



Scottish Consortium
for Rural Research

MINUTE OF THE 142ND MEETING OF THE SCRR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 27TH FEBRUARY 2020, AT MOREDUN RESEARCH INSTITUTE, PENTLANDS SCIENCE PARK, BUSH LOAN, PENICUIK, MIDLOTHIAN. EH26 0PZ

Present:

Prof Sarah Skerratt (Acting Chair, Scientific Director)
Prof Willie Donachie (Secretary/Treasurer)
Prof David Miller (JHI)
Dr Nick Fraser (NMS)
Prof Lee Innes (MRI)
Prof David Hopkins (SRUC)
Dr Kathy Velandar (Edinburgh Napier University)
Prof Stuart Monro

Apologies:

Prof Geoff Simm
Prof Des Thompson (SNH)
Prof Pete Hollingsworth (RBGE)
Prof Karen Halliday (UoE)
Prof Martin Price (UHI)

- 1. Welcome & Apologies:** In Professor Simm's absence Professor Sarah Skerratt acted Chair and welcomed those present. Professor Skerratt noted thanks to MRI for hosting the meeting.
- 2. Minutes and matters arising from 140th Executive meeting:** The minutes were accepted with no matters arising.
- 3. Update, Members, Centres of Excellence and Networks**

3.1 SCRR Scientific Director's Report: Professor Skerratt informed the meeting that as 1 February 2020 she had officially taken up her new position as Director of Programmes Director of Programmes at the RSE.

3.2 MRI: (LI): This is the Centenary Anniversary year for MRI and a number of events have been planned for the celebration.

- Scottish Parliament Reception on 17 March 2020
- Education Conference at MRI with the Royal Society for Biology in May 2020
- Launch of a MRI mobile laboratory bus
- "One Health" conference in June 2020
- Livestock 2020 Conference in November 2020

Action: Newsletter item to be submitted by LI.

3.3 JHI (DM): SEFARI-

- Ask Academia initiative resurrected by Graeme Cook in Scottish Government. An event on Biodiversity is planned for September. Submissions are open to all research organisations.
Action: DM to enquire about SCRR organisations participation
- SEFARI Operational Plan is progressing with 1month duration fellowships available for placement in Agencies such as SNH, SAOS and NPA. For SCRR organisations these can provide inputs for Pathways to Impact assessments.
Action: DM to provide material on this for next Newsletter.
- Scotland's Record Repository – report expected in in Autumn 2020
- EU Biodiversity Strategy 20-30 – Scottish research highlighted.
- COP26 – Discussion was had on the difficulties experienced in making engagement with organisers. CREW and The Royal Scottish Geographical Society RSGS were suggested as contacts who had made successful engagement.
- Rural Mental Health Forum: workshops have been planned on this important subject as it has significant specific policy and staff health issues for all organisations engaged in rural research.
Action- Newsletter item? DM

3.5 NMS (NF):

- NMS has a new Director, Professor Chris Breward, taking up post in April 2020
- Joint meeting of the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections (SPNHC) and the International Council of Museums Committee for Museums and Collections of Natural History (ICOM NATHIST). June 7-13, 2020, Edinburgh.
Hosted by : [National Museums Scotland](#) and [Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh](#). Website: <http://www.spnhc-icomnathist2020.com/>
- Make Space for Nature: A Showcase Event at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, Scottish Natural Heritage. Tuesday, 31 March 2020 from 14:00 to 17:00
- Workshop for Sub-National, Regional and Local Governments on their role in the post-2020 global biodiversity Workshop for Sub-National, Regional and Local Governments on their role in the post-2020 global biodiversity. 1-3 April 2020, RBGE.
<https://www.rbge.org.uk/biodiversityworkshop2020>
- Taxonomy Training: The Committee discussed the growing concern that training in taxonomy across a number of disciplines was diminishing. NF, DH, DM and KV agreed to look into what is currently available and report back at next meeting and draft a notice for the Newsletter.

3.6 SRUC (DH)

- Re-organisation is continuing with the emphasis on regional devolution, bringing research closer to teaching, reshaping consultancy services and moving towards specialisation to reflect local needs.
- Food Policy Debate 28 February Edinburgh, "Give us this day our daily bread" – but how?"

- The recent events at the University of Edinburgh following Student's Union discussion on removing beef from all catering outlets were discussed.

3.7 SNH: WD to contact Des Thompson about a replacement for Ed Mackay on the Committee.

4. Events

4.1 Peter Wilson Lecture 2020: The date for the lecture is 11 May 2020 at the RSE. A meeting with the RSE Young Academy representatives will take place on 3 March. Getting responses from 'other young persons' groups such as Young Farmers and Youth Scotland have proven difficult but efforts will continue.

4.2 SCRR/Scotia Club Meeting: 'Agriculture transition to Zero Transmissions' will be held on 27 February 2020 at the RSE.

4.4. Challenging Upland Futures Forum: The meeting will take place in Perth on 1-2 September 2020, see attachment for details.

4.4 SCRR AGM 2020 : Arrangements for the AGM have been made with the RSE. The date will be 11th November 2020. Following the success of the 2019 mini-conference the 2020 AGM will also be followed by lunch and then a Mini-Conference.

4.3. Design Thinking: The postponed presentation will be held at the next Executive meeting in May 2020.

5. Membership

5.1. SCRR Consortium Membership: The Scottish Society of Antiquaries have now joined officially as full members of the Consortium.

5.2. Executive Committee Membership.

5.2.1 A major aim after the 2019 AGM was the appointment of an Early Career Researcher to the Executive Committee. The process for recruitment was discussed and agreed (see Appendix 1).

5.2.2 WD informed the Committee that he intended to step down from the Secretary and Treasurer office at the next AGM in November 2020. The process for recruitment of a replacement was discussed and agreed (See Appendix 1).

6. Finances

6.1. Accounts and current financial position: WD presented the current financial position which continues to be healthy (see Appendix 2).

6.2. Membership Subscriptions: The membership fees have not changed since 2014. The Consortium finances continue to break almost even on an annual basis so there is no urgency to increase fees. However it is prudent financial management to review the current situation and discuss the future needs of the Consortium. This will be an Agenda item at the Executive meeting on the 6 May 2020.

7. Publicity & communications

7.1. **SCRR Website:** A proposal to review the website management and possible changes was put forward by SS (see Appendix 1)

7.2. **SCRR Newsletter:** The next Newsletter is planned for April 2020. Please send articles to WD

8. AOB:

8.1. The engagement with school age children was discussed. A number of initiatives are already in existence amongst Consortium members. It was agreed that this issue be put on the Agenda for the next Executive meeting to allow a fuller discussion.

9. Date and place of next Executive meetings:

9.1. 6 May 2020, University of Edinburgh

9.2. 17 September 2020, SRUC, Kings Buildings, Edinburgh.

9.3. 11 November 2020, SCRR AGM, RSE

KEY	Prof Sarah Skerratt	SS	Prof David Miller	DM
	Prof Willie Donachie	WD	Prof Kathy Velandar	KV
	Prof lee Innes	LI	Dr Nick Fraser	NF
	Prof Stuart Monro	SM	Prof David Hopkins	DH

Appendix 1

Papers for SCRR Executive from Prof Sarah Skerratt, Scientific Director

Item 5.2.1 Recruitment and election of young person (aged under 24) for Executive Committee

Purpose of this paper: looking for approval from Executive Committee to proceed.

Purpose: to ensure that views, concerns and perspectives of young people are shaping the decisions and direction-of-travel of SCRR.

Proposed approach:

1. Check whether there is a requirement to amend the SCRR Memo and Articles to allow for the election of a young person to the Executive Committee of SCRR. If so, check the timeline for this to take place and set processes in motion to ensure its completion in a timely manner.
2. Depending on point (1):
 - a. Aim for new Exec Member to be in post by November 2020 AGM.
 - b. However, if Memo and Articles have to be amended at November 2020 AGM first, then recruit and appoint by Christmas 2020.
3. Steps in recruitment and selection process:
 - a. Advertise the position via SCRR membership, ensuring specific targeting of young researchers.
 - b. Establish selection criteria (including website maintenance) which will be published with the advert, along with an application form.
 - c. Shortlist then interview candidates.
 - d. Select and appoint, with subsequent mentoring in place to support full participation in Executive Committee.

Item 5.2.2 Recruitment of Secretary and Treasurer

Purpose of this paper: looking for approval from Executive Committee to proceed.

Purpose: to seek a replacement for Professor Willie Donachie who has indicated his wish to step down after the 2020 AGM.

Proposed approach:

1. Aim for new Secretary and Treasurer to be appointed by November 2020 AGM.
2. Steps in recruitment and selection process:
 - a. Advertise the position via SCRR membership through updated SCRR website and Twitter.
 - b. Establish selection criteria which will be published with the advert, along with an application form.
 - c. Shortlist then interview candidates.
 - d. Select and appoint.

Item 7.1. Changes to provision of SCRR website

Purpose of this paper: looking for approval from Executive Committee to proceed.

Key issues:

1. The website is significantly out of date on a regular basis which is not good for our public profile; current arrangement is not effective.
2. The content management system for the website is cumbersome and clunky and is therefore very difficult to update.
3. Therefore, it is not possible to point people to this as a resource or showcase for SCRR,
4. We need to have an update online resource:
 - a. As a publicity vehicle, including to advertise upcoming events e.g. the AGM and mini-conference;
 - b. For information about benefits of membership in order to attract and maintain new/existing members and activity;
 - c. As a repository for our documents;
 - d. For information about/for members.
5. Scientific Director and Secretary must to be able to add content themselves rather than having to go through a third party.

Proposed resolving of issues:

1. Use of an effective, proven, user-friendly and cost-effective website content management system, i.e. Squarespace,
2. Cost per year £32.00
3. Scientific Director and Secretary would take responsibility for maintenance and ensuring consistent content quality.
4. New young person on Executive Committee would have website content management within their remit. They would be part of three-person team who would be leading on keeping website up to date, interesting, informative and compelling.
5. Timeframe: decision by Exec in Feb 2020, switch by end of 2020 Financial Year.

Appendix 2

Scottish Consortium for Rural Research

Income & Expenditure Account Year to date 20/02/20

	Actual £	Balance in Bank £
Balance brought forward 31/03/2019	28,571.50	28,571.50
Income		
Subscription	32870	61,441.50
Total Income	<hr/> 32870	
Expenditure		
Salaries & Honoraria	14,707.92	46733.58
Travel	140.7	46592.88
Meetings & Hospitality	3,251	43341.8
Office Rent, Rates, Heat & Light	0	43341.8
Office Expenses & Telephone	34.99	43306.81
SCRR Newsletter publication	4,324.04	38982.77
Publicity, Posters, Website	12.00	38970.77
Miscellaneous	0	38970.77
Total Expenditure	<hr/> 22,470.73	
Balance20/02/20		<hr/> 38970.77