



Scottish Consortium  
for Rural Research

## MINUTE OF THE 133<sup>RD</sup> MEETING OF THE SCRR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON 28<sup>TH</sup> FEB 2018 IN THE BOARDROOM, CHISHOLM HOUSE, HIGH SCHOOL YARDS, THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

### **Present:**

Prof Steve Yearley (Chair)  
Prof Stuart K Monro (Scientific Director)  
Prof Willie Donachie (Secretary/Treasurer) – by phone  
Dr Nick Fraser (NMS)  
Prof Pete Hollingsworth (RBGE) – by phone for item 3.11  
Prof Lee Innes (MRI)  
Prof David Miller (JHI)  
Prof Des Thompson (SNH)

### **Apologies:**

Prof Martin Price (UHI)  
Dr Kathy Velander (Edinburgh Napier University)

1. **Welcome & Apologies:** SY welcomed those present particularly in the light of the difficult weather conditions.
2. **Minutes and matters arising from 132<sup>nd</sup> Executive meeting:**
  - 2.1. Agreed with minor changes.
3. **New SCRR Director:** It was reported that interviews had been held and that no appointment had been made. It was agreed that further trawling was required and that several other potential applicants would be approached. It was noted that the most convenient time for a handover would be at the AGM in November.
4. **Centres of Excellence and Networks: update on all networks**
  - 4.1. **Edinburgh Napier University:** no report available.
  - 4.2. **James Hutton Institute:** DM reported the good news that both Colin Campbell and Martin Price had been elected FRSE. He noted that the profile of SEFARI was being raised by events involving the Scottish Government and, in the future, SCRR might also be involved. JHI had responded to consultations on the impact of BREXIT on science research with the importance of involvement in 2020 highlighted. Plans are in hand for activities at the Royal Highland Show and at the Game Fair. The Plant Health Centre had now been established with 5 years funding. Links between SCRR and SEFARI need to be maintained and enhanced and a presentation on SEFARI would be appropriate at the AGM.
  - 4.3. **Moredun:** LI reported that there was a planned closer alliance between Moredun and SRUC focusing on veterinary surveillance. The current review of SEFARI was noted with responses being elicited from stakeholders. An event will be held as part

of the Edinburgh International Science Festival with the RSE Young Academy on “Friend or Foe? The parasites that live inside us”. A research Fellowship with Cairngorm National Park had proved very successful particularly in engaging with gamekeepers on tick control. Further work is taking place in Orkney on goose control. There is an initiative to resurrect the “Moredun bus” which was used in the very early days of Moredun to take messages on disease control to the farming community.

**4.4. National Museums of Scotland:** NF noted that digitisation of collections was proceeding fast with around 3 billion specimens globally being used to monitor change. In the US this programme is being funded by the NSF but elsewhere funding remains a problem particularly for collections in small museums. Edinburgh Conservation Science was a consortium of world-class research organisations, NMS, RBGE, SNH and the University of Edinburgh, dedicated to the translation and application of science to conservation which was in the process of being launched. He also noted the other networks, including the Moorland, Forum, SAGES and MASTS, who also overlapped with the interests of SCRR members.

**4.5. RBGE:** PH (by telephone) reported that restructuring was underway at RBGE with new senior appointments. Plans for the Plant Health Centre are well underway. He presented the rationale for the Collections Workshop and outlined from where possible contributors would come. The way forward was for NF and PH to come up with a list of contributors and this would be put together for a workshop in September 2018.

**4.6. Social Science:** SY reported that there was little big news from this area and that the proposed appointment in Rural Food Security with the Global Academy had not been made.

**4.7. SNH:** DT reported that two working groups had been set up, one on deer management chaired by Simon Pepper and the other on Grouse Moor Management chaired by Alan Werrity. National Performance Indicators for upland birds had shown a marked decline in the number of waders and there was a focus on research into what was causing the decline. Information to be circulated on up and coming conferences which may be of interest to members.

## 5. Events

**5.1. Peter Wilson Lecture 2018:** SKM reported that this had taken place and was well received by a full house in the RSE lecture theatre. Thought should now be given to the lecture and format for the next Peter Wilson Lecture in 2019. Suggestions should be emailed to SKM.

**5.2. Biological Collections Workshop:** The format for this had previously been agreed earlier in the meeting and would be taken forward by PH and NF in collaboration with SKM and WD.

**5.3. Coastal Event Workshop:** WD reported that progress on this was behind that for the Biological Collections Workshop but a planning meeting was now in the diary which was engaging with all the participants.

**5.4. Scotia/SCRR Essay Competition and Lecture:** SKM and WD reported that there had been no response from schools to this initiative and as discussed previously moving forward would involve collaboration with SEFARI through Prof Innes and with RHET.

**5.5. Social Sciences Event:** There was general support for an event but it will require further discussion on the details. SY/SKM/WD

**6. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR):** WD reported that SCRR held a substantial amount of data in terms of names and addresses associated with contact list for Directors' lunches and distribution of the Newsletter. It was unclear as to how SCRR might be affected by this legislation but information will be shared with others confronted by the problem to identify a way forward.

## **7. Membership**

**7.1. Consortium membership:** SKM reported that Biological Sciences at St Andrews University were retaining their membership and that he was making a presentation to the School of School of Geography & Sustainable Development on SCRR activities.

**7.2. Executive membership:** There is presently one vacancy on the Committee due to the resignation of Ruth Wolstenholme. The Committee is also light on representation from the University of Edinburgh. Any suggestions for replacements should be notified to SY,SKM or WD.

## **8. Finances**

**8.1. Accounts and current financial position:** WD presented the current financial position which was very healthy (see Appx 1). Any change in the remuneration package for the Scientific Director and Secretary/Treasurer would need to be evaluated against present income.

## **9. Publicity & communications**

**9.1. SCRR Website:** WD reported that the website was urgently needing updated and that his efforts to do that had not been successful. SY promised to use his influence to see if there were any problems with the contractor.

**9.2. SCRR Newsletter:** WD reported that we were on track for a good-sized edition of the Newsletter and that material was still coming in.

## **10. Any other business**

## **11. Date and place of next Executive meeting: CEH, 18 April 2018**

KEY	Prof Steve Yearley	SY
	Prof Stuart K Monro	SM
	Prof Willie Donachie	WD
	Dr Nick Fraser	NF
	Prof Pete Hollingsworth	PH
	Prof Lee Innes	LI
	Prof David Miller	DM
	Prof Martin Price	MP
	Prof Des Thompson	DT
	Dr Kathy Velandar	KV

## Appx 1

### Scottish Consortium for Rural Research

#### Income & Expenditure Account Year to date 28/02/18

	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Balance in</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>Bank</b>
		<b>£</b>
Balance brought forward 31/03/2017	35,152.04	35,152.04
<b>Income</b>		
Subscription	22825	57,977.04
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Total Income	22825	
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Salaries & Honoraria	14,598.24	43,378.80
Travel	0	43,378.80
Meetings & Hospitality	957	42,421.38
Office Rent, Rates, Heat & Light	0	42,421.38
Office Expenses & Telephone	5.81	42,415.57
SCRR Newsletter publication	4,017.98	38,397.59
Publicity, Posters, Website	453.60	37,943.99
Miscellaneous	0	37,943.99
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Total Expenditure	20033.05	
<b>Balance 28/02/18</b>		<hr/> <b>37,943.99</b>