



Scottish Consortium
for Rural Research

**MINUTE OF THE 137TH MEETING OF THE SCRR
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, HELD IN THE MANSION
HOUSE, ROYAL ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND,
EDINBURGH ZOO ON 27 FEBRUARY 2019 AT
10:30AM.**

Present:

Prof Sarah Skerratt (Scientific Director and Acting Chair)
Prof Willie Donachie (Secretary/Treasurer)
Dr Nick Fraser (NMS)
Mr Ed Mackey (SNH)
Prof Pete Hollingsworth (RBGE)
Prof Martin Price (UHI)
Dr Kathy Velandar (Edinburgh Napier University)
Prof Steve Yearley (Attended from 12.15pm)

Apologies:

Prof Lee Innes (MRI)
Prof Des Thompson (SNH)
Prof David Miller (JHI)

1. **Welcome & Apologies:** Professor Sarah Skerratt welcomed those present, and noted thanks to the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland for hosting the meeting.

2. **Minutes and matters arising from 136th Executive meeting:**

3. **Update, Members, Centres of Excellence and Networks**

3.1. **SNH (EM):** A near complete Business plan for 2020-21 is being prepared. The budget for this remains very tight but there is a focussed and wide spread of activities.

Francesca Osowska, CEO SNH, has agreed to give the lecture in 2019.

A major Biodiversity meeting is planned for 2020.

Scottish Biodiversity Information Forum is now in stage of developing proposals and some of these may be relevant to SCRR. There are opportunities to invest in infrastructure.

SEFARI – A new Biodiversity Fellowship has been announced demonstrating enthusiasm for this initiative.

3.2. **RBGE (PH):** RBGE has its 350th Anniversary in 2020 and there will be a number of events planned to celebrate the anniversary. It will include a lot of events associated with biodiversity issues.

Edinburgh Conservation Science (ECOS) is a consortium comprising National Museums Scotland, RBGE, SNH and the University of Edinburgh with a mission to provide a Centre of Excellence for Applied Conservation Science, integrating multi-disciplinary science, practice and policy, and providing leadership for

innovative transdisciplinary responses to global challenges in conservation and ecosystem health. There is a desire to engage across a wider community. Launched in December this is expected to grow organically.

4. Events

4.1 Peter Wilson Lecture 2019: (SKM) - Francesca Osowska, CEO Scottish Natural Heritage, has agreed to give the lecture on May 30th 2019 at the RSE.

The format is likely to be changed to one that is more interactive than a traditional lecture. There will be discussion with an expert Panel, and a short list of members includes Professor Colin Campbell (CEO, JHI), Louise MacDonald (CEO, Young Scot), Mike Robinson (CEO, Royal Scottish Geographical Society) and Martin Valenti (Strategic Director, Scottish Land Commission).

The Committee discussed some issues arising from this lecture
Increasing Diversity of audience by engaging schools by invitation to the lecture and perhaps producing a video for wider viewing.

4.2 Biological Collections Workshop: Stuart Monro will remain involved. The RBGE venues are available again. PH and NF will meet and revise the original programme and dates, There is a major conference soon and its deliberations will affect our conference. The earliest date would be June 2019.

4.3 Scotia/SCRR (WD/SS): SCRR and Scotia co-hosted a meeting at the RSE to discuss the impact of Brexit on agriculture in Scotland. Members of both organisations were invited. The turnout of around 33 individuals was considered good and there were two good speakers, Steve Thompson (SRUC) and David Barnes (Scottish Government). There was a lively discussion following the talks. However it was an academic audience and it may be better to have a bit more challenge from practitioners and other stakeholders in any future events.

There is a new group being set up by RESAS called Remote Sensing for Agricultural and Environmental analysis in Scotland. Stephen Smith is the contact in RESAS.

4.4 Treeline Conference: There is no development on the re-organisation of this conference and is unlikely to take place in 2019.

4.5 Interdisciplinary Learning, RSE, 30th January 2019: This did take place but as yet there is no report.

4.6 Design Thinking: KV introduced this workshop event. It is a way of bringing creative thinking into science. It will be aimed at early career researchers but open to all. It will take place at Moredun on 3rd April from 1-5pm. The invitations will be circulated to appropriate organisations. The format is that the attendees are placed in mixed discipline groups and set a problem to solve.

5. Membership

5.1. Membership: SS circulated a Briefing Document (see Appx 1) which will form the basis for discussions with the heads of SCRR members organisations. SS and WD aim to visit every member organization and meet with the Director and the main SCRR contact. The Committee discussed the document and agreed that this would be a sensible approach.

One of the main aims is to increase involvement of organizations outside Edinburgh which includes those in the North, West and South of Scotland. Video linking should be considered for all meetings.

SRUC Inverness was agreed as the venue for the SCRR AGM on November 13th 2019. Video linking would be needed.

The idea of reviving the reception event with a main welcoming speaker and poster presentations from ECR in the member organisations was strongly supported. This could be part of the AGM day to increase the attraction of attending. The availability of a minibus option for travel may also help attendance.

5.2. Executive Committee Membership: Professor Karen Halliday, University of Edinburgh, has joined the Executive Committee.

6. Finances

6.1. Accounts and current financial position: WD presented the current financial position which was very healthy (see Appx 2).

7. Publicity & communications

7.1. SCRR Website: WD reported that the website still needed work to update it.

7.2. SCRR Newsletter: The Winter 2018/19 issue was posted out at end of February. The deadline for summer 2019 issue is 26 April 2019

8. Any other business: None

9. Date and place of next Executive meetings:

- a) 3rd April 2019: 138th Executive Committee Meeting and Directors' Lunch at Moredun.
- b) 22nd May 2019: 139th Executive Committee Meeting and Directors' Lunch at JHI Aberdeen
- c) 28th August 2019: 140th Committee Meeting and Directors' Lunch at BGS, Heriot Watt University.
- d) 13th November 2019: 58th Main Board Meeting and AGM, SRUC (site to be confirmed)

KEY	Prof Steve Yearly	SY	Mr Ed Mackey	EM
	Prof Sarah Skerratt	SS	Prof Martin Price	MP
	Prof Willie Donachie	WD	Dr Kathy Velandar	KV
	Dr Nick Fraser	NF		
	Prof Pete Hollingsworth	PH		

SCRR Future Direction Discussions: Summary briefing document

1. Background to the discussions:

- a. SCRR, with 24 members from Shetland to Dumfries, **aims** to:
 - i. improve mutual awareness, facilitate communication and provoke discussion;
 - ii. provide accessible expertise on scientific matters that affect Scotland, its people and its natural heritage;
 - iii. promote collaboration to address issues of national importance, including government policy.
- b. SCRR **achieves this** through low-cost, no-frills:
 - i. lunchtime research meetings and visits, workshops and discussions – rotated around members’ locations;
 - ii. Annual Peter Wilson Lecture (with Royal Society of Edinburgh);
 - iii. Newsletters with articles contributed by members.
- c. In November 2018, **Professor Sarah Skerratt** (of SRUC) succeeded Prof Stuart Monro as SCRR’s Scientific Director. In 2019, Sarah plans to meet with all 24 SCRR members for one-to-one discussions focused on shaping the consortium for the future.
- d. In having these one-to-one discussions, I won’t be quizzing you in-depth about SCRR! I want to learn about what works well in *your* organisation, what are you *proud* of, what excites you, and what you want to share as *examples of excellence*.

2. Purpose of 1:1 SCRR member discussions:

- a. Gather evidence as to how the consortium can reflect **members’ priorities and drivers** while delivering to SCRR’s aims and values;
- b. Identify how SCRR can strengthen the **collective “added value”** from knowledge exchange amongst and beyond members, to showcase the impact of science, its public good and policy value.
- c. Lead the way in creating **pathways for inclusive science** – for early career researchers, isolated researchers in rural settings or single disciplines; and for those not typically engaged in scientific debate.

3. Themes for 1:1 SCRR member discussions:

- a. **Benefits** of your SCRR membership;
- b. How SCRR membership could **showcase your strengths** more;
- c. How the “SCRR collective” could **increase its public and policy impact**;
- d. Inclusive science: how SCRR, as a collective, can support **increased outreach by members**.

4. Outcomes of 1:1 SCRR member discussions:

- a. Shared, enhanced understanding of **SCRR’s collective potential**;
- b. **Draft plan for action**, with priorities identified;
- c. A basis for forward-looking discussions and planning at the **AGM** in Inverness on 13th November 2019.

Scottish Consortium for Rural Research

Income & Expenditure Account Year to date 25/02/2019

	Actual	Balance in
	£	Bank
		£
Balance brought forward 29/08/2018	40,053.99	40,053.99
Income		
Subscription	12,585	42,188.99
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Total Income	2135	
Expenditure		
Salaries & Honoraria	7,326.48	34,862.51
Travel	0	34,862.51
Meetings & Hospitality	1,503	33,359.49
Office Rent, Rates, Heat & Light	0	33,359.49
Office Expenses & Telephone		33,359.49
SCRR Newsletter publication	4,131.05	29,228.44
Publicity, Posters, Website		29,228.44
Miscellaneous		29,228.44
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Total Expenditure	12960.55	
Balance 23/08/2018		<hr/> 29,228.44