Prof A.L Glover at the RSE on Thursday 25th February 2016. It was very well attended and offered a good insight on how a chief scientist can inform politicians or not. There was good feedback on the lecture.

The topic suggestions for 2017 included conservation, "One Health", "History, Heritage and archaeology". Names of prospective speakers will be sought for next Executive meeting.

### 4.2 Workshops:

4.2.1 Land Use Reform. The report for workshop in Perth is nearly finalised and will be posted on the SCRR website soon.

4.2.2 Edinburgh International Science Festival. An SCRR sponsored public event on Life in the Extremes will be held at the National Museum at 3.00pm on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2016. Contributions from University of Edinburgh on astrobiology (Adam Stevens), JHI on soil lichens (Colin Campbell) and from St Andrews on early Archean life (Aubrey Zerkle). The format will be 20 minute talks with discussion at the end.

4.2.3 Follow up workshop on Land Reform: Needs to be planned for later in 2016. This could be another Round Table

4.2.4. Follow up on Life in the Extremes: A more scientific meeting will be held bringing together scientists from across Scotland in the different disciplines relevant to this topic.

4.2.5 Scotia Agricultural Club: We have had an approach from Prof John Oldham about holding a joint seminar on a topic of mutual interest. WD and SM have still to meet John and discuss possible subjects.

4.2.6 Living Collections: A good number of the SCRR members have living collections. This shared responsibility and the issues that arise for making the data available may be the basis of a very interesting meeting. SKM and WD to form a Steering Committee for this.

### 4.3 Directors' Lunches

- Monday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2016: Executive Committee and Directors' Lunch, School of Geosciences, University of Edinburgh, Assembly Room in ECCL.

## 5. Membership

**5.1 Consortium:** The National Trust for Scotland and the University of St Andrews having indicated strong interest in joining SCRR have still not signed up. SM and WD will follow up on this.

**5.2 Executive Committee:** WD circulated the list of current Executive Committee members and their appointment and re-election dates. We do not have a CAMERAS representative on the Committee since Ian Bainbridge left. SM and WD to look into possible replacements.

**6. Finances:** WD reported that the Finances are healthy.

## 7. Publicity and Communications

**7.1 SCRR Website:** The website is being updated regularly.

**7.2 SCRR Newsletter:** The Spring 2016 edition will be printed early April in time for distribution at the Edinburgh International Science Festival event.

**8. Any other business:** No other business.

## 9. Date and place of next Executive meeting

16 May 2016: Executive Committee and Directors' Lunch; School of Geosciences, ECCL, UoE

KEY	Prof Stuart K Monro	SM
	Prof Willie Donachie	WD
	Dr Kathy Velander	KV
	Prof David Miller	DM
	Dr Nick Fraser	NF
	Prof Pete Hollingsworth	PH
	Ruth Wolstenholme	RW