



Scottish Consortium
for Rural Research

MINUTE OF THE 132ND MEETING OF THE SCRR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 25TH SEPTEMBER 2017. IASH, UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH, HOPE PARK SQUARE, EDINBURGH, EH8 9NW

Present:

Prof Steve Yearley (Chair)
Prof Stuart K Monro (Scientific Director)
Prof Willie Donachie (Secretary/Treasurer)
Dr Kathy Velandar (Edinburgh Napier University)
Prof David Miller (JHI)
Prof Alistair Stott (SRUC)
Prof Des Thomson

Apologies:

Prof Pete Hollingsworth (RBGE)
Prof Martin Price (Centre for Mountain Studies, (UHI)
Ruth Wolstenholme (Sniffer)
Dr Nick Fraser (NMS)
Prof Lee Innes (MRI)

1. **Welcome & Apologies:** SY welcomed those present.
2. **Minutes and matters arising from 131st Executive meeting:**
Agreed with minor changes
3. **New SCRR Director:** Prof Stuart Monro let the Committee know of his intention to resign from the post of SCRR Director as soon as a replacement can be found. Following discussion it was agreed that a job description would be drawn up and circulated to the Executive Committee for comment. Then if acceptable to the Committee it will be sent out to all the SCRR Board members for discussion at the Main Board Meeting in November. Increasing diversity on the Executive Committee was identified as a desirable in appointing a new Director.
4. **Centres of Excellence and Networks: update on all networks**
 - 4.1. **Edinburgh Napier University:** (KV) The Broomhouse Project has been awarded £2.5M to improve the Broomhouse Centre which will enable the local community to communicate more effectively and make their voices heard. The Scenic Routes project is going well and the Mountain Biking Groups are showing interest in their activities. Edinburgh Napier University will be involved in The UN 16 Days of Action to highlight violence against women alongside the University of Edinburgh in November and December.
Linking with this AS noted the “Women in Agriculture” initiative between SRUC and the RHS.

- 4.2. JHI (DM)** i) UK Government paper on Brexit - Science and Technology: Bilateral agreement signed with USA. The University of Edinburgh was noted as a successful institution in this paper ii) In the Programme of Government positive comments on hydrogenation were well received by members of CREW. iii) The JHI Aberdeen site was venue for two round table discussions on Fisheries and Agriculture involving the UK Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Michael Gove. These were reported as being lively. iv) JHI presentation to Scottish Government on the Forestry Bill covered issues such as the non-forest estate and whether the aim was sustainable forestry or sustainable development. Is this an issue for SCRR to pick up this discussion and contribute. v) The SG has indicated that it proposes to stretch the cuts in carbon emissions to 90% by 2050 in line with the recommendations of the Climate Change Committee. If the SG do sign up to this proposal then the National Plans will stoke demand for climate change research within SCRR member organizations. This may be a choice area for Peter Wilson Speaker in 2019. vi) The McAuley lecture will take place on 4th October 2017 at Dynamic Earth. vii) The SEFARI website will be officially launched on St Andrew's Day, 30th November.
- 4.3. MRI** No Report.
- 4.4. NMS** Update The development of the Collections Facilities at West Granton (National Museums Collection Centre) reached another milestone at the end of August with the completion of an extension to our analytical labs and conservation building. The new facilities include geological and palaeontological preparation and conservation labs as well as dedicated spaces for XRD, FTIR, and other analytical equipment.
This is part of a phased development of the site at West Granton. National Museums Scotland is now developing the next phase of a long-term Masterplan for the area and is in consultation with others in the sector, including the Galleries and RBGE, regarding the potential for the co-location of facilities in the future.
The acquisition of the Galloway Hoard has been a preoccupation of a large part of the museum over the last few months although, apart from a little joint work between the archaeologists and geologists determining provenance and nature of some of the pieces, it has not been a distraction for the natural scientists!
- 4.5. CAMERAS (DT)** David Pirie is the new Chair. A change of name for the group is also being proposed.
- 4.6. SNH (DT)** Francesca Osowska OBE is the new Chief Executive Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). The former Chief Executive, Ian Jardine, who led SNH for the past 15 years, has taken up a new role on loan to the Scottish Government as a National Adviser on environment policy to strengthen its EU-related analysis, engagement and policy work. Sally Thomas is now Director of Policy and Advice and SNH will shortly appoint a Director for Business Transformation.
In other changes; Eileen Stuart is the SNH individual responsible for the National Peatland Group; Susan pepper is now Chair of the Deer Management Groups. A new Chair for the Grouse Moor Management Group will be announced later in 2017. Andrew Thin is now Chair of the Scottish Land Commission and Hamish Trench is the new CEO.

4.7. **SRUC (AS)**

- i) Two new senior appointments have been made Prof Jamie Newbould as Academic Director and Colin McEwan as Commercial Director. One of the main aims is to bring back together the teaching and research arms of SRUC.
- ii) EPIC Conference. Successful meeting involving SRUC, MRI and JHI
- iii) Centre for Livestock Tropical health launched with collaboration with ILRE (Nairobi, Kenya) and University of Edinburgh. This is indicative of an interest outwith the UK and Europe.
- iv) Industrial Strategy: This focuses on non-graduate training which is a neglected area of education but within which SRUC has had a long time presence.

4.8. **SSAC (SKM)** The website is now being updated. Anna Meridith, one of the members, is now Chair of the Advisory Board.

4. Events

4.1 Annual Peter Wilson Lecture 2018. RSE, 27th February. Roger Crofts, Chair of RSGS, is the speaker for the 2018 lecture. The title "What went wrong with Land Use Scotland" is likely to be a very individual and possibly controversial view. The possibility of using a moderator was aired and will be considered.

4.2 Workshops:

4.2.1 Biological Collections: This is still at early stages. The feeling from the meeting was that it would be better to arrange a small workshop in the first instance to make recommendations for anything further in the future.

4.2.2: Coastal Event Workshop: A number of SCRR members have interests in this environment and an SCRR workshop on this topic will be organised. A meeting of interested parties was held at Moredun in September with representatives from . St Andrews, and Edinburgh Napier University. The event is agreed in principle but details are still being discussed.

4.2.3: Extremophiles: This is on hold at present.

4.2.4: Scotia/SCRR Essay Competition and Lecture: The details for this are now on the SCRR website.

4.2.5. Social Science Event: SY, SKM and WD still to meet to meet and discuss.

4.3 Directors' Lunches

- Thursday 16th November: AGM and 56th Main Board Meeting, RBGE, Edinburgh.

5. Membership

5.1 Consortium: The National Trust are still not signed up due to reorganisation issues. WD to contact the NTS again. The Rowett Institute has been approached about membership but no response so far. SKM to contact Prof Peter Morgan.

5.2 Executive Committee: Professor Des Thompson, SNH, has joined the Executive Committee and will report on CAMERAS issues in addition to his own sector.

6. Finances:

WD reported that the Finances remain healthy. A number of subscriptions are still due. Those organisations will be contacted again.

7. Publicity and Communications

7.1 SCRR Website: The website has been updated and new material, including Meeting minutes and event details, is now being added.

7.2 SCRR Newsletter: The next newsletter will be Winter 2017 and the deadline is the 28 October.

8. Any other business:

No other business

9. Date and place of next Executive meeting

TBA.

KEY

| | | | |
|----------------------|-----|-------------------|----|
| Prof Steve Yearly | SY | Prof David Miller | DM |
| Prof Stuart K Monro | SKM | Dr Kathy Velandar | KV |
| Prof Willie Donachie | WD | Prof Des Thompson | DS |
| Prof Alastair Stott | AS | | |

Abbreviations:

CAMERAS - Coordinated Agenda for Marine, Environment and Rural Affairs Scotland

IASH - Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities.

SG – Scottish Government